



Artwork by monkeybutton

Klaine || AU || M

Klaine fic set in the Buffy 'verse. Blaine Anderson is the only boy ever called to be a Slayer. He already feels like an outsider, but when he meets his new Watcher he worries that things can only get worse.

PLEASE NOTE: *I have posted a Buffy 'verse info page for those not familiar with the show. It should explain that which needs explaining.*

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Chapter One

There was a time in which Blaine Anderson was just a normal boy.

That time had long since passed.

The first time it passed was when he was thirteen, and he realized he was gay.

When that happened, Blaine had closed in on himself with terror. Terror that someone – *anyone* – might find out his horrible secret.

Blaine knew Lindsay Blackstone had a crush on him, and he asked her out the very next day.

He still looked like a normal boy to everyone else, but he knew what it meant. He knew he was a freak.

Maybe one day, when he was older, he could get a visa to go study in the Eastern States, and then he'd disappear into New York and never come back. But this was Ohio, and ever since the Tea Party had taken over the Mid States government, there was no social empathy or legal protection for someone like him.

The second time it happened was when he was sixteen, and his sexual orientation had been discovered.

School became a living nightmare, and Blaine had come home bloody and limping more than once. His mother seemed truly heartbroken over his ordeal, while his father seemed to think that maybe the attacks would "straighten him out." But finally even his father had to admit that this was more than mere roughhousing, and Blaine was sent to Dalton.

Dalton.

Dalton was truly an oasis in their little Republic, a place where so many boys who didn't fit in could come together and breathe free. Bullying wasn't tolerated, and no one cared that Blaine was gay. He joined show choir, and he was *good*. He was popular and well-liked, and when he was seventeen, he even got himself a boyfriend.

Blaine was sure that the worst was over. He was sure that finally, thankfully, he was almost a normal boy again. And after one more year at Dalton, he could go to New York where he could be normal all the time.

But as it turned out, this sense of near-normalcy was also destined to pass.

It started a few weeks before his eighteenth birthday.

He would later discover that this made him something of a late bloomer.

The dreams were odd, vivid, and sometimes he would wake up screaming.

He saw girls. He *became* those girls. He both watched it happen and felt it happen, understanding nothing and everything all at once.

There was violence. And death. There were creatures that he couldn't even begin to describe, beings of pure malice pulsing with unimaginable power.

He fought the creatures and he *knew* what to do. He fought and killed and he was strong and he survived.

There were so many girls. They spoke more languages than Blaine thought could ever exist, seemed to live in a dizzying assortment of times and places.

Every night the dreams would come at him faster, stronger, harder than the night before. On the night before his eighteenth birthday, there were suddenly too many girls, too many lives to process all at once, and when he woke up screaming in his dorm room, he simply couldn't stop.

His boyfriend Patrick had been sleeping beside him, and he held him and tried to communicate until his fear overwhelmed him and he desperately ran to alert the night guard.

When the EMTs arrived, it took an almost lethal dose of sedative to get him to calm down. And when he awoke in the hospital in restraints, he lifted his arm reflexively to scratch his nose and found that he had broken through the straps on his arm like they were made of paper.

His strength terrified him.

He was still in the hospital when Emma approached him. She had seemed very confused, and asked Blaine if he had a sister or a girlfriend that had perhaps been visiting him at Dalton. When he had finally convinced her that there hadn't been a girl in his dorm for as long as he could remember, Emma

tentatively asked him about the dreams, seeming doubtful that he would know what she was talking about.

Her permanently-alarmed-seeming eyes had widened impossibly when Blaine launched into the details, and she clutched the door beside herself for support.

And that was the night when all hope of ever being normal slipped away from Blaine Anderson forever.

Once again, he seemed normal (or as normal as he ever was, anyway) to the outside world. But once again he had a horrible secret that he couldn't reveal. Once again he knew that he was a freak.

Only this time, no matter where he went, it was never going to change.

After The Change of the previous century, it had taken a long time for the Council to re-build itself.

But The Change itself had facilitated the Council's growth significantly. Once becoming a Slayer became a gift and a burden shared by thousands rather than just one, the inevitable collaboration that followed was incredibly efficient.

Working with witches, benign demons and the families of Slayers created ongoing sources of income both in the demon and human worlds. New Watchers were found and trained, and ancient writings thought long since destroyed were rediscovered. Knowledge was re-absorbed, communication was enhanced, and the Council became something better than it had been before.

But over time, a unique problem developed.

In the days before The Change, there was one Slayer and many Watchers, all of whom wanted the opportunity to train and work with the Chosen One. But now the Council was faced with nothing less than an actual shortage of trained Watchers, and more Slayers than it knew what to do with.

Training schools (in the guise of boarding schools, of course) were developed for the newly-called Slayers, and the best and brightest were selected by Watchers and sent on assignments. Getting selected was essentially the means by which one "graduated" from such institutes as the Sylvester School for Girls,

while those that went too long without finding a Watcher were given ever more demeaning chores to attend to.

The oldest (and therefore worst) students at the Sylvester School were Brittany Pierce and Blaine Anderson, the boy Slayer.

Blaine had hated leaving Dalton, even though he had been isolating himself ever since finding out what he was. He had completed his junior year there while the Council had debated what to do with him, because something like this had never happened before.

Someone like *him* had never happened before.

Patrick had broken up with him about a month after Blaine's birthday, citing Blaine's lapse into wistful depression as "too boring for words."

"You used to be *fun*, Blaine," Patrick sighed, before giving Blaine back the pocket watch he had given Patrick for Christmas.

When the Sylvester School had finally agreed to take him, Blaine decided to try and look on the bright side: he may never be normal, but at least he would be around people like himself.

And at least he would be leaving Ohio. The Sylvester School was in Pennsylvania, which meant that he *was* in the Eastern States, even if it wasn't quite New York.

But at the new school, Blaine felt more alone than ever before in his life.

No one bullied him or pushed him around here, but no one got too close to him either. The Council still regarded him with an air of distrust, and his classmates seemed to take the same position.

There were no other boys around. The faculty consisted of retired Slayers and Watchers, so a handful of old men were the only other males around. When the girls realized he was gay, his one potential reason to arouse their interest quickly dissipated. Many girls were friendly to him, but he didn't have any friends.

Blaine was alone.

Until he met Brittany, that is.

Brittany was also a late bloomer. She was also one of the sweetest people Blaine had ever met. She was the absolute worst student in the entire school, but it wasn't because she lacked strength or reflexes. If anything, Brittany was one of the fastest and most graceful fighters Blaine had ever seen.

The problem with Brittany was that she trusted everyone. Vampires included.

By the time he was twenty, Blaine had managed to kill a fair few vampires in field exercises. Brittany always got distracted talking to them, and sometimes even offered them candy. Once, Blaine had seen a vampire sweetly inform Brittany that a small sip of blood from her neck would be far tastier than candy to him, and Brittany had smiled and tipped her neck toward him obligingly. Luckily, Blaine had managed to stake him before any real damage was done.

But Brittany didn't judge Blaine. She didn't hypothesize, when she thought Blaine wasn't listening, that he might actually be the creation of some evil demi-god bent on destroying all Slayers. She didn't joke that Blaine must be gay if he were something as feminine as a Slayer, and then laugh even harder when she realized that he actually *was*.

Brittany never said "I wish they could have found somewhere else for him to go. He just doesn't *belong* here."

Brittany liked Blaine because he never called her stupid. He never made fun of her when she tried to play fetch with werewolves or when she tried to wish upon stars in the presence of vengeance demons. Brittany liked Blaine so much that she happily agreed to share a dorm room with him, much to the relief of all the other Slayers, none of whom wanted to be saddled with either one of them.

So as lonely and sexually frustrated as Blaine was, having Brittany alongside him cleaning the gutters and scrubbing the toilets and preparing Headmistress Sylvester's bi-weekly colon cleanses made everything just that slight bit easier to bear. Even if Blaine was the only male slayer in the world, and even if almost no one around him seemed to trust him, and even if he was being continually punished for failing to catch the attention of a Watcher after being at the school for nearly three years, at least he had a friend.

But if there was one thing that Blaine Anderson had learned in his life, it was that nothing good ever lasted.

"Blaine?"

Blaine turned to Brittany. They were sitting on top of the little roofed area outside their dorm room, above the front entrance to the school.

"Yeah, Britt?"

"I think you're going to get a Watcher soon."

Blaine furrowed his brow. "Why do you say that?"

Brittany seemed to concentrate on the question.

"Sometimes I just know things, Blaine."

"Yeah? What things?"

"Well, I knew that Rachel was going to cry when she slayed her first vamp."

"Everyone knew that Rachel was going to cry when she slayed...slew? Is it slew? Because I..."

"I knew that that Turok-Han was going to get in through the basement in February."

Blaine considered this for a moment.

"Yeah. Yeah, you did. I guess I didn't..." Blaine stopped himself and flushed slightly. He hadn't taken her seriously at the time because he had just dismissed her ramblings as "Brittany being Brittany." But come to think of it, some of Brittany's odd comments *did* seem to have a way of coming true.

Blaine could feel her eyes on him. He turned to face her.

"Britt, maybe you've got some psychic ability. You should let Ms. Robbins test you."

Brittany sighed. "She'll just ask me what shapes are on her cards. But that's not the kind of thing I see, Blaine. I see Rachel crying, and the Turok-Han sneaking into the basement, and you getting this really cute Watcher, and me falling in love with a vampire some day."

Blaine's eyes widened. "Really c- wait. Falling in love with a vampire? Oh, Brittany, sweetie, *no*."

Brittany met his eyes resolutely. "Buffy did it."

"Um, Brittany, that was a long, long time ago. And I don't think there are any more vampires with souls out there. At least none that are single."

"Well, there aren't supposed to be any boy Slayers out there either, but there's you."

Blaine sighed. "Don't remind me. Just...please be careful, Brittany. And don't let any more vampires bite you."

"But...Slayer blood is like candy for vampires."

"Yes. And vampire fangs are like *permanent death* for Slayers, Britt."

"Not if you stake them while they're feeding on you," Brittany reasoned.

Blaine opened his mouth to reply, but settled on a slight nod. Brittany did have a point, after all.

Brittany sighed, and leaned back on her elbows. "I'm going to miss you, Blaine. Will you write to me?"

"Every day," Blaine promised, leaning back to mirror her pose. "If I am getting a Watcher. I don't know, though, Britt. I don't think anyone would want to work with me."

"It's just because you're a boy," Brittany stated firmly, not seeming to notice Blaine's wince. "You're a really good Slayer, Blaine. Even Ms. Sylvester thinks so."

"Yeah," Blaine replied dryly. "After the last field day she said I was finally turning into a real Slayer. Then she said she wanted to check and see if I was growing a vagina, because that might explain it."

Brittany giggled, then sobered very suddenly. "Wait. You didn't grow a vagina, did you?"

Blaine couldn't fight his smile. "No, Britt."

"Good. Because I'm *totally* almost out of tampons, and I'd feel bad if I didn't have enough to share."

Blaine laughed, and reached out to squeeze Brittany's hand fondly.

In moments like this one, with his only real friend, Blaine could almost believe that he was normal again.

A week later, Blaine received his letter.

The school was simply *buzzing* with the news that a Watcher had finally decided to take on the boy Slayer, and no one even bothered to keep their voices down when Blaine was within earshot.

There was intense speculation as to who it could be, most of the best-known unattached Watchers being dismissed out of hand. No one with true *prestige* would want to take on Blaine. Not when he could easily turn out to be evil and bring about the next apocalypse. Not when he could turn out to be the secret weapon of some unspeakable creature from a hell dimension.

And indeed, when Blaine found out the name of his Watcher-to-be it was no one he had heard of.

That didn't bother Blaine, though. Whoever this man was, he was willing to take a chance on Blaine. He was willing to put aside all gossip and speculation and train him to become a *real* Slayer. A *professional* Slayer. And though Blaine would have preferred not to be a Slayer at all, he would rather be a well-trained professional than a Sylvester School drop-out.

Blaine and Brittany both cried as they packed Blaine's belongings, and Blaine repeated his promise to write her every day.

"And now that I'll be a real Slayer I'll be getting a stipend, Britt. Maybe I can save up enough to have you come visit."

Brittany raised her right fist, and extended her pinky. Blaine wrapped his own pinky around it to seal the promise.

They were sitting on their little patch of roof, waiting for the representative for Blaine's new Watcher to arrive, when a very stylishly dressed young man emerged from the back seat of a town car.

Blaine leapt up excitedly. "I think that's him, Britt. I can't believe this is finally happening."

Brittany hugged him.

Blaine swung through the window and back into his dorm room, taking one last nervous look around.

"I think I have everything...Oh, Brittany, I wonder what I should say? Where do you think I'll be stationed? I wonder what the threat level is there? Do you think it will be mostly vampires, or will it be demons? Maybe it's werewolf rehabilitation? I *hope* it isn't just werewolf rehabilitation. That seems so boring. I wonder-"

Blaine froze at the knock on the door. Brittany walked over and opened it, smiling.

The man – boy? – on the other side looked momentarily confused, until he glimpsed Blaine behind her.

Blaine stared at him. This guy was...well, he was *pretty*. He was probably the prettiest boy Blaine had ever seen. At first glance he looked like a teenager, but he carried himself like someone much older. He was dressed immaculately and his hair was perfectly coiffed without looking over-styled. He had full pink lips and the loveliest eyes...

"Blaine Anderson?"

Blaine blinked, forcing himself back into the moment.

He needed to get a grip. Yes, it had been a very long time since he had been in the same room as a good-looking man in roughly his age group, but he needed to make a good impression, not drool like a horny schoolboy.

Blaine cleared his throat. "Um, yes. That's me. Nice to meet you."

Blaine held his hand out. The man shook it.

"Nice to meet you too, Blaine. I'm Kurt Hummel."

Blaine froze.

"Um, pardon me?"

The man looked confused. "I thought you'd be expecting me. I'm-"

"*You're* Kurt Hummel?"

The man – Kurt – raised an eyebrow. "I believe that's what I said, yes."

"But...but I thought Kurt Hummel was my *Watcher's* name!"

"Yes, that would be correct."

"But you...you're...how *old* are you?"

Kurt pursed his lips. "I'm twenty-one."

"How are you old enough to be a *Watcher*?"

Kurt's face took on a haughty expression. "Well, Mr. Anderson, if you must know, I suppose I'm considered something of a prodigy. Now, if you're quite finished *gawking*, we're on a bit of a schedule, so..." Kurt gestured to Blaine's packed belongings.

Blaine nodded mutely and began gathering his things.

He turned away from Kurt, cheeks burning. So this was what the Council was going to do. Instead of letting Blaine waste away at the Sylvester School they were going to unload him on this *boy* – this *joke* of a Watcher. Blaine was going to be even more of a laughing-stock than ever, but at least he wouldn't be around to see all of the amused faces.

In fact, with a Watcher like this, Blaine would be lucky to be around much longer, period. He would be lucky if he and Kurt lasted a month in the field.

Brittany smiled at him as she hoisted his trunk effortlessly onto her shoulder.

"I told you he was cute!" She chirped, bouncing down the hall after Kurt. Blaine collected his backpack and wheeled suitcase and followed, sighing.

It was official. He'd need a *telescope* to see normal from where he was going.

Chapter Two

Dear Brittany,

Well, I'm back in Ohio. As if this day couldn't get any worse.

I haven't even unpacked yet. I wish phone and computer access wasn't restricted to the top students - I really want to see your face or even just hear your voice, Britt. I haven't even been gone overnight yet and I already miss you so much!

Oh, well. I suppose hand-written letters have their own sort of old-fashioned charm.

I don't think Kurt likes me. I'm honestly getting the impression that he regrets agreeing to take me on in the first place. If I weren't so desperate for a real slaying gig I would probably have refused his offer as soon as I saw how old he was, but that's probably why he chose me. He knew I was in no position to be picky.

Why the Council has allowed this man to become active is beyond me. Maybe he knows his demons. I doubt he's much use in the field. He looks like he weighs all of two pounds and I bet he might start crying or something if his hair got slightly mussed in a fight.

God, I'm really whining aren't I?

I'm sorry. Maybe I should tell you a bit about my assignment.

Well, we're in Lima, Ohio, which is uncomfortably close to where I grew up. Apparently there's been some pretty intense demonic activity here lately, and there's even speculation that another Hellmouth might be trying to open up somewhere around here. I'm the only Slayer in Lima, but they've stationed others in most of the surrounding towns because they want to keep the area covered. No one's telling me much yet, but the Council is definitely paying attention to northwestern Ohio right now.

*I'm living with Kurt, in his family home. His father, stepmother and brother all live here too. I know it's a work-house; the whole family is involved in the Council and they have the means to board allies and host meetings and all, but the fact that we're living with Kurt's parents just seems to emphasize how **young** he is.*

Kurt's father used to be a Watcher too. Now he's a mechanic, and it's not even a front. He really is a mechanic. I think there's a story there, but I get the sense that it isn't something I should bring up.

I don't know, Britt. I know I really shouldn't be complaining - at least I have a job, and you're stuck sanding down Ms. Sylvester's plantar warts. I really hope you get a Watcher soon too. And while I wouldn't wish Ohio on anyone, it definitely wouldn't suck if you ended up somewhere nearby.

I miss you.

I should probably go to bed now, though. Kurt's waking me up at five to start training tomorrow.

Love and kisses,

Blaine

xoxo

Kurt really wasn't sure what to expect from this boy.

He knew, from talking to faculty at the Sylvester School, that Blaine was bright and strong and had the makings of a fantastic Slayer. He also knew that many of them were still a bit uncomfortable with the boy realizing his potential, given that no one knew why he, and no other boy in the world, had been called. It was the sort of thing that smacked of some type of planned interference with the Slayer line, and things of that nature never seemed to end well.

But Kurt felt for the boy. He knew what it was to be judged and to feel different.

He also knew some things about Blaine that very few others in the world knew, and it was important that he keep it that way.

It was also important to make sure that Blaine got really good really fast. And despite the doubt in Blaine's eyes when he looked at Kurt, Kurt knew that he was just the man for the job. And perhaps it was possible that Blaine had hurt his pride a tiny bit.

And perhaps Kurt was going to have to make him eat his words.

Blaine had woken easily, inhaling the tangerine and mug of green tea that Kurt had laid out for him before his morning run. Kurt rode his bicycle alongside Blaine, impressed but not surprised at what excellent shape the boy seemed to be in.

After the run, they settled down to a proper breakfast while Kurt discussed the day's plans with Blaine.

"All right, so we'll do some exercises this morning to test your reflexes and reaction speed. After lunch we can delve into some of the more mental disciplines you'll need to get ahold on, and then maybe we'll go down to the tire shop. Do you know much about cars?"

Blaine raised an eyebrow. "Uh, cars? I wasn't aware there was an automotive component to slaying."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "You need a day job, Blaine. Or at least the appearance of one. Unless you'd prefer to just get "slayer" tattooed on your forehead."

"Uh, I think that might appear a little ostentatious. And no, I don't know much about cars. I mean, I know how to drive..."

Kurt sighed impatiently. "It's fine, I'll teach you. You only really need to learn a few basic things anyway. Plus, my dad has something for you at the shop, so we should definitely make time to go there today."

Kurt gave him a small, enigmatic smile. "I think it's something you'll like."

Blaine looked genuinely intrigued. "Really? What?"

Kurt smirked slightly. "Finish eating and change into something a bit more...um...form-fitting. I need to see how your muscles move." Kurt could feel himself blush. He didn't like it. He was a professional, and the fact that Blaine was an extremely attractive boy with *slayer strength* was certainly not something to blush over.

Kurt stood up, wiping his mouth delicately with a napkin before carrying his plate over to the sink. "Meet me in the training room in ten minutes," he ordered coolly, before heading downstairs to set things up for Blaine.

The training room was in the basement of the Hummel-Hudson house, and had been used for Slayer training since long before Kurt was born.

Kurt opened the weapons chest and began assembling the relevant weapons on a small table in the corner, near the basement door. Nothing fancy today; mostly Kurt just needed to see where Blaine's strengths were and what areas needed the most work. He laid out wooden stakes and nunchucks, and leaned a pair of bo staffs against the table. There was also a hay-stuffed model of a humanoid figure, a large kick bag hanging from very sturdy chains, and a pommel horse without handles already out. Kurt dragged a mat to the center of the room and surveyed the area with satisfaction.

After getting everything ready, Kurt ducked behind the shoji screens set up across the room from the door, and quickly changed into his own training gear. He heard Blaine coming down the stairs and called that he would be right out.

"You might want to avoid that," Kurt said evenly as he walked out from behind the screens and absolutely did *not* let his eyes linger on Blaine's obscenely tight black leggings and thin, fitted tank top. After all, Kurt was wearing something very similar, and it wasn't as if Blaine was leering at *him*.

Was he?

"Avoid what?" Blaine asked, a note of defensiveness already creeping into his voice as he quickly looked away from Kurt, his cheeks looking slightly pink.

"I could hear you clomping down the stairs, and my hearing is nowhere as good as a vampire's. Slaying isn't all about brute strength or even endurance, Blaine. There's a subtlety to it as well. You need to stay battle-ready at all times. You need to master the art of stealth."

Blaine actually *rolled his eyes*. Kurt clenched his fists at his side in frustration.

"I'm serious about this, Blaine. I know what I'm talking about."

Blaine sighed and looked at Kurt. "Look, Kurt, I'm sure you've got a brilliant mind, and I know you've been in the fold longer than I have, but I'm a *Slayer*. And I've been at Slayer school for almost three years. You can probably just..." Blaine swept his hand out to gesture at the training space in front of him. "What I mean is...and I *really* mean no disrespect, but you can probably just let me practice, and when it comes to *research* and incantations and all that, I'm sure you'll be very helpful."

Blaine looked away, flinching against Kurt's searing glare.

"I just...I know what to do. My *body* knows what to do. I was built for this. You can't be more than a few months older than me, and I can't imagine that you've managed to learn more about actual *fighting* than-

"You're wrong."

The words were said with such force that Blaine whipped his head around to look back at Kurt, stunned.

"You may have the innate talent to do this, and you may have been training with Sue Sylvester's ladies for the past three years, but you're wrong if you think I don't know more about fighting than you do. And you're wrong if you think I'm not good enough to be a Watcher because I'm too young. I suppose I thought you might have had enough experience with people making assumptions about you that you wouldn't do the same to me. But..." Kurt shrugged.

Blaine's eyes were swimming with guilt. "Kurt, I didn't..."

Kurt didn't answer him. He simply moved to the table and tossed him one of the bo staffs. Blaine caught it easily. Kurt took the other staff and walked over to the mat in the middle of the room. He gestured for Blaine to join him.

Kurt held the staff out in front of himself defensively. "All right," he said. "Come at me."

Blaine looked incredulous.

"Let's spar," Kurt insisted.

"Kurt, I don't-"

"Are you afraid?" Kurt asked, his lips curling into a smirk.

"I just don't want to hurt you."

"Blaine Anderson, I am your Watcher, and I am telling you to *attack*. If you can't follow my simple instructions, I'll send you back to the Sylvester School so fast you won't even-"

Blaine lunged forward. Kurt slipped out of his path like fast-moving liquid and ducked, kicking across Blaine's ankles and making him lose his footing. Blaine fell onto his back with a grunt, staring up at Kurt in surprise.

"Why, Blaine, *thank* you for not hurting little old me. You're such a *gentleman*," Kurt cooed, his voice dripping with venom.

Blaine jumped to his feet and surged forward again. Kurt continued to evade his attempts to disarm him; if Blaine could just manage to make contact, he would have Kurt pinned to the mat in seconds, no question about that. But Kurt was simply too quick for him. He anticipated Blaine's moves easily. When Blaine was finally on the verge of simply throwing his staff to the ground and hurling himself at Kurt bodily, Kurt caught his staff under Blaine's and pulled hard, his biceps straining, wrenching the staff out of Blaine's grip and sending it flying.

Blaine noticed that Kurt's lean arms were actually much more muscular than they had first appeared.

Before Blaine could completely process the fact that Kurt had actually disarmed him, Kurt thrust his own staff forward toward Blaine's neck, Blaine catching the blunt end in his fist a hair-breadth's distance from his throat.

He stared at Kurt. "How..." Blaine finally muttered, letting the inquiry trail off. He was truly at a loss for words.

"Piece of advice, Blaine," Kurt said, his face cool as ice water as he smoothed his hair. "*Never* make assumptions about what another person is or is not capable of without gathering evidence first."

Blaine dropped his gaze to the floor, looking abashed.

"Now. If you had been facing a vampire with that skill level, I think we both know you would be lunch by now. So. Are you ready to stop wallowing in self-pity over getting stuck with me and maybe actually give me a chance to make you into an incredible Slayer?"

Blaine looked back up, meeting Kurt's eyes. Kurt looked smug and aloof, but also...also almost hopeful.

Like maybe he *wanted* to work with Blaine. Like maybe Kurt really did want to help Blaine excel, rather than just humiliate him.

Blaine swallowed. "Yes," he whispered.

Quinn sighed.

"Really, Tina? Boy *again*?"

Tina looked unimpressed. "I thought you liked boys."

"I like boys," Dave supplied hopefully, eyeing the cowering college student that Tina had dragged back to the lair. He was cute. He had pale skin and big, terrified eyes.

Dave liked that in a boy.

"Shut up, Dave. Of course I like boys, but it seems like *all* we eat anymore. At least when Santana was here-"

"Don't." Tina's expression darkened considerably. "It's been almost thirteen years, Quinn. And if you're so hell-bent on girls all of a sudden, why don't *you* pick up dinner for a change?"

Quinn sniffed. "I'm doing research," she said loftily, gesturing to the flashing computer membrane on the wall before her.

Tina peered at the screen. "Any developments?"

Quinn smiled slightly. "Yes, actually, but I don't know that I'm up to discussing it on an empty stomach."

"Oh, for – *here*," Tina huffed, shoving the boy to Quinn. He whimpered and opened his mouth to voice fresh protests before he saw Quinn's vamp face and started to scream instead.

Quinn bit down hard, a bit of blood spurting up and smattering her cheeks lightly as she began to drink.

"Hey, don't drain him. Save some for us too."

Quinn took one last pull on the boy's artery before lifting her head and shoving him toward Tina, who latched onto his wrist.

Quinn licked her lips and wiped off her face, licking her fingers clean.

"We need more than just the one, Tina," she said. "He looks like he's ninety-five pounds soaking wet. In what hell dimension is *that* enough to share?"

Tina passed the boy to Dave. Dave always went last because he simply didn't have the self-control that the women did. It was probably because it had only been three years since Dave had been turned. It probably also had something to do with the fact that Dave had still been in the closet when he was turned, and hadn't gotten over his newfound ability to actually *feast* on pretty boys.

Dave wrapped his large hands around the boy's frail shoulders and bit down on the opposite side of his neck from where Quinn had fed, letting out a low growl as he devoured the boy.

"Perils of a small town, Quinn dear," Tina answered. "We can't arouse too much suspicion."

Quinn sighed. "Remind me again why we left Chicago?"

Tina stared at her evenly. "You know why. Now tell me what you found."

"Well. Two things. Our source at the Sylvester School tells me that they're already into phase two. So we should definitely prepare ourselves. And..."

"And?"

Quinn's smile spread across her face slow and cold, alighting her features with a malicious beauty.

"And I think I found the Summers boy."

Chapter Three

By the time he and Kurt made their way into Hummel Tires & Lube that afternoon, Blaine was feeling thoroughly humbled.

Kurt knew his stuff. Blaine didn't know *how* Kurt knew so much about...well...*everything* related to slaying, but it was clear that he did. Kurt could fight, Kurt could do basic spellwork, Kurt could read Latin, Sanskrit and ancient Sumerian, and Kurt had even begun to teach Blaine a very effective meditation technique to help improve his focus.

Also, Kurt filled out his snug-fitting training apparel quite nicely. Especially after a few hours of sparring when he was all sweaty with exertion, the fabric of his sleeveless t-shirt downright *clinging* to his well-defined chest.

Not that Blaine had noticed.

They had both showered and changed before lunch, and just when Blaine was beginning to get fidgety with all the reading and lecturing in the afternoon (and Kurt had him actually *taking notes*, and told him to expect a *quiz* by the end of the week), Kurt had looked at the clock and announced that it was time to head to the tire shop.

Blaine really, really liked Burt Hummel.

It was fairly obvious to Blaine that Kurt was gay, though neither of them had specifically disclosed that information to one another yet, and Burt seemed nothing but unabashedly fond and proud of his son.

Their closeness made Blaine slightly jealous. He hadn't even told his parents that he was back in Ohio.

But it wasn't just his relationship with Kurt. Burt also made Blaine feel welcome instantly. What could have been a very awkward period of adjustment was made exponentially more comfortable by Burt's easy manner. When he had met Blaine the night before he had clapped him on the shoulder and said "It's nice to finally have another Slayer in the house. It's been too long. I've missed it," before giving Blaine a brief, friendly squeeze and walking into the kitchen to get himself a beer.

He had offered one to Blaine too, but Kurt had glared at him, reminding his father that Blaine had *training* in the morning.

Burt had shrugged. "My Slayers never seemed any worse for wear for kicking back a cold one every now and then, but hey – what do *I* know, right?" He had responded, sending Blaine a wink and a smile.

Today, seeing Burt was once again a nice break from Kurt's serious intensity, and he walked over to greet them as they entered the shop, wiping his hands off on a rag.

"So, Blaine, I hear we're going to be putting you to work soon?" Burt asked after giving each boy a swift, firm hug with plenty of back-slapping.

"Uh, yeah. But like I told Kurt, I don't really know anything about..."

Burt waved the sentiment away with his hand. "You'll be fine. Sylvester said you were bright. Trust me, we'll have you rebuilding carburetors and pressurizing solar cells within the month. Right, Kurt?"

Kurt looked a bit skeptical, but forced his face into a tight smile when his father fixed him with a pointed look.

"Right, Dad."

But Blaine was only half paying attention. Ms. Sylvester had said he was *bright*?

Well, that was definitely something.

"So, Kurt. You bring Blaine to show him his new toy?"

Kurt's face brightened considerably at this. "Yeah. Is it ready?"

"Just gave it a final tune-up myself this morning. Purring like a kitten."

Blaine's eyes widened. "You...you're giving me a *car*? I can't accept-"

"Not exactly," Kurt assured him. "Come on."

Blaine followed Kurt and Blaine through the shop, waving to Finn and Carole along the way, both of whom also seemed to work there.

They ducked under cars on lifts and wound their way toward the back of the shop, where an object was draped in oilcloth.

Kurt ran over to it and swept the cloth away with a dramatic flourish, revealing a motorcycle.

A shiny, red *beautiful* motorcycle.

Blaine stared at it.

"Well?" Burt asked, clapping Blaine on the shoulder. "What do you think?"

What Blaine thought was that neither he nor the bike was likely to survive him riding it, but he figured that probably wasn't the best way to express his gratitude.

"It's...it's *amazing*. But I can't...I mean, you can't...it's just so..."

Kurt laughed, and Blaine couldn't help but smile at the sight. He looked so lovely with his eyes warmed up like that.

"It's all right Blaine. I'll teach you how to ride it. I think you'll find it easier than you may expect."

Blaine eyed the machine, and then gave Kurt a dubious look.

"Really. Slayers and motorbikes...it's really the perfect vehicle for you. A lot of Watchers are gifting their Slayers with them these days. They're fast, they run forever on a few well-placed solar cells and a backup tank, you can fit into tight spaces that cars can't if you're ever being pursued, and this one is even designed for superior off-roading."

Kurt leaned back against the bike, running his fingers across the handlebars with something akin to reverence.

"Besides," he added, looking up at Blaine, "with your reflexes, Blaine, your body was *born* to ride this."

Blaine couldn't suppress a smirk at that, and Kurt suddenly went beet-red, swiftly moving away from the bike and clearing his throat.

"It's beautiful," Blaine murmured, realizing he was still looking at Kurt. He quickly directed his gaze back to the bike.

"Yeah, Kurt helped restore it," Burt informed him proudly. "You should have *seen* the thing when we hauled it in here. Rusted bucket of bolts that hardly ran."

Blaine looked at Kurt with unmasked awe. "Is there *anything* you're not good at?" he asked.

Kurt's face, which had started to recover from its earlier blush, reddened once again.

"He got it from his mom," Burt said, ruffling Kurt's hair. Blaine forced himself not to laugh at the look of sheer indignation on Kurt's face as he hastily smacked his father's hand away and attempted to smooth his hair back into submission.

By the time Kurt and Blaine headed back to the house for dinner, Blaine was sore, dirty, and his jeans were ripped.

But at least he had finally gotten the hang of the bike.

Kurt wasn't the least bit surprised by Blaine's progress, though Blaine definitely was. But Kurt was right. Apparently his body *was* made to ride.

And once he'd really gotten the hang of it, he couldn't pretend that he hadn't felt a jolt of something nearly electric running through him as Kurt slipped behind him and wrapped his arms around his waist tightly.

And Blaine had gunned it, all the way home.

He couldn't get over the exhilaration of whipping forward almost full-throttle, a feeling so much like flying, so wild and unrestrained and yet so *controlled*, that Blaine had lost himself in intensity.

It was so similar to the way he had felt on the few occasions when he had really lost himself in the slaying during field exercises at school. He simply let go, and let that indefinable current of *something* have free reign inside his body. That current that he had never felt before the dreams began, but could no longer remember living without. It was almost as if the rest of the world slowed down and everything he did, every move he made, was *perfect*.

So by the time he and Kurt arrived at the house for dinner, Blaine was sore, dirty and his jeans were ripped, this was true.

He also felt fantastic.

As strange as it was simply moving in with another family like this, Blaine was fairly certain that he could get used to living in the Hummel-Hudson home.

He already knew that he liked Burt, and Kurt was definitely growing on him. But seeing them with Finn and Carole just made sense of everything.

Separately, all four were lovely people. But together, they were beautiful.

The way that Kurt and Finn sniped at each other good-naturedly, the comfort that the boys had in challenging their parents while obviously respecting them immensely, the way that, in the truest sense possible, Carole and Burt were *partners*.

Blaine turned his head away in embarrassment lest his slightly damp eyes draw attention. It was just so much. It was *family*.

It was something Blaine had never really had. Not like this.

"Dude, you're a guy Slayer? That's *awesome*," Finn enthused, trying valiantly to keep his semi-chewed food contained in his mouth while he spoke.

Kurt looked at him in horror. "Finn, *how* many times? Swallow, *then* speak. Eating and speaking should never exist in tandem."

Finn rolled his eyes but swallowed his food and took a large gulp of milk, wiping his mouth with the back of his sleeve. Blaine could practically *feel* Kurt's disgust radiating off of him.

"So are you, like, stronger than girl Slayers? Because you know, guys are usually stronger than girls, so..."

Kurt groaned. "Please tell me you did *not* actually ask that."

Blaine laughed lightly. "Uh, no. I mean, there are some that I am stronger than, but there were plenty of girls at the Sylvester School that were stronger than me. But it isn't just about strength," Blaine added, his eyes darting to Kurt with a slightly self-deprecating smile. "There's a lot more to being a good Slayer than that."

"You bet your ass there is," Burt asserted. "My first Slayer was a little slip of a thing, practically scared of her own shadow. She wasn't the strongest I've seen by far, but she was one of the best. Quick, smart, *brave*." Burt looked at Blaine. "She made it all the way to retirement. Best thing a Watcher can hope for."

Carole rolled her eyes. "Yes, Burt, we all know how much you like to brag about Emma."

Blaine looked up from his meal. "Emma? Not...I mean...you don't mean Emma Pillsbury?"

Burt, Carole and Kurt all froze, forks clattering. Finn continued eating, utterly oblivious.

Carole shot Burt an apologetic look. He seemed to ponder something for a moment before looking at Blaine. "Yeah," Burt answered slowly. "You know Emma?"

"Um, yes," Blaine answered, fidgeting slightly. "She's the one that found me after I was called. But she's...she's Matriarch of Western Ohio. She was *your* Slayer?"

Burt and Kurt shared a moment of intense, nonverbal communication before Kurt turned to Blaine.

"She was, Blaine. But...well, it's complicated, but we *really* need to keep that between us, okay? Just- it can't leave this table."

Blaine stared back at Kurt in confusion. "Um, all right...I...I guess..."

Kurt glanced back at Burt again. "I will explain it to you, Blaine, just...not right now, okay?"

Blaine noticed that Kurt was glancing at Finn out of the corner of his eye.

"You too, Finn," Carole said firmly.

"Yeah, all right, but- I mean, why? We all know Burt and Ms. Pillsbury are friends. We all knew your first Slayer's name was Emma. It's not rocket science. What's the big deal?"

"The big deal is that if that information got out to the wrong people it could get us all killed, Finn," Kurt snapped. "Do I need to go get the silver bullets?"

Finn paled. "Hey, dude, no need to get personal-"

"Boys." The voice was soft and calm, but carried an unmistakable weight of authority. They both immediately fell silent and looked at Carole.

"This is a very serious and important conversation that we will all have as a family when the time is right. And that includes you too, Blaine, you are a part of this family now. But please trust me when I tell you that you two are safer not knowing the details of this right now." She looked pointedly at Blaine and Finn. "But please believe me when I tell you that this is serious, and that it is very important that you not repeat what you know. All right?"

Blaine and Finn both nodded.

"Now," Carole added, her face brightening, "anyone want dessert? I've got all the fixings for make-your-own-sundaes in honor of Blaine's first official day as a Slayer."

"Yes!" Finn cried out joyfully, punching his fist into the air.

Blaine awoke just before sunrise, lying in his bed and staring at the ceiling. Kurt had told him to go ahead and sleep in today – tonight he would start patrolling, and they would both be up very late.

Blaine stared around the room. It was simply furnished and had blank walls. Blaine wondered if the Hummel-Hudsons would mind if he put some posters up or something.

Finding himself too restless to sleep, Blaine got up and headed for the staircase. Maybe he could get in a bit of practice. The basement was sound-proofed, after all, and a bit of physical exertion might wear him out enough to get in another few hours of shut-eye.

He paused at the top of the stairs, hearing the murmuring of voices below. Remembering Kurt's admonishment about his loud descent into the training room the previous day, Blaine practiced his stealth. He crept down the smooth wooden staircase noiselessly, pleased that the owners of the voices didn't seem to hear him.

As he got closer, it became clear that the voices belonged to Burt and Kurt. They were in the kitchen. Blaine was just about to join them, when he realized that the tone of their conversation seemed tense. Not exactly meaning to eavesdrop, he moved closer to the door. It was halfway open, but Blaine was definitely shielded from view.

When he heard Burt say what was unmistakably Blaine's name, he stopped pretending not to listen, and instead leaned in as close as he dared.

"I *know* Dad," Kurt was saying, sounding agitated. "It's just...what if it's safer for him somewhere else? The last thing I want to do is put him in even more danger than he's in already."

"Kurt, I don't think there is anyplace safer. He needs to be with people who know what's going on. People who know who he *is*."

"But Emma-"

"He can't stay with Emma! For God's sake, Kurt, the boy needs a *Watcher*. And frankly, it makes me feel a little better knowing there's a Slayer in the house. He isn't the only one who's in danger."

Kurt sighed. "Dad, we've been 'in danger' for the past thirteen years. Do you really think they still-"

"Yes. Yes I do, Kurt. Thirteen years is *nothing* for a vampire grudge. Now, it's like I said. I want you sticking to that boy like glue. You need each other. You need to keep each other safe."

"But what about you? You're the one that actually laid the curse, Dad. If anyone needs protection, it's you. You're still credentialed. You could-"

"No, Kurt. If it comes down to it, I've had a good run. You're young. Your safety is more important."

"That's ridiculous!"

Burt lowered his voice significantly. Blaine leaned closer to the door to make out the words.

"It's what your mother would have wanted," Burt said softly. "Please, Kurt. If we're lucky, then we'll all get out of this alive. But you and Blaine...you and Blaine are the most important. The prophecy..."

"We don't even have a complete translation for the prophecy, Dad. We're doing all this on a hunch and a few educated guesses."

"You have something better to go on?"

Kurt sighed. "No. I just wish we had more *resources*. If we could just tell the Council..."

"You know we can't do that."

"I know. I just wish I knew who we could trust."

"We can trust each other. And Will and Emma. I'm not quite sold on Lauren and her boys yet, but it's a start."

Kurt sighed. "Yeah, it is."

There was a moment of silence. Blaine forced himself to start moving back toward the staircase to avoid being discovered. He stopped in his tracks when he heard Kurt's voice again.

"I think we can trust Blaine too."

There was a heavy pause before Burt replied.

"You feel it too, huh?"

"I do," Kurt answered, almost too quietly for Blaine to hear.

Blaine smiled to himself and crept back up the stairs.

He climbed back into bed, stared at the ceiling once again, and thought about what he had heard.

Tina pulled back the blackout curtains ever-so-slightly, hissing at the weak vestiges of sunlight that poured through.

"At least another hour until it's safe. *Why* are we staying in this fleabag atrocity again?"

Quinn opened a single eye from where she lay on one of the double beds in the room. "Because, Tina darling, I wanted to sleep in a real bed for a change. Those dreary mausoleums and condemned mansions you're always finding us are charming and all, but I for one haven't been dead too long to appreciate indoor plumbing and electricity."

"We're *vampires*, Quinn," Tina huffed out, pacing. "We have a certain image to maintain, and this certainly doesn't-"

"No. It doesn't. The image *I'd* like to maintain includes 2,000 thread-count Egyptian cotton sheets and French bellboys for breakfast. This is a compromise. Now stop whining and lie down."

Tina glared at her. "I can't sleep."

"Well then at least shut up," Quinn sighed. "Some of us would like to get some rest before we're back on the road again, and we can't *all* sleep through irritating monologues."

Both women glanced to the second bed, where Dave was splayed, sleeping like he was more dead than he actually was.

"I swear, I don't know why we even bother with him," Tina muttered.

"He's useful," Quinn sighed. "For now, anyway."

As if on cue, Dave twisted onto his other side, and mumbled something in his sleep. Quinn was on her feet inside of two seconds.

"Wait, *what* did he say?"

Tina shrugged. "He always talks in his sleep."

"Yes, but it sounded almost like he said-"

"Hummel," Dave muttered. "*Fuck*, Hummel, you look so..." he fell back into mumbles.

The two women didn't even have time to exchange glances before they were shaking him awake.

"*Fuck's sake!*" Dave bellowed, shoving them away from him.

"Dave," Tina said seriously, folding her arms across her chest. "Who is Hummel?"

Dave's eyes went wide. "What? I...I don't know what you're..."

"Cut the crap, Dave," Tina snapped. "You were talking in your sleep. This is important. This could help us. Who were you talking about?"

Dave avoided her eyes. "Just some kid I went to high school with."

"Friend of yours?" Quinn asked.

"Uh, not exactly."

"What was his first name?"

Dave seemed to come as close to blushing as was physically possible for him.

"Kurt."

Tina almost jumped up and down in excitement. "It was in Ohio, wasn't it?"

Dave looked suspicious. "Yeah. How the hell did you know that?"

"Dave," Quinn said softly, sliding beside him on the bed. "How would you feel about a little reunion between you and Kurt?"

Dave stared at her, uncomprehending. "You'd take me to see Hummel? Why?"

Tina smiled, perching on the edge of the bed. "Dave, you've been with us for a while now. I think it's time we filled you in on a few things. The first being that we've been looking for your friend Kurt for a very long time."

Dave stared at her. "Can I have him?" He blurted. "Uh, I mean...can I turn him?"

Tina and Quinn exchanged wicked smiles.

"Dave," Quinn said, her voice nearly a purr. "Of course you can. But we want to have some fun with him first too. Now I want you to tell us *all* about him."

Dave's face broke into a slow, wide grin.

He couldn't *wait* to get back to Lima.

Chapter Four

Dear Blaine,

I think Kurt likes you. But you have to be nice to him. I don't feel like people have always been nice to him. I had a dream about him last week and he was a little boy and he was crying because none of the other little boys would play with him. It was really sad.

I have a new roommate but I think she's strange. She never trains with us and she spends lots of time in the labs with the witches. I threw her a box of animal crackers the other day and she didn't even catch it. It hit her in the eye and she got mad at me.

I don't think she's a Slayer and I don't know why she's here.

I asked Ms. Sylvester about it yesterday and she made me clean her toilet with my toothbrush. And then she made me brush my teeth. Her toilet water is blue so I thought maybe it would taste like that blue Kool-Aid, but it doesn't.

Blue toilet water tastes bad, Blaine. Like, really bad. Don't ever put your toothbrush in it.

I miss you. You're my best friend, and I don't like being away from you. Things feel weird here and something bad is going to happen soon, but whenever I talk to anyone else about it they just tell me I'm crazy.

Maybe I am crazy.

I'm going to try to do better in class so I can talk to you on the computer. I like watching you smile because it makes me smile too.

*Smile, Blaine. You're a real Slayer now, and you have a nice family to live with, and you're fighting evil for **money**. I'm proud of you.*

Love,

Brittany

xoxo

P.S. I dreamt about my vampire lover last night. I think I might have caught gay from you, but I don't care because she's really pretty. I hope I get to meet her soon. Maybe if I bring my camera to bed with me tonight I can send you a picture.

Being the newest Slayer in western Ohio meant that Blaine got stuck with some of the least sought-after tasks on the Slayer roster.

After living with the Hummels for almost two weeks, the full moon was upon them and Blaine was assigned to werewolf patrol at the Puckerman estate.

Blaine was familiar with werewolf history, particularly over the past hundred years, from his classes at the Sylvester School. It used to be that most werewolves either roamed free, posing a threat to society, or thrashed about in cages, causing long-term mental and emotional problems, when the moon was full. When the Council began to reorganize itself after The Change, the issue of how to handle werewolves was a complicated one. They weren't demons; they were living mortal creatures with souls. They were, essentially, still human. But the danger *had* to be contained.

As the conversation continued, several strong, charismatic werewolves emerged as leaders and advocates for their kind. They began organizing themselves into packs, a practice that had been lost for centuries. Soon they allied themselves with the council and established territories in which they could roam free and safe during their change.

The Puckerman estate was one such territory. Eliza Puckerman was a wealthy widow whose only son had been bitten at a young age. She had taken it upon herself to see that he have the best life a young werewolf could have, and she had spared no expense. The Wolf Park was about three hundred acres of lush forest and grassy meadows, located on the outskirts of Lima. On the three nights surrounding the full moon each month, every werewolf within traveling distance would be there.

Including Finn.

It hadn't exactly come as a surprise; Kurt's constant threats and jokes concerning silver bullets and silver knives and basically all manner of injury to Finn's person with silver weaponry of any kind had tipped Blaine off, as had Finn's increasingly agitated mood as the full moon approached.

At first Blaine couldn't understand why it was such an unpopular assignment. Werewolf tracking and suppression had been one of his favorite assignments at school. It was an opportunity to practice his Slayer skills without actually *killing* anything.

By one o'clock that morning he understood perfectly.

The Wolf Park was surrounded by a three-foot-thick brick wall that was easily fifty feet high. The entirety of the Puckerman Estate was well-equipped with trained guards toting tranquilizer guns. Blaine's job was essentially just to be there as back-up in case the shit really hit the fan.

And apparently, the shit *never* hit the fan.

And if the boredom wasn't bad enough, Kurt was trying to make him learn to read in some fucked-up demon language that hurt his eyes to look at for more than thirty seconds at a time.

The wolves, on the other hand, sounded like they were having the time of their lives.

Blaine let his head fall back against the wall with a heavy thunk. He groaned and glanced over at Kurt. Kurt was absorbed in his own book, and didn't look up from it until he felt Blaine's stare heavy on his neck.

He sighed.

"Yes, Blaine?" Kurt asked, carefully inserting his bookmark before closing the volume.

"This sucks."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "Yes, well, I *told* you it was an unpopular assignment."

"Not that. *This*." Blaine gestured to the book in his lap. "It isn't making any more sense than it did an hour ago, and it's starting to give me a migraine."

Kurt sighed heavily and leaned his head back against the wall as well, turning to face Blaine.

"Blaine, pushing through the discomfort is the only way you'll ever learn to read Kaaruguin. Once you achieve the proper level of concentration and receptivity it should arrange itself into something that makes sense to you."

"Kind of like a magic eye book created by sadistic demons in a hell dimension?"

"Actually, that's not a bad analo-"

"Kurt."

"Blaine." Kurt mirrored his impatient tone.

"Can we put the books down, maybe have a conversation?"

Kurt shrugged and carefully placed his book into Blaine's backpack, which sat between them on the ground. "All right. What do you want to talk about?"

Blaine gave a deep sigh of relief, putting his book back in the bag along with Kurt's. He smiled.

"Tell me about yourself."

Kurt cocked an eyebrow.

Blaine wrapped his arms around himself defensively and stared at his feet.

"Come on, Kurt," he muttered softly. "We're supposed to have, like, a *relationship* here. Isn't that the whole point of me living with you and your family? We can't be willing to take risks and *die* for one another if it comes down to it if we're no more than colleagues. We're supposed to bond. Or at least...that's what they taught me at school anyway." Blaine felt his cheeks flush at the naked admission, and began fiddling with a blade of grass. He could feel Kurt's eyes on him.

"Blaine, do you not...you know that you have six weeks to reject your assignment before your contract officially begins. Are you saying that maybe this isn't..."

"*Damn it, Kurt!*" Blaine snapped, surprising himself with both his tone and volume. Several wolves howled nearby as if in response. When he turned to look at Kurt again, he was staring at Blaine and looking pretty surprised himself.

"I'm sorry," he said quickly, forcing himself into a semblance of calm. Blaine knew his temper could sometimes get away from him if he didn't reel himself in in time. "I just...God, you're so *cold*, Kurt. I barely

know anything about you. I mean, your Dad practically treats me like I'm his Slayer outside of training and studying, and all you do is-

"Well, I'm sorry but the great Burt Hummel is retired, so I'm afraid you'll just have to settle for me," Kurt snapped.

Blaine stared at him for a moment before allowing his lips to curl into a partial smile.

"Ah."

Kurt narrowed his eyes. "What?"

"Well, at least this is a start. So you're afraid you won't live up to your father. That's definitely a start."

Kurt rolled his eyes and muttered something to himself. Blaine didn't catch anything outside of the word "ridiculous."

"All right, fine," Blaine continued. "I'll tell you some things about myself, maybe that will help. You haven't expressed an *interest*, sadly, but I'm going to tell you anyway."

Kurt opened his mouth as if to argue, but Blaine cut him off quickly, increasing his volume slightly.

"I'm gay. Did you know that?"

Kurt shrugged. "Yes."

Blaine stared at him. "Oh. You did? Most people tell me I'm not that obvious at first. I mean, not that there's anything wrong-"

"I know a lot about you," Kurt explained. "I've done my research. I'm not just going to take any old Slayer, and especially not a *controversial* Slayer, without knowing what I'm getting myself into."

"All right," Blaine rolled his shoulders. "What have you gotten yourself into then?"

"Pardon?"

"Tell me what you know about me."

Kurt gave him the slightest hint of a smile. "Well. I know you used to go to Dalton Academy. I know you were sent there because you were being tormented in public school and your parents could afford it. Which makes you *very* lucky, by the way. I know that you barely speak to your parents, and they don't approve of your sexual orientation. *Or* the fact that you're a Slayer, for that matter. I know that you've had a rough time of it at the Sylvester School, and you were treated like an outsider. I know that you were one of the top three students in your class academically, both at Dalton and the Sylvester School."

Blaine raised his eyebrows. He knew that was true of him at Dalton, but he was fairly sure that Kurt was sorely mistaken about his performance at Slayer school.

"Your *grades* may not have been at the top of the class, but I know that you were not graded fairly, because sadly your teachers at the Sylvester School had their judgment clouded by their own prejudices and presumptions. But I asked Sue for records of your work before I took you on, Blaine, and if you had been a girl you'd have the best Watchers in the country clawing each other's eyes out to take you on. You're an excellent fighter but you rely too much on your raw strength and some of your other capabilities are underdeveloped as a result. But you are a very quick learner. And..." Kurt looked like he was going to leave it there, but then he continued, tripping over his words slightly.

"And...well, you seem like a genuinely good person. A kind soul. I may be a cold, heartless bitch, Blaine, but I tend to read people very well."

"Hey, I never said you were a heartless bi-"

"No," Kurt cut him off with a sigh. "But I suppose you struck a nerve anyhow."

Blaine simply stared at him.

"I'm gay too, you know," Kurt added after a moment of silence.

Blaine forced himself to suppress a smile.

"Oh...um, really?" He asked, trying his hardest to feign shock. Kurt rolled his eyes.

"Oh, knock it off. I know I probably didn't even need to tell you, you've got eyes and ears, after all. I just figured that...well, since you told me..."

Kurt's arms were hanging over his bent knees, and he brought his hands together, interlacing his fingers. He stared at his hands as if they were the most fascinating things he'd ever seen.

"It hasn't been easy for me either, you know," Kurt continued softly. "I know what it's like, not to fit in anywhere. People were horrible to me at school, and the Council certainly wasn't going to pay for private school. It's a big part of why I pushed so hard to become a Watcher so early. I got my G.E.D. When I was seventeen so I could start Watcher training. Or at least that's what I told people."

"You...didn't want to be a Watcher?"

Kurt snapped his head up. "Of course I did. Actually, if you must know, I wanted to be a Slayer. But my mother disabused me of that notion quite early on. My parents' Slayers let me train with them, though. They taught me a few things."

Blaine smirked. "*A few* things? They taught you enough to put an arrogant Slayer in his place, I'd say that's more than a few things."

Kurt allowed himself a small smile. Blaine felt a tingle of pleasure race through him at the tiny treat that was a grin on his Watcher's face.

Kurt cleared his throat slightly and looked back down at his hands again, something very much like a slight blush seeming to color his cheeks. Blaine studied him for a moment before he realized what Kurt had said.

"Wait- your mother was a Watcher too?"

Kurt paused for a moment before responding. "Yeah. She was. Right up until the end."

Blaine opened his mouth to respond, when the walkie-talkie on his hip crackled to life.

"Slayer to gate seven. We have a breach. I repeat, we have a breach."

"Shit," Kurt muttered, jumping to his feet. He grabbed one of the tranq guns and tossed Blaine the other. They began walking quickly toward the gate.

Before long the voice on the other end of the walkie-talkie returned, sounding more panicked.

"Damn it, hurry! Man down! MAN DOWN!"

"We're on our way!" Blaine called into the device before he and Kurt broke into a run. As they got closer to the gate, they began to hear yelling, growling yelping and the unmistakable firing of tranquilizer guns. Blaine was so focused on getting to the gate that he almost didn't notice the large shape out of the corner of his eye, barreling directly toward Kurt.

Blaine had the wolf by the hindquarters just as it crashed down on top of Kurt, his Watcher falling to the ground with a scream. Blaine managed to wrench the creature away entirely before tossing Kurt his gun.

Hand-to-hand with a werewolf was not an easy task, but there was no way Blaine would have been able to get a decent shot at such a close range. He managed to land a roundhouse kick into the wolf's gut, gaining some temporary distance.

The creature snarled, flattening its ears and circling Blaine slowly. Blaine moved in sync with its movements, attuning himself to the wolf's movements, its stare, the feral energy rolling off of it.

He heard Kurt cock the gun.

The wolf heard it too.

Blaine dove for the animal as it started moving back toward Kurt, pinning it to the ground as it writhed and snarled, teeth snapping dangerously close to Blaine's exposed throat. He heard Kurt swearing under his breath at the missed opportunity for a clean shot.

It would have been so much easier if Blaine could just hurt the werewolf. But this was a human being – this could possibly even be *Finn* – who didn't know what he or she was doing. Werewolf suppression was delicate work, even more delicate still when there was another person to defend.

Blaine managed to gain some traction, and he leapt to his feet so that he was squarely between the wolf and Kurt. Off in the distance was more yelling and howling, and panicked-sounding nonsense was spewing from the walkie talkie that had fallen off Blaine's belt earlier in the scuffle.

Blaine kept his eyes open, but he breathed in deep. What had Kurt told him last week? Chess. Sometimes it was like chess. Blaine had rolled his eyes and figured that Kurt just wanted an excuse to play chess with Blaine in the middle of the afternoon instead of studying or training, but suddenly it made a lot of sense. Blaine considered his strategic options.

Kurt had the gun.

Kurt was also still on the ground, which could mean he was injured.

There were more wolves at the gate, people seemed to be in distress, and they had to put this wolf down *fast* before more surrounded them.

"You should always be thinking at least three moves ahead, Anderson," Kurt had said smugly after winning his fourth straight game.

Blaine turned around to face Kurt. Kurt's ankle looked twisted unnaturally, and his pale face was shining with cold sweat. His arms were shaking slightly as he tried to hold the tranq gun steady.

Kurt's eyes widened. "Blaine-"

Without moving a single other muscle in his body, Blaine kicked one leg back hard, slamming the heel of his boot into the wolf's snout hard enough to hear a sickening crunch. The human inside might be stuck with a broken nose, but that would just have to be collateral damage at this point. The animal yelped and staggered backward. Blaine flew forward and reached for the gun, which Kurt tossed to him without being told. Blaine turned swiftly and fired two tranquilizer darts into the wolf's side before throwing the gun down and scooping Kurt up into his arms. He heard the wolf hit the ground as he reached a large oak tree.

"Kurt can you- are you all right?" Blaine asked, setting him down gently at the base of the tree.

"Yeah. Yes. I just- I hurt my ankle when it landed on me, but I should be fine."

Blaine crouched down in front of him and turned, presenting Kurt with his back.

"Climb on."

"What?" Blaine could almost *hear* Kurt raising an eyebrow critically behind him.

"Climb on. *Hurry*, Kurt, I need to get to the gate. But first I need to get you somewhere safe, and I figure up there is as good a place as any." Blaine gestured to the tree.

Kurt was silent. Just as Blaine was gearing up to insist some more, he felt Kurt's arms wrap around his neck. They were still shaking a little, but he managed a firm grip regardless. Blaine reached back and hoisted Kurt up as he stood.

"Wrap your legs around me," he instructed. "Tight." Kurt did so, and Blaine leapt up to grab hold of a low-hanging branch.

If he had been on his own he easily could have swung branch to branch, nimble as a monkey, but he couldn't risk dropping Kurt, so he moved carefully. He tried not to think too much about how impressive Kurt's thigh muscles were, to be gripping against his sides like that while Blaine climbed steadily higher.

When Blaine had located a branch that seemed thick enough to be comfortable and high enough to be safe, he eased Kurt onto it.

"Well, wolves can't climb trees, so you should be all right up here. Just...try to blend into the tree, I suppose. I'll be back for you as soon as I can."

Kurt nodded and gave him an enigmatic smile. Blaine quickly began scurrying toward the ground.

"Blaine?" Kurt called, just as Blaine was on the last leg of his descent.

"Yeah?"

"That was some quick thinking. I'm impressed."

Blaine dropped to the ground and looked up at Kurt, smiling. He didn't even care that it was probably one of the biggest, silliest grins that Kurt had ever laid eyes on.

Blaine took off toward Gate seven as fast as he could after retrieving his tranq gun and walkie talkie. The yelling and howling and yelping had actually died down, replaced by a stillness that made Blaine's gut scream with panic.

Blaine approached the gate cautiously, his back pressed firmly to the wall. He moved as noiselessly as he possibly could.

The gate was shut.

There were bodies littering the ground in front of it, but the heavy iron gate was firmly and irrefutably closed. Blaine furrowed his brow. Nothing about this made any sense.

The bodies on the ground were both human and wolf. Blaine knelt down to inspect them.

There were five humans and two wolves. And they were dead, all of them. There was a fair amount of blood, and some of the humans looked a bit mauled, but there was something else.

Blaine gingerly pushed the hair away from a female guard's neck. He had never dealt with death like this before, though he had known it would only be a matter of time. He felt oddly detached, though a hard ball of something dripping with fear and sadness and anger sat heavy in his chest. It sat there as if dormant, and he knew that when (if) he was back in his room, snuggled under the blankets and nestled deeply in the illusion of safety once again, it would open like a toxic flower and let pain and guilt flow through him.

But now was not that time. Now his nerves were thrumming with focus and precision.

And now it was sinking in that this woman had not been killed by a werewolf. Blaine saw the two distinct marks on her neck revealing the true culprit.

But how had the wolves gotten out? What had-

Kurt.

Oh, God.

If there was a vampire around – or, by the looks of it, more than one vampire, Kurt would hardly be safe in a fucking *tree*. In fact, it would only serve to make him all the more deliciously helpless. Blaine cursed his own stupidity.

Blaine was back on his feet in a flash. His only thought was getting to Kurt, but his hand whipped out instinctively and caught a pale, slender wrist just as it made a grab for him.

Blaine whipped around to face the owner of the arm. He would have known she was a vampire even if her wrist hadn't been ice-cold and lacking a pulse.

She was beautiful, really. She had delicate features, a pale complexion, shoulder-length blonde hair and eyes like green ice. She was dressed beautifully but conservatively, a small gold heart on a delicate chain around her neck.

She looked as sweet as poisoned pie.

She struggled against Blaine's grip, looking more puzzled than concerned.

"Interesting," she murmured. She looked Blaine in the eye and smiled like sunshine. "What's with the strong grip, pretty thing? Were you afraid I was going to hurt you?"

"I was *afraid* that the *thing* that killed all these people might be coming back for more. Turns out I was right."

She laughed sweetly before calling out, "Tina, sweetie, you have to come see this. Dinner's talking back and it's just *adorable*."

Kurt sat nervously on his branch.

Something wasn't right, he just *knew* it.

He could hear the telltale sounds of werewolves howling and barking, but the sounds seemed to be coming from the enclosure as always. Closer to where he sat, leaves rustled in the wind and owls sang their low, haunting songs. But there were no voices. No more commotion.

Something wasn't right.

And Blaine had run off alone because Kurt had managed to get himself hurt. Blaine, who was fresh out of school and only two weeks into his training. Blaine, who Kurt should be with right now instead of sitting in this tree like a helpless child.

Kurt sighed and fumbled in his pocket for his phone. He frowned when his fingers didn't close around the ear-clip. He must have lost it when the wolf attacked him. Fabulous.

He let his head fall back against the rough trunk of the tree and sighed loudly. This was supposed to just be routine werewolf patrol. It was supposed to be a boring night. And he and Blaine had started talking and it had been...

Kurt smiled to himself for the briefest moment before his face settled back into a frown. He had let Blaine down. The very first tenet of the Watcher credo was *keep your Slayer safe*. The second was, *Never let your guard down and always be prepared*.

Kurt sighed again, his frustration at his own incompetence growing.

Beneath him he heard a soft chuckle.

Kurt froze, but let his gaze travel down to the grass below.

A cold jolt of terror raced through his veins, and Kurt gripped at a small branch beside him to keep from losing his balance and plummeting to the ground.

Because looking up at him was the source of more nightmares than Kurt could count.

Looking up at him was the one being that Kurt feared more than any demon, werewolf, or creature of otherworldly power that he had ever conceived or encountered.

Another chuckle. Kurt felt like he was going to either vomit or pass out. Possibly both.

"Hey Hummel," David Karofsky said, looking up at Kurt with a cold, hungry smirk. "How's tricks?"

Chapter Five

Blaine did his best to keep his eyes trained on the blond vampire even as another emerged from around the corner of the wall, trailing the limp form of a stocky female guard by the shoulder and licking blood off her fingers.

This second vampire – Tina, Blaine supposed, glanced at him, her face breaking into a wide grin. She flung her victim to the ground and approached them.

Tina looked much more like Blaine's idea of a vampire than the blonde one did. Even though it been drilled into him for the past three years that most vampires looked like everyday people, he had never gotten an image very like Tina out of his head.

She had long black hair that moved like liquid and wore dramatic makeup, though her black lipstick was caked with blood. Her clothes were all burgundy and black and velvet and lace, swishing around her fishnet-clad wrists and high-heeled boots while hugging her curves ruthlessly. She had beautiful cleavage, and a large and complicated pewter pendant hung from a black silk choker around her neck. Blaine was fairly certain that she would be wearing a large gothic cross instead if it wouldn't burn her flesh.

She was small, Asian and very pretty, and could probably look like one of the cutest creatures on the planet if she so desired. She and the blond vampire had that in common, and Blaine was entirely aware of just how dangerous that made them.

"Well what do we have here?" She asked in a delighted voice. "I *had* hoped you'd gotten ahold of the Slayer, Quinn, but he looks much tastier."

"Doesn't he, though?" Quinn asked, flashing Blaine a dark and flirtatious smile. "Unusually strong, though. I'm not sure what *that's* about."

Tina rolled her eyes. "Oh, please. He's barely enough for an appetizer. Don't tell me they got you with one of those tranquilizer darts, Quinny. Weakness is a bad look for you."

"I am not *weak*," Quinn snarled, wrenching her arm away from Blaine pointedly.

"Well then come on. If we're going to eat him, we'd better be fast. The Slayer is bound to show up any minute."

"Um, excuse me?"

"*What?*" both women snapped, turning to him. "You know, I think I have to disagree with what you said earlier, Quinn," Tina added. "They're *much* more adorable when they *don't* talk."

Blaine spared the two of them a brief, cold smile. "You're not going to eat me. If you try, it will end badly for you. So I suggest you just- *hey!*"

Blaine reached out just in time to grab Tina by the hair and roughly pull her away from his neck as she lunged toward him. He twisted his fist tighter and drew his arm back fast before throwing her forward so hard that she went airborne, screaming with pain. Before Tina had even hit the ground, Blaine whirled around to block a kick from Quinn, but failed to avoid a powerful uppercut to his jaw that sent him sprawling.

It was the kind of punch that would have seriously damaged a normal person. But Blaine Anderson was not a normal boy anymore. That time had long since passed.

It hurt, but it didn't really damage him. It did, however, really piss him off.

Blaine rolled onto his back and only got so far as propping himself on his elbows before Quinn was standing above him, feet on either side of his thighs, her mask of sweetness twisted into full-on vamp face.

"What the *fuck* are you?" She demanded.

"The person that's going to kill you," Blaine snapped before scissoring his legs outward, causing Quinn to stumble slightly. Blaine took advantage of this slim window of opportunity by grabbing her around the thighs and throwing her over his head. He allowed his body to follow the momentum, letting her go just in time to get his arms underneath himself and then push off in a handspring.

Blaine had less than a second to orient himself before he was blocking an attempted blow from Tina. Tina swore and paused just long enough to rip a long slit in her skirts, freeing her legs enough to kick Blaine hard in the gut with the pointed toe of her boot.

Blaine fell backward with a grunt, the wind knocked out of him. Just as he moved to get up, another foot landed squarely on his abdomen, and he found himself slammed back to the ground by one of Quinn's tasteful slate-colored pumps, the wide heel grinding down enough to restrict his ability to breathe. Blaine struggled briefly before Tina joined her, resting the stiletto heel of her boot gently on his groin.

Why the fuck hadn't he worn a cup? That should have been part of his Introduction to Slayer Safety class, for sure.

And perhaps it would have been if any other Slayer in the history of the world had needed to use one.

"All right," Quinn said softly with a radiant smile. Her face was back to its innocent china-doll perfection. "Now I believe I asked you a question, my darling boy. What. The. Fuck. *Are. You.* Tell me now, please. I get bored very quickly."

Blaine struggled to respond, if only with a *fuck you*, but he couldn't get the words out with Quinn's foot pressed into his chest like that.

Quinn laughed like a delicate chain of silver bells and eased the pressure on Blaine's chest slightly. He couldn't help but gasp loudly for lungfuls of air, but he was pretty sure he still couldn't really speak.

"Hey," Tina said suddenly. "Quinn, look." Quinn followed Tina's gaze to the broken walkie-talkie that had long since fallen from Blaine's belt.

Quinn looked back at her. "Is that...?"

"It has to be."

"But we heard a boy's voice. I thought it was the Summers boy, but..."

Both women studied him. Blaine didn't move a muscle. He didn't want to die but he really didn't want to lose his dick either.

Tina's mouth curled into a slight sneer. "He could be that boy Slayer."

Quinn laughed again, looking genuinely amused. "*Really.* Is that true, love? Are you a little Slayer boy?"

Blaine simply glared at them.

"Well." Quinn cocked her head slightly and brought a hand up to stroke her chin. "I have to admit, I pretty much wrote you off when I heard about you. I figured you were some scheme cooked up by one demon or another and you'd just destroy the Council from within for us if...well, if *someone else* didn't do it for us. But here you are, cute as a button, patrolling for werewolves and fighting vampires like a big boy for the little Watcher that could. It almost warms my heart. It probably would, if it was still beating." She glanced over at Tina.

"I call inner left thigh," Tina said quickly. Quinn raised an eyebrow at her. "Well, *look* at him," Tina defended, coming as close to a blush as she was probably able. "I mean, I never really got the Slayer fetish before, but their blood is supposed to be like *sex*. And he's hot. And he looks like he might be Eurasian."

Quinn smirked. "All right, I call neck then. We should probably do this fast before Dave gets back with our little friend. If he finds out we have a hot boy Slayer, you and I probably won't get a drop to share between us."

Blaine was on the very verge of deciding *fuck my dick, what has it done for me lately anyway*, when he heard a quick whoosh of air and Quinn jumped back from him with a noise of surprise. He gasped at the lack of pressure and swiveled his head to look at her. She stood with her fingers wrapped around a long, slender wooden arrow that was just millimeters from piercing into her heart.

Another whoosh and Tina dove for the ground as a second arrow sailed above him.

"All right, whoever you are, you just made a *very* big mis-" Quinn cut herself off by diving to the ground to join Tina as another arrow appeared, expertly aimed right at her heart.

"Fuck," Tina hissed, sounding more irritated than anything. "Did you bring a real Slayer with you too?"

"Hey!" Blaine was indignant. "I *am* a real Slayer, thank you very much. And that wasn't over. I could have turned that whole situation around just fine if I'd gotten the chance!"

"You tell them, Blaine!" Came a very loud and very distinct voice from a dark grove of trees off to the left.

Blaine's eyes widened and then he fell back to the ground with a groan. "Okay fine, kill me."

Another arrow flew at the group, aimed with such precision that Tina had to literally roll away to avoid getting hit.

"*Fuck this*," Quinn snarled. "Let's just find Dave and the Summers kid and get the hell out of here."

She leapt to her feet and took off at an incredible speed, Tina close at her heels.

"No," Blaine protested weakly. "Come back. Just...sex blood, remember? And I *am* Eurasian, I swear!"

He sighed deeply as the two vampires disappeared from view. This night could not get any worse. Of all the people to witness his failure, to *save his life* and thus demand a reasonable degree of gratitude-

No. Blaine seriously could not handle this.

He threw an arm over his eyes, as if blocking his vision would somehow reset reality.

She approached quickly, deftly, and in perfect silence. *Of course*.

He heard a deep, condescending sigh from above him.

"Oh, Blaine," Rachel Berry said without even attempting to keep the smugness out of her voice. "What would you *ever* do without me?"

It was several moments before Kurt could even speak. He clutched the tranq gun that Blaine had left in his lap so hard his knuckles turned white.

"K-Karofsky," he finally managed. "What the hell are you doing here?"

Dave shrugged, still smiling up at Kurt. His eyes were far too intense.

There was definitely something off about him.

"Just taking an evening stroll, Hummel. *Kurt*. I think I'd rather call you Kurt. It feels more...intimate."

Kurt couldn't suppress a shudder.

And the shudder turned into a gasp when Dave started to scale the tree.

"W-what are you doing?" Kurt squeaked, and suddenly he was sixteen again. He was no longer the man who sought out and faced beings of pure malevolence. He was no longer skilled with weapons or quick on his feet. He was sixteen and small and alone and absolutely petrified.

"Just coming up to say hi. Geez, Kurt, relax. No need to get your panties in a twist."

"You don't need to come up here," Kurt said quickly. "I can hear you just fine from down there."

Dave simply chuckled and continued to climb. Kurt cocked the tranquilizer gun.

Dave looked offended and possibly even a little hurt, but not particularly intimidated by the action. "Now, why would you want to point that thing at me, Hum-Kurt? Are you still hung up on that shit from high school? Because that was a *lifetime* ago." Dave settled on a branch next to Kurt's, and it seemed like he had gotten there unnaturally fast. Dave looked him in the eye and smiled again.

"Trust me, Kurt, I've changed."

If it took longer than it should have for Kurt to figure it out, it was because fear had eclipsed all rational thought. Being the son of two Watchers, Kurt couldn't even remember when he'd been in the presence of his first vampire. It had probably been before he was old enough to walk.

He knew what to look for. He knew all the signs.

Dave leaned forward, his bulky form perched on a slim branch with an unnatural level of grace.

"*Fuck*, you look good. I mean, you were hot in high school, Kurt, don't get me wrong, but now?"

Dave leaned closer, his eyes glued to the tendons of Kurt's long, pale neck. He groaned and actually *adjusted his crotch*. Kurt stared at him in horror.

"Now, Kurt..." Dave continued, his face close enough for Kurt to feel the breath on his face. Only there was no breath to feel.

"Now you look fucking *delicious*."

Kurt screamed.

Blaine was on the very verge of asking Rachel what she was doing there and how she had found him when he heard Kurt's scream.

Blaine leapt to his feet and was racing toward him before Kurt's voice had even faded. Rachel had begun some sort of monologue about her slaying prowess when Blaine bolted, and he could hear an offended "hey!" behind him before she was on his heels.

"Blaine! Slow down! You should really let me go ahead of you, this could be quite dangerous and I frankly think you're better suited to back me up right now. After all, I have been training with William Schuester for the past year and a half, and as you know he is the-" *most well-respected Watcher in Affiliated States*, Blaine said along with her in his head. He had heard this spiel at least fifty times after Rachel had gotten her letter from Schuester. The fact that she really was as good as she thought only served to make her more infuriating.

"*Blaine!*" Rachel shrieked, and Blaine couldn't help but flinch, though he didn't break stride.

"Rachel, shut up. I think they've got my Watcher!"

"They've got Kurt?" Rachel sounded genuinely upset. Blaine hadn't even realized that Rachel knew Kurt. "But surely Kurt can hold them off until we form a strategic-"

"He's hurt. He can't even walk. I left him alone in a tree with nothing but a goddamn tranquilizer gun."

Rachel was actually quiet for a moment. "That wasn't very smart, Blaine," she finally said.

"I know!" Blaine roared at her, his frustration mounting. "I thought we would just be dealing with werewolves tonight!"

Even as she sped up to run alongside him, Rachel managed a loud, dramatic sigh. "You can never make assumptions like that, Blaine. The Slayer handbook clearly states-"

"*Fuck the Slayer handbook!*" Blaine screamed. He knew he should probably be a little kinder, seeing as how Rachel had just saved his life, but all he could think about was Kurt. Kurt could be dead already, and it was all Blaine's fault. Having Rachel Berry point that out to him really wasn't helping one bit.

Blaine heard Kurt scream again, and as horrible as it was to hear, it made Blaine's heart flood with relief. Maybe they weren't too late after all.

There was a low murmur of arguing voices in the direction of Kurt's tree, and as they got closer they saw the unmistakable forms of Quinn and Tina standing on the ground. They were looking up at the tree, and Blaine could hear a deep, masculine voice coming from the branches.

Yeah, that was *definitely* not Kurt.

"Blaine!" Rachel hissed.

"Not now, Rachel, they-"

"No. *Stop.*" She surged forward and twirled slightly, coming to a stop in front of him. She held out a firm hand and then reached out her other arm to catch him when he smacked into it and started to fall.

"Blaine, I know you're worried about Kurt, and please believe me, I am too. But if we rush in there all keyed up and without a basic plan, we are going to get ourselves – and *Kurt* – killed. Now, I need you to listen to me. Are you listening?"

Blaine stared at her defiantly, but said nothing. Enragingly, she sounded like she knew what she was talking about. Finally he forced himself to nod.

"Good. Is that the tree where you left Kurt?"

Blaine nodded again.

"All right. That's good, actually. I have a pretty clear shot from here." Blaine looked at her more closely and for the first time properly registered her crossbow and the drawstring quiver of slender wooden arrows on her back. "I think Kurt is probably still up there but he isn't alone. If I distract those two, you can move around to the other side of the tree and climb up."

Blaine sighed. "Thank you, Rachel," he muttered softly. He could worry about his pride later. Right now, Rachel Berry was exactly what she'd always said she would be at Slayer school.

She was a *star*.

Rachel's overbearing expression softened, and she gave Blaine's arm a brief squeeze. "Happy to help. Now go get our boy."

Blaine smiled at her and then crept back into the shadows of a dense grove of trees. Slowly and soundlessly he moved around the periphery so that he could get to the tree unnoticed.

As he got closer, Blaine became aware of a sound other than the voices of the two vampires on the ground and who he presumed was a third in the tree. He wasn't sure what it was until he got a bit closer, and he caught a beam of moonlight shining through a gap in the foliage. It illuminated Kurt, still alive, but sobbing. His arms were wrapped tightly around himself and his eyes looked stricken and almost blank with shock. He was shaking, and there was a large man – a large *vampire* – holding Kurt in his lap. The vampire was looking at him with something almost like affection, and Blaine had never seen Kurt like this. He looked wrecked and unraveled and utterly lost. The calm iciness that Blaine had come to associate with Kurt was nowhere to be found. He looked like nothing more or less than a frightened child.

Blaine almost froze as he felt himself consumed with a tidal wave of protectiveness and rage. Something was not right here. Something far more than the things that were usually not right when vampires were involved.

Blaine forced himself to remain steady as he continued to move forward.

"Dave," Quinn was saying impatiently, "Get him down here. I think there's another Slayer around besides the boy wonder, and-" she glanced sidelong at Tina- "the boss will be *very* upset with us if we let him slip through our fingers."

"No," the vampire in the tree – Dave – replied stubbornly. "You said I could keep him, You *said*, Quinn-"

"I'm sure you can still have him after the ritual," Quinn answered with exaggerated patience. "But first we need to get him to-"

"They're going to bleed him, though!" Dave sounded nearly hysterical. "There won't be any left, and I won't be able to turn him. You *just* said so, Quinn."

Kurt whimpered.

"Yeah," Tina added, glaring at Quinn with unmasked irritation. "You did, didn't you. Smart move, there, Lucy."

"Don't you *dare* call me that," Quinn spat. "Look, Dave, we don't have time for this. I'll make sure they leave enough for you to turn him after-"

"Don't fucking *bullshit* me!" Dave bellowed. "I should just fucking eat him right now. Fuck you and your damn ritual, I don't even care what it changes! All I want is him." Dave placed a hand on Kurt's cheek and turned Kurt's face toward him.

"All I've *ever* wanted was him," he said against Kurt's lips.

Kurt blinked and looked like he was coming out of a trance, and began to thrash and scream and struggle. Dave's grip didn't loosen in the slightest.

Blaine couldn't stand another second of it. He ran.

Luckily, Rachel seemed to realize that things had just escalated, and at that precise moment the first arrow appeared. Tina moved just in time to avoid getting stabbed in the heart, but the arrow made contact and embedded itself deeply into her shoulder.

"Fuck!" She screamed. "That hurt!"

Quinn moved out of the way just in time to avoid a second arrow, and it sunk into the bark of the oak tree.

"All right, *that's it*, you little bitch, whoever you are. Come and fight like a woman, why don't you?"

Blaine could hear a peal of laughter from where Rachel stood. "I thought that's what I was doing. Too much for you?"

There were a few more arrows, all of which barely missed Quinn and Tina, before Rachel was striding out into the clearing with an air of complete confidence. She reached into her hair and pulled out a stake, sending her long chocolate-colored hair tumbling down her shoulders.

"Quinn," she said, smiling at the blonde. "Tina. Hello. My name is Rachel Berry and as much fun as that was, rehearsal is officially over. I'm going to kill you now."

Before either vampire could so much as formulate a retort, Rachel managed to kick Quinn hard in the chest at the perfect angle to send her flying into Tina. Both women hit the ground.

Tina glared up at her. "Oh, game on, midget," she snarled, before lunging at Rachel.

Under different circumstances, Blaine wouldn't have been able to take his eyes off the sight of Rachel in battle. She had been very good while in school, but her time with Will Scheuster had obviously not been wasted. She had gone from very good to *superb*.

But at the moment all Blaine could focus on was his Watcher and the vampire that was holding him captive.

Blaine managed to reach the base of the tree without catching Dave's attention. Dave looked a bit lost in thought, like he was considering his options.

"Well, Hummel, what do you say?" Dave asked, stroking up and down Kurt's neck with the backs of his fingers. He chuckled to himself. "Sorry, *Kurt*. I have to remember that. If we're going to be together forever I can't keep calling you Hummel, can I?"

"Just kill me," Kurt pleaded. His voice was barely more than a whisper.

"Don't worry, baby, I will," Dave cooed. "You don't know how long I've wanted to taste you. I've eaten lots of boys, but I'm *always* thinking of you, Kurt. Always pretending it's you. And now...finally I can stop pretending."

"Don't turn me," Kurt whimpered. "Please don't turn me. Just kill me. I don't want to come back. I don't want to be with you."

"That will change," Dave said, the mock-sweetness of his voice taking on a hard edge. "Trust me, Hummel, you'll want me." Dave moved his lips to the shell of Kurt's ear. "You won't have a choice."

Blaine had launched himself up the tree, and was now hovering less than ten feet above Dave and Kurt. He bit his lip, considering. He really wasn't sure quite how to get Kurt safe and away from Dave.

Until Dave wrapped his meaty hand around Kurt's chin, forced his head back, and bit into his throat with a wanton growl.

Kurt howled in pain. Blaine stopped thinking.

Leaping down to the thick branch that supported both Dave and Kurt's weight, Blaine grabbed Kurt's bicep with one hand and reached upward, catching hold of a branch just above them and taking advantage of Dave's preoccupied state. Dave was so focused on Kurt that he didn't look up until Blaine's legs were swinging at him, smashing square into his face. Dave screamed, his hands automatically flying to his face, and Blaine took the opportunity to wrench Kurt away from him completely.

Kurt gave a tormented scream, and Blaine was fairly certain that he had dislocated his Watcher's shoulder. But he couldn't worry about that now. Shoulders could be fixed. Death was permanent.

Blaine slung Kurt over his shoulder and then braced himself with the branch above them again. Just as Dave started to get his bearings back, Blaine swung his body around so that both feet landed squarely against Dave's side with enough force to push him off the branch.

Dave went tumbling to the ground below.

Blaine could feel Kurt's warm blood dripping onto his back and soaking into his shirt. He continued to cry softly as he hung limply against Blaine. Blaine closed his eyes and breathed. He knew Rachel needed help. He knew he needed to keep Kurt safe.

He wasn't sure what to do.

He started by climbing back down the tree.

On the ground, Rachel still seemed to be holding her own. Dave was lying dazed, and Tina was looking far worse for wear. Quinn's eyes were taking in the scene wildly, a look of mounting panic on her face.

Blaine located a reasonably sharp-looking partial branch jutting out from the tree and broke it off. He wrapped his left arm firmly around Kurt's legs, and held the makeshift stake in his right.

Just holding the stake made him feel so much calmer. It felt like power and safety and authority. It cleared his mind, and allowed him to realize that he was going to get through this. Even one-handed, he could fight. It was what he was made for. At the end of the day, he wasn't just a Slayer. First and foremost, he was a *Vampire Slayer*.

He locked eyes with Quinn, and something there seemed to decide it for her.

"Retreat!" She barked. "Come on, let's get out of here!"

"But what about-" Tina was gesturing to Kurt.

"Later," Quinn snapped, planting a kick to Rachel's stomach. She smiled slightly. "We know where to find him now and we know who his Slayer is. Don't worry, Tina, we'll get him. And in the meantime, we can just go after everyone he loves." Her eyes narrowed and her smile turned cold as ice. "Again."

Kurt stirred at that, struggling against Blaine and making strangled noises that weren't quite words.

Quinn and Tina ran off into the night, cruel laughter ringing in their wake. Dave stood up and shook his head, still looking slightly dazed. He spotted Blaine and started toward him before noticing the stake in his hand. And then he noticed the stake in Rachel's. He seemed to think for a moment before bolting in the direction of the two women. Blaine could faintly hear him yelling "wait for me!" as his footsteps receded.

Blaine knelt to the ground and put Kurt down gently. Kurt immediately curled into a ball, rocking back and forth, tears streaming down his face.

"Rachel..." Blaine looked up at her. "Do you have a car? I just have my bike, and I don't think Kurt is in any state to..."

Rachel was kneeling over a slumped figure on the ground. She looked up. "I do, actually. I'd be happy to give you a ride home." She looked back down at the figure. It was the werewolf Blaine had shot with the tranq gun maybe an hour or two ago. It felt like it had been weeks.

"We should get this one back to the enclave first, though."

Blaine nodded. Rachel slung the wolf over her shoulder like it weighed as much as a puppy, and Blaine picked Kurt up gingerly and carried him bridal-style. He had been slightly afraid that Kurt would resist, and the best case scenario was that he would just go limp again. To Blaine's surprise, however, he snuggled into his chest and reached his uninjured arm up to rest on Blaine's shoulder. Blaine looked down and Kurt looked up at him, his wide blue eyes bloodshot and puffy.

"Thank you," Kurt whispered. He continued to gaze at Blaine for a long moment before closing his eyes.

Blaine bit his lip and fought back his own tears. A million things raced through his mind; *I'm sorry, I never should have let that happen to you, this is all my fault, I'm the worst Slayer in the world.* But he knew Kurt didn't have the energy to reassure him, so he just held him closer.

Kurt was so warm.

"You're safe now," was what Blaine finally settled on.

But he knew it would never be true.

Chapter Six

By the time Rachel dropped them off, Kurt was angry. He bid Rachel a quick, sharp goodbye before slamming the car door behind himself and hobbling toward the door to the house as fast as he could manage with his hospital-issue aluminum cane. Blaine thanked her with an apologetic smile before hurrying after Kurt to help him.

Kurt had *not* wanted to go to the hospital. Unfortunately, the two uninjured Slayers in the car with him had had other ideas.

"Look- do you want- your ankle seems pretty bad, Kurt. If I just carried you-"

"I'm *fine*," Kurt snapped, trying to disguise his wince of pain.

Blaine sighed and wrapped an arm around Kurt's waist to support him. "Here. Let me at least-"

"Keep your hands *off* me!" Kurt shrieked, spinning out of Blaine's grip and then stumbling. He gave a loud cry as he started to fall, and Blaine caught him.

"Kurt I'm not- you're hurt. Please. You've got to let me help you."

"I'm *fine*," Kurt insisted again, his voice shaking. But he didn't push Blaine away this time, instead leaning on him heavily as they shuffled toward the front door.

Burt was standing in the door, white-faced and stricken, before they even got to the porch. As soon as they reached him he pulled Kurt into a tight, rough hug.

"OW! Dad...my shoulder..." Kurt's words were muffled against Burt's chest. Blaine saw a hint of tears in the man's eyes.

"Sorry." Burt pulled back slightly and touched Kurt's sling gently. "I just got off the phone with Scheuster. Thank God you're okay. Thank God *he* had sense enough to send back-up for your first assignment. I should have...I'm just so damn glad you boys are *okay*." Burt looked up and met Blaine's eyes then, and Blaine began to lower his gaze, shame creeping over him. He had almost gotten Burt's only child killed.

What if Burt didn't want Blaine living there anymore? What if he wanted Kurt to get a *real* Slayer instead of an imposter? What if-

Blaine gave a slight yelp of surprise as Burt reached out one of his arms and pulled Blaine to him as well, knocking Blaine awkwardly into Kurt's uninjured shoulder in the process.

When Burt finally pulled back, Kurt sighed and shuffled forward, allowing both Blaine and his father to help him. They moved into the living room, and Burt eased Kurt into the recliner that was generally reserved for Burt himself. He propped Kurt's ankle up on an ottoman and studied him critically.

"It sounds like you had a pretty bad scare there, bud."

Kurt sighed. "No. I'm fine. Really, Dad. I think Rachel must have exaggerated the story for dramatic effect-you know how she is."

Burt frowned. "It wasn't just Rachel, Kurt. I spoke to Mrs. Puckerman as well. She's the one that assured me that Finn wasn't among the casualties."

Blaine let out a sigh, remembering when she had confirmed that for them as well before they left the estate. Once able to speak properly, Kurt had insisted on staying until they knew for sure that Finn was all right. Oddly, Rachel seemed just as determined, and her sigh of relief was almost overwhelming to behold when she heard that Finn remained safe inside the enclosure.

"Well, *I'm* fine," Kurt insisted. "It was just a vampire, Dad."

Burt eyed him skeptically. "Well, it sounded pretty bad to me. All I have to say is thank *god* Blaine was there."

"Yes, I would have suffered the indignity of a properly aligned shoulder if it weren't for Blaine," Kurt said, his voice pure ice. He turned his gaze to Blaine, and Blaine shivered when he saw that Kurt's eyes matched his tone. "Thanks for that, by the way."

Blaine gaped at him. "Kurt, I was trying to *save* you from-"

"*I didn't need your help!*" Kurt screamed.

Blaine was incredulous. "Kurt, he was biting you!"

Kurt closed his eyes. "Blaine, just...shut up. Just shut up and leave me alone," Kurt said, quiet and cool.

Blaine bit his lip and felt tears prickling behind his eyes and he didn't know what to do or say. His anger was battling his hurt, and it just felt like Kurt had squeezed all the blood out of his heart.

Suddenly, he felt a warm hand on his shoulder.

"Blaine," Carole said, her voice gentle and warm. Blaine hadn't even noticed her come in. "I think Burt may need a moment with his son. Why don't we go sit down in the kitchen, have some tea, and just try to relax?" Burt glanced over and gave Blaine an apologetic smile, and Blaine smiled back at him shyly before allowing Carole to lead him to the kitchen.

When they reached the kitchen, Blaine instantly urged Carole to sit at the table while he busied himself preparing the tea. He put the kettle on, and went to the cupboard where the teas were kept.

"What would you like?" He asked.

"Camomile would be lovely, Blaine, thanks. And help yourself."

A few minutes later, Blaine walked back to the table with two steaming mugs of chamomile tea. He sat down beside Carole and stared into his cup.

"Kurt hates me," he heard himself blurt out before he could stop.

Carole reached across the table and placed her hand gently on top of Blaine's. "Sweetie, of *course* he doesn't." She sighed at Blaine's miserable expression. "Let me guess. Something happened, and Kurt ended up terrified and helpless and so you *helped* him, and then before you know it he's spitting venom at you like you did something wrong."

Blaine stared at her. "How did you..."

Carole laughed, squeezing his hand. "Sweetie, that's just *Kurt*. He spent a lot of his life being bullied and picked on, and there were always stronger and more powerful people swooping in to save him. It's a sore

spot for him. He put a lot of time and energy into learning how to fight back, and when he feels like he's being put in his place, like he's back in *high school*, it just does a number on him."

High School.

"The vampire that had Kurt...he said he *knew* Kurt. From before. He said he knew him from high school."

Carole stared at him. "Do you remember his name?"

"Um...Dave? The others were just calling him Dave."

"Dave..." Carole murmured. She rolled her eyes upward, searching her memory.

"He..." Blaine swallowed and shifted uncomfortably. "He, um, seemed pretty interested in Kurt." Carole looked at him in question.

Blaine sighed. "I mean...romantically. Or, uh...s-sexually." Oh God, this could *not* get more awkward.

Carole's eyes widened. "Not *Karofsky*. Was he a big guy? Tall? Built like a football player?"

Blaine nodded.

"Oh, God, *Kurt*," Carole gasped. She leapt to her feet and ran out the kitchen door. By the time Blaine reached the living room Kurt was once again yelping in pain as Carole threw her arms around him.

"Oh sweetie, you must have been so...did he do anything to you? Did he...oh, Kurt, sweetheart, are you *okay*?"

"I'm fine," Kurt muttered, much of the fight from earlier gone from his voice. "It was just a *vampire*, Carole, I don't know why everyone keeps-"

"Kurt. It was Karofsky, wasn't it?"

There is no point in trying to deny it, not after Kurt's intense visceral reaction to Carole's question. He pulled back from her sharply, his face draining of color and his eyes wild.

"*Fuck!*" Burt belted out, standing up sharply from his kneeling position beside Kurt. "That son of a- so he got vamped and now he's coming back for you? That goddamn-"

"Burt," Carole said, her voice a soft warning as she glanced at Kurt's horror-struck face.

"No. I'm- I'm sorry, son, I know how horrible this must be for you, but I thought we'd been through this before. You told me you weren't going to withhold stuff like this from me anymore. No more, Kurt. This ends."

Kurt looked up at his father and bit his lip.

Burt began to pace, rubbing his face. "All right. Well, there is one good thing about that bastard getting turned. Now we can *kill* the motherfucker like I always wanted to."

"*Burt.*" This time Carole's tone was a bit more forceful.

Burt sighed deeply. "Sorry. I just...all right, Blaine. Now, I know I'm not your Watcher, but your number one priority right now is to find this vamp and *destroy* him. I'll call Scheuster and Bieste, get them to send their Slayers too. This is *it*. He is *not* going to cause this family any more pain."

Blaine glanced at Kurt for confirmation. As much as he wanted to destroy this vamp, based both on what he had seen tonight and what he was gathering from Burt's tirade, Kurt *was* still his Watcher. And no matter how unreasonable Kurt might be behaving, he didn't want Kurt to send him back to school or unload him on another Watcher. He wanted Kurt.

Kurt sighed and gave Blaine a slight nod. "He's right," Kurt said softly. "I...to be honest, I don't think I'll be able to sleep until he's dead. And I know that might make me weak, but-"

Burt, Carole and Blaine's voices tripped over one another in their haste to object to Kurt's statement.

Kurt shook his head and laughed slightly. Blaine felt his shoulders relax noticeably.

"All right. Where do we start?" Blaine asked. "I can start tonight. I'm really not tired. And I bet *someone* around here has seen them. They're a fairly noticeable trio."

Kurt stared at Blaine like he'd grown an extra head. "You can't be serious. Blaine, it's four o'clock in the morning."

"So?"

"So, you're *exhausted*, whether you've let yourself realize it or not, and no one's going to get out of bed to answer your questions about strangers in Lima, and you can't take on three vampires alone. Not yet. Shall I continue?"

Blaine scowled. "No," he muttered. "I just...I feel so fucking *useless* right now."

"tell me about it," Kurt muttered, lifting his cane dramatically.

Burt seemed to have calmed down a bit and had finally stopped pacing. "Well, for a start, why don't you tell us about the other two vamps? That would probably help."

Blaine shrugged. "They were female, both of them. One was white and blonde and I'm pretty sure the other was Korean. They were both small, both pretty. Seemed old. I mean, their power *felt* old. Especially the Korean."

Burt nodded, a strange look in his eyes. "Did you catch names?"

"The blonde one went by Quinn. The other was called Tina."

Blaine sensed the shift in the room before it happened. Carole gasped, eyes wide and a hand flying over her mouth.

Blaine didn't catch Burt's expression. But he was quick enough to catch him when he fell.

The commotion that had followed left Blaine even more confused and restless than he had been already. Burt had recovered from his fall and started wildly attempting to convince everyone to pack a bag and get into the car. Blaine couldn't understand much of what he was saying, but the words *new life* and *new identities* were thrown into the mix more than once. Carole had had to essentially force Burt to take a sedative while Kurt pleaded with him about his heart. After he had calmed down as much as it seemed like

he was capable, Carole led him upstairs to their bedroom, insisting that he needed sleep, and that *we can discuss new identities in the morning, Burt.*

Blaine was left sitting on the living room couch, stunned, staring at Kurt in the recliner to his left. Kurt was frowning in concentration.

Blaine didn't even know where to start. All he knew was that there were a lot of secrets in this house, and nothing seemed simple.

"Blaine?"

Blaine blinked, and looked at Kurt. He was looking at Blaine almost nervously.

Kurt fiddled with the handle of his cane. "Blaine, I- I'm sorry. The way I behaved earlier was inexcusable, and you didn't deserve that."

"I really didn't," Blaine agreed, but he kept his tone gentle. He really wasn't angry anymore, just confused and hurt.

Kurt sighed. "I know. I was just- I was so angry at *myself* for letting things spin out of control like that, for not being prepared, for not-"

"Kurt, it wasn't your fault."

Kurt quirked his mouth into a half-smile, but his eyes were sad.

"Blaine, it really kind of was." His tone was firm but kind. "You handled yourself beautifully. You thought on your feet, you maintained focus, you- you saved my *life*."

"Only because *Rachel Berry* showed up," Blaine muttered, looking at his feet.

"Yes, we are very lucky that happened, a fact that I am sure Rachel will absolutely *never* allow us to forget. But if I had done a better job preparing you, you wouldn't have needed to rely on Rachel. And that was- it would have been difficult to prepare for something like that entirely. It wasn't as if there were some random vamps at the Wolf Park. They *planned* this, Blaine."

Blaine looked up at him. "But why?"

Kurt chewed his lip. "Well, I'm not entirely sure. But I think..." Kurt paused to give Blaine a hard look. "Blaine, you've only been with us for a little while. Normally I wouldn't be telling you any...*sensitive* information at least until you'd finalized your contract."

"Kurt, I'll sign it right now. I want...I want to stay with you. I don't want another Watcher. You don't have to tell me anything yet if you'd rather not, but I- I want you to know that I'm definitely staying."

Kurt's smile was slightly shy. "Well, I'm certainly pleased to hear that, but now I think it's my turn to ask *you* why. I think I demonstrated tonight that I'm hardly the best Watcher in the fold."

Blaine shook his head. "You're just kind of new. But – I mean, you know what you're doing Kurt. And you see potential in me, and not a lot of other people have. You told me you could make me into an incredible Slayer, and I believed you. I still believe you."

Kurt laughed mirthlessly. "I don't know if I believe *myself*. You don't need *me* to be a great Slayer, Blaine, you've got-"

"Kurt."

Kurt closed his eyes and sighed deeply.

"Blaine," he said softly, opening his eyes. "There is sensitive information that it is perhaps too early to tell you. But at the same time, I don't think I can ask you to make any kind of commitment to me or this family *until* I tell you. Dave and I have our...our own history. But what I don't understand is how he met up with those two. Or *why*. They...I wasn't sure it was them until I saw my dad's reaction, but he didn't leave any room for doubt. Those women have been looking for us for a *long* time."

Blaine simply stared at him, willing Kurt to continue. "You may not want to stay with me after all once I've explained, and I'll understand if you want to leave, but I need you to promise me that you won't tell anyone what I'm going to tell you. I don't care how much you trust them, you *can't* tell anyone, all right?"

Blaine nodded, eyes wide. "Yes. Of course."

Kurt nodded. "Okay. So..." Kurt's face took on a look of concentration. "So, I imagine you've heard of the curse of Angellus."

"Blaine nodded. "Yeah. He was a vampire, a particularly vicious and dangerous vampire, and he killed a gypsy princess or something and was cursed with a soul."

Kurt's lips curled into a tiny smile. "More or less. He was cursed to live as a vampire with a soul, knowing full well what he'd done all those years as a soulless demon. He had to live with himself every day with that knowledge, and with the knowledge that if he ever had a single moment, however fleeting, of true happiness, he would lose his soul all over again."

Blaine shivered slightly. "God. Those Gypsies do *not* fuck around."

"No," Kurt agreed. "We don't."

Kurt took a moment to allow his response to sink in. It didn't take long. Suddenly, Blaine's eyes widened immensely.

"Wait. *What?* You- I- *what?*"

"The people that Angellus was unfortunate enough to cross were the Kalderash clan in Romania. They had some...unique magics that are generally assumed to have been lost. But...the family itself never lost them."

"And you...?"

"My mother was a Summers. And my father is a Kalderash."

Blaine stared at him. "So...where did Hummel come from?" The question sounded stupid to his own ears, but he couldn't think what else to ask. He didn't even know where Kurt was going with this.

"It's an assumed name. My father relocated us, gave us new identities. I've been Kurt Hummel for the past thirteen years. But I was born Kurt Summers-Kalderash. A bit of a mouthful, but it sounds rather distinguished, doesn't it?"

Blaine just nodded.

"Well, so, you already knew I can do some spellwork, though I'm not powerful enough to really be a proper warlock. My father, on the other hand, *is*. He was well schooled in all the family magics, and he's good at what he knows. And he loved my mother *very* much."

Kurt wasn't sure how he was able to remain so calm. He had never told *anyone* this story. The story that had controlled the last thirteen years of his and his father's life. The story that almost led his father to reject Carole, until Kurt had found them arguing loudly on the front porch during a thunderstorm, Carole yelling that she didn't care about being *safe* if it meant losing he and Kurt, his father falling apart in her arms in a way that had made Kurt's eyes go wide.

He had carried it like something fragile and heavy, trying desperately to live the version of normal that others in the fold were living while constantly looking over his shoulder, living with a secretly packed bag under his bed, ready to run.

But as he began to tell Blaine, he was amazed at how much lighter and sturdier his secret began to feel. And as Kurt spoke, Blaine got up off the couch and sat down on the floor beside Kurt's recliner.

"My mother had a Slayer named Eva. And there were these three girls- vampires. They called themselves the Unholy Trinity. They were smart and dangerous and they kept Eva and Emma and my parents on their toes. God, they even summoned this enormous sluggoth demon once that came right up through the *floorboards* of our living room. I was probably only three or four, but I still remember my mother grabbing me and running out of the house and-"

He was rambling and he knew it, but Blaine was paying rapt attention. He didn't appear the least bit fidgety or bored, didn't seem to be humoring Kurt with his interest. Before he knew it, Blaine was sitting with his chin resting on the arm of Kurt's recliner, gazing up at Kurt like a small boy listening to a bedtime story.

And so Kurt told him everything. He didn't skim over the details or hold any of it back. He told Blaine about the leader of the Trinity, the Mayan princess-turned-vampire who was one of the most bitterly vicious creatures ever to touch his life. He told Blaine about how the former princess claimed to be in love with Kurt's mother, the way that she sent his mother jewelry stolen from dead women and flowers stolen from funerals as gifts, the way she vowed at every opportunity, whether screaming from the back yard or

whispering across the windowsill or writing a note in the smeared blood of a neighborhood pet, that she would *have* Elizabeth Summers, that she would destroy everyone she loved until she, the dark princess, was the only one left that she *could* love.

The trinity had tried to get Kurt. They had tried to get Kurt a *lot*. One time they even did it, and he spent the night in a cold crypt crying for his mother before Eva saved him.

He never did find out why they didn't just kill him that night.

Kurt remembered the princess standing just outside their front door, speaking to his father in a low, calm voice that made Kurt shiver.

"I'm going to kill you," she had said, "but first I'm going to break you."

And broken him she had.

What she hadn't expected was for Burt Kalderash to break her right back.

Blaine's throat had gone dry. He couldn't stop listening, but he honestly wasn't sure he even wanted to hear the rest of the story. He could see the pain mounting in Kurt's eyes, and he wasn't sure he could bear to see it crest.

"She killed my mother," Kurt said softly. Blaine inhaled sharply, and murmured "Oh, *Kurt*." Kurt looked down at him, expecting pity, but was greeted with nothing but a look of heartbroken warmth. He felt his chest tighten at the openness in Blaine's eyes.

"She killed her and then she turned her, and-" Kurt closed his eyes and heaved an enormous, shaky. sigh. Then his face fell into the hand on his uninjured side, and he was crying softly.

"Kurt," Blaine said so quietly it was almost a sigh.

Kurt wiped his eyes and Blaine caught Kurt's hand in his own on its way back down to Kurt's lap. Kurt gave him a surprised look, but squeezed his hand gently and smiled at him and didn't let go.

"Blaine, it was my fault. I know I was a little kid, but I was *raised* to know about vampires. I should have known better. But she just- she'd been missing for days, and I didn't even realize that I was inviting her in, I mean, it was her home. She *lived* there."

Blaine tightened his grip on Kurt's hand.

"I can still remember the look on her face when my father staked her," Kurt whispered.

And then he was crying in earnest, because suddenly the memory of that look was all he could perceive. That look of shock and rage and then – maybe? Possibly? A tiny glimpse of the real *her*, a tiny glimpse of grief and sadness and love-

Blaine was up on his knees and doing his best to hold Kurt. It was awkward; he was being careful to avoid Kurt's injured shoulder, and Kurt was still slightly stiff in his arms, but the comfort it gave them both was palpable.

They held each other quietly for a few moments before Kurt continued the story.

The Mayan princess had been enraged. She had not wanted Elizabeth to go without her to see her husband and son, but the princess hadn't had such people in her life when she had been turned. She didn't understand the maddening desire of a new vampire to shred and destroy everything that tied them to being human, to having a soul.

And now she was gone, and the princess had not had her for even a day.

She set their house on fire. She killed Eva. She almost killed Emma. And she forgot, utterly forgot, that Burt was a Kalderash.

But Burt hadn't forgotten. And the princess wasn't the only one thrumming with heartbreak and rage. She wasn't the only one who's world had narrowed to a simple thirst for grief-stricken revenge.

The curse of Angellus had not been laid in hundreds of years. It was strong, dark magic and there was no guarantee that Burt would even survive it. Emma begged him not to do it, but he simply gave her instructions to keep Kurt safe if anything happened to him. Kurt remembered sobbing into Emma's skirt while his father pulled out of the driveway, convinced that he was going to lose him, that he was going to be an orphan at the age of eight.

"He survived it, obviously, but it took a toll on his body. He developed a heart condition, and he even had a heart attack a few years ago, which was utterly terrifying, let me tell you."

Blaine settled back onto the floor, but didn't let go of Kurt's hand. "Wh-what happened to the princess?"

Kurt shrugged, wincing at the pain in his shoulder as he did so. "I didn't see her again. My father said the curse was successful. To be perfectly honest, I hope she's suffering. I hope she suffers forever." He glanced at Blaine out of the corner of his eye. "That might make me a horrible person, but-"

Blaine shook his head. "Of course it doesn't. I...of course it doesn't. After what she did to you, I don't think anyone could blame you for that."

Kurt gave him a tiny smile. "Well, the other two members of the Trinity- and I'm pretty sure they were the two that we dealt with tonight- they absolutely *swore* vengeance. And they weren't the only ones. Staking is one thing, but the curse- *that* curse is considered the worst thing that could ever happen to a vampire. We may as well have had a bulls-eye painted on our front door. So the Council relocated us. We got new names and new identities, they moved us to the Mid States, which I wasn't thrilled about even when I was eight, and put us in a work-house. Emma...well, she and my father stayed close, worked together under the radar, but he wasn't her Watcher anymore. She moved to the Eastern States for awhile, just to throw people off our tracks. When she finally moved here..." Kurt smiled. "It was nice. We missed her. *I* missed her."

"Was she the last Slayer your father had?" Blaine asked.

Kurt frowned and nodded. "He was an amazing Watcher. If you ask anyone old enough to remember about Burt Kalderash and Liz Summers – they were kind of like a celebrity couple of the Slayer world. But he just...he couldn't do it, I suppose. After losing my mother and Eva like that, he was different." Kurt shrugged slightly, wincing a far bit less this time. "Only a few people in the Council's inner circle know who we really are. He's stayed in the fold because he's a warlock and runs a work-house and can give people the appearance of legitimate employment at his garage. We had hoped Quinn and Tina would have forgotten about us by now, or at least given up on looking. Or I did, anyhow. I don't think my father ever really thought that was going to happen."

Blaine swallowed. "But now it has."

"Now it has," Kurt agreed.

"But what about the ritual they were talking about tonight?"

Kurt furrowed his eyebrows. Blaine willed himself not to think about how adorable it was. It was entirely inappropriate to be thinking about Kurt's frequent displays of adorability during such a serious conversation.

So he only thought about it a little.

"I really don't know. It's the first I've heard of it. I would ask my father, but-" Kurt rolled his eyes. "I don't think he'd be a very helpful source of information tonight."

Blaine sighed deeply. "Yeah. No kidding. What a night, huh?"

Unexpectedly, Kurt burst out laughing. "Oh my God, that may be the biggest understatement I have ever heard!"

Blaine couldn't help but laugh too. He was pretty sure he had never experienced so many emotions in such a short period of time. At least not since he had found out he was a Slayer, that is.

"So," Kurt said pointedly as his laughter subsided. "What now, Mr. Anderson?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, now you know everything there is to know. Are you still determined to stay in this madhouse?"

Blaine smiled and shrugged. "Well, yeah. I mean, madhouse or no madhouse, I feel like I belong here."

Kurt bit his lip to contain his smile. "You definitely belong, Blaine. But staying with us isn't going to be as safe as-"

"As what?" Blaine cut in. "As any other Watcher household where I would be sure to piss off *other* vampires and demons and live in constant danger anyway? It's not like I'm an accountant, Kurt. This is a dangerous job. It's going to be dangerous no matter who I'm working with."

Kurt arched a perfectly sculpted eyebrow. "Touche," he said with a smile before stifling a yawn.

"It's really late," Blaine observed, ignoring Kurt's *no shit, Sherlock* look in response. "We should probably get to bed."

Kurt sighed. "Go ahead. I'm not going to be able to sleep anytime soon. I'll probably just stay up and read."

"You need to sleep, Kurt. Do you want some tea? I could make you some chamomile-"

"That's sweet, Blaine, but no. I just...I'm feeling..."

"Is it Quinn and Tina?" Blaine asked softly. Kurt shook his head.

"Is it..." Blaine eyed him nervously. "Is it the other one? Dave?"

Kurt stiffened noticeably, his hand clamping down hard on Blaine's. "I..."

"You don't have to talk about it," Blaine said quickly. "But if it would make you feel more, um, relaxed, you do have that couch in your room. I could sleep there."

Kurt's cheeks went pink. "No, I couldn't ask you to do that. It's just – I'm just being ridiculous. It's not like he can get in the house, and anyway, he's just a *vampire*. Nothing I should be losing sleep over, really."

"He's obviously not just a vampire to you, Kurt. And I really don't mind." Kurt opened his mouth to protest, but Blaine hurried to continue. "Look. I'm a Slayer, which basically means I'm a glorified security guard with superpowers, and I sleep like a cat. Are you seriously trying to tell me you *wouldn't* feel safer with me in the room?"

"Maybe a little," Kurt conceded, looking away from Blaine.

Blaine gave Kurt's hand a gentle squeeze and stood up. "Come on. I'll help you up the stairs."

Kurt rolled his eyes but accepted the help.

Outside the Hummel-Hudson residence, Dave watched the guy Slayer help Kurt out of his chair and practically carry him toward the staircase. A moment later a light went on upstairs in Kurt's bedroom. Dave *knew* it was Kurt's bedroom, because he had spent enough nights holding his breath while he watched Kurt through the window, doing homework at his desk or smearing some kind of fancy gay lotion shit on his face or plucking his eyebrows. A couple of times Kurt had even forgotten to pull the shade down when he got changed, and those memories had featured prominently in Dave's nights alone, twisting in the sheets of his bed while he jerked himself off.

Dave climbed the tree outside Kurt's window with much more speed and grace than he ever had as a clumsy human teenager. Inside the room, the guy Slayer was helping Kurt get his shirt off while navigating around the cast. Kurt was blushing, and then he said something and the Slayer nodded and went over to the window and pulled down the shade.

A few moments later the light went off in the bedroom. Dave gritted his teeth and looked around for something to kill. He couldn't find anything, so he settled for ripping a branch from the tree where he sat and throwing it as hard as he could. He heard it hit the roof of a neighbor's house with a distant thump.

So the girls didn't trust him anymore. Fine. Fuck those bitches. It made things easier, actually, because they weren't going to let Dave have Kurt the way he wanted anyway. He was sick of that bitch Quinn always telling him what to do and calling him stupid. He didn't want to just tag along with older vamps anymore, he wanted a *companion*. He wanted someone he could hunt with and feast with and have sex with under the moonlight, their bodies smeared in warm human blood. He wanted to watch Kurt suck a pretty boy dry while Dave fucked him from behind. And he wanted to turn him. He wanted to drink Kurt's life and watch Kurt die and then come back to him. Come back *for* him.

Dave climbed down from the tree and began prowling around the edge of the house. Maybe he could slip under the porch- that didn't really count as going *inside* the house, did it? Or maybe there was a shed or something- all he knew was that he didn't want to go far. He wanted to lie in wait. He *needed* Kurt, and he couldn't believe that it had taken him this long to come back to Lima for him.

Also, he really wanted to kill that fucking Slayer. That short-ass prettyboy Slayer who had pulled Kurt off of him and kicked him out of a tree. That little bitch was probably fucking Kurt right now. Oh, yeah, Dave was *definitely* going to kill his ass. He wasn't even sure he was going to bite him. Well, he probably would, really- Slayer blood and all – but the idea of wrapping his hands around that fucking midget's neck and just *squeezing* the life out of him-

Dave had to stop and adjust himself. He was getting really turned on. He was about to continue exploring the yard when he was hit with an overwhelming presence.

There was someone here. Someone of the demon variety. Someone *old* and *powerful*.

Dave didn't even have time to turn around before he was slammed against the side of the house, one hand around his throat and another pushing against his chest. He couldn't move.

It was another vampire, and Dave hadn't been wrong about the old and powerful part. He could feel it with just as much solidity as he could feel the hands on his body.

But there was something else too. Something...*off* about this one. Dave couldn't quite put his finger on it.

"You stay the hell away from them, you got it?" the vampire hissed in his ear. "If I *ever* catch you lurking around here again, I *will* kill you."

Dave just stared.

"*Got it?*"

Dave couldn't even access his anger at being put in his place like this. This vampire was stronger than any he'd ever met before and he was *scared*. He nodded emphatically.

The vampire released him. "Good. *Go*."

Dave took off like a shot into the night.

The older vampire stood and stared at the house, eyes travelling up to the window where the Slayer and his young Watcher slept.

By the time the sky began to lighten, the yard was empty.

Chapter Seven

Dear Brittany,

I hope you got my letter. Maybe Ms. Sylvester isn't letting you write to me for one reason or another, but I would love to hear from you if you can find a way. I miss you so much.

So Kurt and I kind of had a disastrous first night out in the field, and I pretty much had to be rescued, which is humiliating enough, but guess who swooped in to save me? Rachel freaking Berry. Apparently she's stationed in Westerville. Just my luck, huh? She and Schuester moved here from New York a couple of years ago because the demonic activity is getting heavy around here. Or at least that's what she says. I get the feeling that there is more to it than that.

I shouldn't complain. She did save me, after all, and Mr. Schuester is letting me practice with her while Kurt's injuries heal. He got kind of banged up and he can't exactly spar with me right now.

I should probably tell you that things are going much better with Kurt. I feel pretty bad about complaining to you about him in my last letter. He actually is a very good Watcher, and I think he likes me, which is definitely a relief.

And Brittany...I can't tell anyone else so I'm going to tell you. I like Kurt too. The trouble is that I think I'm starting to like him too much. I'm not sure what I should do.

I miss you. Write me back as soon as you can.

Love and Kisses,

Blaine xoxo

Dear Blaine,

I don't know why I haven't heard from you since that letter you sent me when you first got to Ohio. Things are getting weird here and I'm starting to get scared.

There's something wrong with my roommate. She isn't even young. I came back from class yesterday and there was this old lady – she must have been forty or something – standing in my room, and I saw her change back into Tammy (that's my roommate), and I didn't even say anything but she started screaming at me about how she isn't a witch and then Ms. Sylvester made me trim the matted hair on her miniature poodle's butt as punishment and I don't even understand what happened.

Little dogs have sharp teeth, Blaine. You should know that.

There have been all of these weird people around school lately, and this guy in a suit was talking to Ms. Crowley about how they aren't going to teach us defensive spellwork anymore, and she got really mad and now she's gone and there are no more spellwork classes and no one knows why, but if we ask anyone about anything we get in trouble.

And you know what's even weirder? There are security guards outside the school gates. With guns. Remember how Ms. Sylvester always said we didn't need guards because who's going to attack a school full of Slayers? And guns aren't allowed here anyway. But I'm afraid to ask her about it. She seems mad all the time lately. More than usual, I mean.

Please write back soon, Blaine. I miss you and I'm scared and something feels big and wrong here.

Love,

Brittany

xoxo

Dear Brittany,

I'm starting to get worried here, Britt. Surely you could at least have gotten someone to send a message for you if you're restricted from sending letters? Please let me know that you're all right. I just need to hear from you.

Love and Kisses,

Blaine

xoxo

Dear Blaine,

I'm scared. They locked me in the dungeon and I don't even know how I'm going to send this. I didn't mean to have a dream, Blaine. I didn't mean to.

But they know that I know because I'm not smart like you and I asked too many questions even though I was afraid of getting into trouble, and then I just told them what the lady told me in my dream and they locked me up.

I think they might kill me.

I can't tell you what the lady said right now because I'm not supposed to write it down. I wasn't even supposed to tell Tammy, but she kind of made me tell. She looked at me and she knew I had a secret and she made me tell even though I didn't want to. I don't understand how she did it if she's not a witch, but she did.

It's not just me, either. I'm alone in the dungeon but they aren't letting anyone leave school. The guards aren't there to keep us safe, Blaine, they're there to keep us trapped. I don't know why they're doing this to us.

I don't know how I'm going to get out of here and I don't know if you will ever get this, but keep Kurt safe. Keep him safe no matter what. You two are the most important people in the world right now, and if anything happens to either of you everything is going to go wrong. I don't think even Tammy knows how important you both are.

Say a prayer or make a wish for me on a star. I don't want to die.

I don't want to die because I'm too young and I haven't even met my vampire lover yet and there are so many things that I want to do. I can't die without seeing you again. I can't die without knowing you and Kurt are safe.

Stay safe. If I can figure out how to get out of here, I'm going to try and find you.

Love,

Brittany xoxo

Dear Brittany,

I think I am going to ask Kurt for a few days off to come and see you at school. I still haven't heard from you and I don't underst

"Blaine."

Blaine looked up from writing his letter to find both Kurt and Burt standing in the doorway of the kitchen wearing serious expressions.

"I need you to listen to this. Tell me if it rings any bells," Burt said. Blaine nodded and moved to get up from his place at the kitchen table, but Burt waved him back down and sat down across from him instead. Kurt sat down as well, choosing the seat closest to Blaine. He gave Blaine a small smile, and Blaine did his best to rein in the enthusiasm with which he smiled back.

Burt removed a small metal cylinder from his breast pocket and pulled a tiny membrane, no bigger than the size of Blaine's palm, from inside. He affixed it to the table in front of him and began navigating his way through a series of codes with his fingers.

Blaine knew what it was. It was a very secure and well-guarded network that only Council members had access to. It was protected with advanced technology as well as advanced magics, and was the only way for Council members to communicate freely without alerting the governments of the world to their existence and inner workings. Blaine wouldn't be given his own access codes until he had been active as a Slayer for at least a year.

A woman's voice began to emanate from the membrane, and Burt fiddled with it until he had found the right spot. "Okay. Now listen."

"All Council members are advised to be on high alert for an escapee from the Sylvester School for Girls. The threat is described as a twenty-year-old rogue Slayer, approximately five foot eight, Caucasian, blue eyes and blonde hair. Threat goes by the name of Brittany Pierce, but may be using an alias."

Blaine's eyes went wide and he opened his mouth to rail against what he was hearing, but Kurt laid a hand gently on his arm and gave him a meaningful look. "Listen," he whispered. Blaine clamped his mouth shut but got up from the table and began pacing around the room in agitation.

"Threat is described as extremely dangerous, and is suspected of colluding with demons of unknown origin in order to usurp the Council. Threat is also described as mentally unstable. Teams have been mobilized to find and neutralize the threat. If any council member encounters the threat, please contact your local Matriarch as soon as possible for further instructions."

Burt turned off the bulletin, and Blaine instantly started yelling.

"No. *No!* What the...the *fuck?* This is Brittany. *Brittany*, Kurt! I've *told* you about her! She wouldn't hurt a fly and I mean that literally! There were these awful horseflies at school and she wouldn't even kill them, she just let them bite her because she wanted to encourage them to bite and feed without killing because it could lead to inter-species unity and set a good example for vampires and-"

"Blaine," Kurt said softly. "I know. *We* know."

"Just...just *please*. It isn't true. Whatever they're saying, it isn't true. God, I *knew* something was wrong when she never wrote to me. I should have gone up there sooner, I should have *helped* her, she must be so scared right now. But please believe me, someone is setting her up. This isn't like her. This- we have to *find* her. Kurt, please. Please, we *have* to, this isn't her at all, she didn't do anything wrong, this is-"

"This is the Tea Party," Kurt said calmly. "Brittany probably found out something she shouldn't have, which means that they've gotten a foothold at the school. Which we *knew* was going to happen sooner or later. I think your reaction has pretty much cemented the fact that this is who we're dealing with."

Blaine stared at him. Burt stood up and walked over to Blaine, placing a hand on his shoulder.

"And we *will* find her, Blaine, okay? We'll bring her back here, and we'll...I don't know, dye her hair or something. We'll figure it out. Can't hurt having an extra Slayer around anyway, since *some* people don't think we should move, even though-"

"We'll need help," Kurt cut him off crisply. They'd had the argument about whether or not to leave Ohio quite frequently in the two weeks since Kurt's identity had been discovered by the group of vampires. Kurt point-blank refused to leave, arguing that if they found them this time they would find them again, and besides – they had Blaine now. Carole didn't want to leave either – the Wolf Park was an important resource for her and Finn, and finding another one that was equally welcoming would be a challenge. Finn just didn't want to leave his friends.

"Maybe we could ask Lauren?" Kurt suggested, looking at his father.

Burt stroked his chin. "I don't know. She's still pretty tied up in the Council, not sure if she's quite sold on the truth of the matter yet."

"I think we can trust her, though."

"I don't know, son. This seems like an awfully risky way to test that theory."

"Artie, then."

"He works for Lauren."

"Well yes, but Dad, he's *Artie*. I'd be willing to bet my life that we can trust him."

Burt sighed. "Artie it is then. And don't go around placing bets with your life. You never know who's listening."

Blaine stared at them. Kurt looked up at him and frowned. "What?"

"Um. I know I still haven't been a part of this household for very long, but would you mind terribly telling me what the hell is going on? Why is the Council after Brittany and how does it involve the Tea Party and who exactly are Lauren and Artie?"

Kurt looked at Burt, and then returned his eyes to Blaine when he'd received a nod from his father.

"All right. So, the Council – we've known for awhile that the Council has been infiltrated. There are some people, pretty high up and for the most part we don't know who, that are trying to destroy us from within. And the Tea Party...well, you already knew *they* were evil."

"Um. Well, evil, yeah, but not like, *evil*-evil, right?" Blaine asked, brows furrowed in confusion.

Kurt sighed. "Oh, Blaine. Evil is evil. Politics aren't given some kind of special exemption. Do you *really* think the Tea Party could have risen to this kind of power without black magic and demonic interference?"

"I suppose I never...thought about it that way."

"Yeah, well, this is just the beginning," Burt sighed. "The only reason things haven't gotten even worse already are because you've got the Eastern and the Western States keeping things in check. But...things are changing. We're getting close to that tipping point, where it could go either way. We knew things would start happening soon."

Kurt nodded, and gave his father a meaningful look. "Should we...?"

Burt shook his head. "Not yet. I want Blaine to be able to get all the answers he can when we hit him with *that*, and you know neither you or I are in a position to do that."

Blaine groaned in frustration. "Oh my god, just *tell* me! You guys are so mysterious sometimes that I just want to scream."

Kurt sighed. "Then scream."

Blaine did. The power in his voice rang through the house, and caused Finn to appear a moment later, eyes saucer-wide, clutching a bag of potato chips.

"I actually feel a little better," Blaine admitted, smiling at Finn. "Now, please tell me how we're going to help Brittany."

Her heart was pounding and every sense was sharp and clear. She could hear the rustle of leaves above her and she could tell that she was alone in the woods.

She was alone and she was close to the place she was supposed to get to, and it seemed like maybe she was actually going to make it.

Brittany closed her eyes and inhaled deeply. Blaine had always told her she was too trusting, but she knew that wasn't really it. She could just *tell* when a threat was real, and when she was cavalier about things it was usually because she knew it was safe. She didn't know how she knew, she just *did*.

And she had known there was something wrong with Tammy right from the start.

First of all, she had red hair. Brittany was pretty sure it wasn't actually true that people with red hair didn't have souls, but no one could use Tammy to argue against it. Tammy might technically have a soul, Brittany wasn't sure, but if she had one she'd messed it up pretty bad and it probably didn't even work anymore.

And Brittany was pretty sure that Tammy really *was* a witch, no matter what she said.

Tammy seemed to have a hold over everyone. She definitely had a hold over Ms. Sylvester, though it was hard to see it at first because Ms. Sylvester had always been kind of a bitch anyway.

Brittany rubbed her shoulder as she moved quietly through the trees. She was still bleeding a little from the barbed wire, but it wasn't too bad. And honestly, at least she hadn't gotten shot. Almost, but not quite. She did feel a little bad about how much she had hurt some of the guards, but she didn't kill anyone and she *couldn't* stay there. She wanted to live and she had to find Blaine.

It was lucky, in the end, that everyone had underestimated her all those years. No one but Blaine had ever realized how quick and strong she really was. No one seemed to believe that she could think on her feet. Even Blaine questioned her judgment sometimes, even though he never did it in a mean way.

So they had sent Moira, who was young and new and barely knew anything about slaying yet, to bring Brittany breakfast. It had almost been too easy.

Brittany did feel pretty bad about locking Moira in the dungeon, especially since she'd had to gag her and tie up her hands and everything, but at least Brittany had split her bagel with her first, so hopefully she didn't get too hungry while she was waiting for someone to find her.

She reached the edge of the forest and peered out onto the dark, winding road. Yes, this was the spot. And it was almost time.

Brittany wasn't looking forward to the pain, but she knew she was going to be fine. She didn't know how she knew, she just *did*.

"Hey, switch it back. I like that song."

"You like any overplayed faux-punk song where some white guy is doing more yelling than singing. This is prettier."

"I can't listen to this. I'm not a bloody poof."

"Really? Then explain your hair. Go on. Because I *really* can't come up with any competing theories."

"Look, just because *you* like to have a bit of fun with the ladies doesn't mean I-"

"Yes?"

"*No*. No, I mean *I* like to have a bit of fun with the ladies too. I like to have a *lot* of fun. I'm all about the fun. With the ladies. I've probably been with more women than you could *fathom*, dear girl."

"Piece of advice? Calling me *dear girl* just makes you sound as gay as you look."

"Oh, for – *Why* did I agree to let Angel stick you with me again?"

"From what he told me you didn't have any complaints."

"Well, that was before I knew you were *gay*. Or a bitch, if we're being honest."

"Oh, please. You definitely knew I was a bitch."

"Fine. But I thought I'd get to shag you, so I didn't really care."

"I am a pretty hot piece of ass, huh?"

"You are so bleeding *full* of it."

"You know, I could make another gay joke about you based solely on that comment, but it's actually just too easy. You're taking the fun out of it."

"Yeah, well- oh, *hell*. I am *not* listening to *this* song. Enough is enough."

"Hey! Leave it! I like this one too."

"I'll just bet you do. You know you – oh, *come on*. This is a classic!"

"If by classic you mean it's faded into obscurity for a very good reason, then yes. Now just let me-"

"Hey! Stop it, you're going to-"

"Let *go*!"

"No. We are absolutely *not* listening to-"

"Oh, shit, look out!"

"Please. Like I'm falling for that."

"No, Spike, *look out*! FUCK!"

By the time he looked up there was really no way to avoid hitting the girl. Spike slammed on the breaks, the car attempting to screech to a halt but sliding on the rain-slicked road.

Strangely, the girl was smiling at them. She didn't look the least bit afraid.

They didn't hit her hard, but hard enough to put a normal-looking girl like that in the hospital, that was for sure. They watched her body fly in a perfect arc before landing several feet away.

Santana was out of the car before it even stopped. She ran to the girl, ignoring Spike's bellowed string of curses behind her. She knelt down beside the (*very, very pretty – no, shut up Libido, this really isn't the time*) girl who was lying splayed on her back on the pavement. Santana touched her arm lightly.

She leapt back a bit in alarm when the girl's eyes opened. There was no indication of confusion there, and she didn't even look like she was in pain. And Santana definitely knew what a human in pain looked like. She had spent years seeking out a perfect expression of mortal agony like it was the holy grail.

As usual, she flinched at the unbidden memory.

The girl smiled up at her, and raised herself up onto her elbows.

"Hi," she said, her voice nothing short of *bubbly*. "It's you."

Santana just stared at her, unsure of what to say. Maybe this girl *had* hit her head pretty hard after all.

"Don't worry about me, I'm a Slayer. Getting hit with the car hurt, but I'm fine. I'm *built* for it, you know."

"I...um..."

The girl laughed, and the sound was so sweet it made something surge in Santana's chest. "You're surprised. I knew you would be surprised. But we don't really have time to talk right now - we need to find Kurt and Blaine, and there's no time to waste."

Spike walked over then, eyebrows knitted in confusion. Santana looked up at him. "Well," she said evenly, her mouth crooking into the smallest hint of a smile. "It looks like we have a new passenger."

Chapter Eight

"Blaine, *concentrate*."

Blaine let out a frustrated groan from his position on the mat in the basement, flat on his back. Rachel leapt to her feet lightly and opened her mouth to add her two cents before Kurt shot her a dark look and held up a hand.

Surprisingly, Rachel actually closed her mouth and looked at Kurt expectantly, used to deferring to a Watcher.

"I know," Blaine muttered. "It's just hard. All I can think about is Brittany. Hasn't anyone heard *anything*?" He pushed a hand through his sweat-damp curls and climbed to his feet.

"That's the point, Blaine," Kurt said, avoiding the question. "You have to be able to concentrate even when it's hard. *Especially* when it's hard. What if Brittany needs you? She needs you strong and focused, Blaine. We all do."

Blaine closed his eyes and sighed, but nodded. Kurt was right. Of course he was. He couldn't simply allow Rachel to pummel him over and over again.

"Take a moment to find your center," Kurt said, his voice soft and smooth. "Both of you. Standing meditation. Rachel, don't be so sure of yourself. Blaine really needs to improve and you're going too easy on him. Blaine, you are not here. You are not fighting Rachel. You are wherever and facing whomever you need to be in order to be at your best, all right? I need your full attention on this fight."

The two Slayers stood, breathing deep and slow and rhythmic, allowing themselves to fall into very shallow trances, feeling the faintest glimmer of their thrumming connection to all the Slayers in the world. They let it fill them, let themselves become centered in what they needed to face the next battle. It was a scant few moments before Kurt's voice reached them again.

"Okay. When you are ready, you may open your eyes and begin."

They opened their eyes and raised their heads simultaneously. Rachel leapt.

Blaine was barely able to sidestep her attack, but sidestep it he did. His eyes were sharp and focused despite the bags beneath them, flashing with something decidedly new. Kurt didn't know what Blaine was thinking of to allow him to focus this way, but it was working.

It had been a rough couple of days, and Kurt had wanted nothing more than to bundle Blaine up on the couch with steaming bowls of homemade soup and silly movies and murmured assurances that everything would be okay. But he couldn't. Not now. They still didn't know exactly who they were dealing with behind it all, but it was starting. It was all starting, and Kurt needed Blaine strong. Especially since it was probably only a matter of time before news of the prophecy fell into the wrong hands. And once that happened, Blaine would be lucky to survive an hour.

Blaine fought well, though he was still using mostly defensive tactics. Rachel did up her game, and Blaine rose to the challenge. Kurt had always found it beautiful watching Slayers train together – the physical perfection with which they moved their bodies, strength that they never had to hold back, not with one another – but he had to admit that watching *Blaine* train was something else altogether. To see the strength and grace and intuitive skill that he had always associated with women demonstrated by this boy – this irrefutably *beautiful* boy – it was almost too much. Kurt found himself struggling to focus on Blaine's technique rather than his other attributes.

He sighed inwardly. It had been far too long since he'd had any type of sexual or romantic activity in his life. And now here he was, drooling over his *Slayer*. This was not good.

Will descended the stairs to the basement just as Rachel was once again pinning Blaine to the mat. It had taken far longer for her to overpower him in this round, though, and he had caused her to lose her footing more than once this time around. Blaine was definitely getting better. It would only be a matter of time before he won a round as well.

Both Slayers rose to their feet panting heavily. "That was really good, Blaine," Rachel said encouragingly.

Blaine smiled at her. "Thanks. And thanks for not going easy on me this time."

Rachel giggled slightly and gave Blaine a gentle punch on the arm that would have sent any normal person flying across the room. "Oh, please. You almost beat me fair and square that time. I've got half a mind to stop training with you before you actually *do*."

Blaine bit his lip and smiled shyly at her before looking over at Kurt, uncertainty written all over his face.

"She's right," Kurt confirmed gently. "You really stayed focused. That was phenomenal, Blaine. I'm proud of you."

Blaine openly preened at the attention, and Will clapped Kurt on his good shoulder. "That really was great, guys – good job, Kurt. I came down to tell you that dinner is almost ready, and we've got the meeting after that, so you might want to finish up."

"Just one more round?" Blaine asked hopefully. "I really want to beat Rachel."

Kurt glanced at Will and Rachel with a small smile. "One more round," Rachel agreed. "But don't get too sure of yourself, Anderson."

Blaine didn't beat Rachel that night, but he did come very close. It was enough to get his mind off of Brittany for a little while, especially with the genuine praise Kurt was giving him as he worked harder and harder and fought better and better.

He was just glad Kurt hadn't asked *what* Blaine was thinking about to help him fight that much better.

After dinner, everyone busied themselves with preparations for the monthly Council meeting. The Hummel-Hudson home was one of a handful of work-houses that hosted the meetings in the area, and it was not only an opportunity to discuss threats and strategies, it was an important social event too. Council meetings were where many people in the fold met their significant others. It was where strong friendships were formed and rivalries were developed. It was an evening of openness, where no one had to hide what they were.

Almost no one, anyway. To most of those present, Burt Hummel was simply Burt Hummel, Warlock mechanic and father to a young Watcher protege. He was not Burt Kalderash.

He was only Burt Kalderash to those select few who had been invited to join them early.

Blaine helped Finn bring extra chairs in from the garage while Carole, Kurt and Burt set up drinks and hors d'oeuvres for their guests. By the time they brought the last load of chairs inside, a small group was

assembled in a tight circle in the living room. Finn smiled at a tan-skinned boy with a short, well-groomed mohawk, and ran over to sit next to him, the two bumping fists as Finn settled in his chair. Blaine began unfolding chairs awkwardly, unsure of whether or not he should join the group.

"Blaine," Kurt called out quickly, "come join us. I want you to meet everyone."

Blaine smiled nervously as eyes in the room fell on him, and he moved to sit in the (thankfully) empty seat next to Kurt.

Kurt reached over and took Blaine's hand, giving it a soft squeeze before releasing it. Blaine felt his whole body exhale at the gentle touch.

Kurt introduced Blaine to everyone in the room, and it quickly became clear that these were the trusted few within the local Council chapter. There was a former Slayer named Shannon, solid and butch and dressed almost like a gym teacher, who was now Watcher to a strong-willed young woman named Mercedes. When Kurt whispered that it was in fact Shannon *Beiste* sitting in their living room, Blaine felt his eyes go wide. She was even more famous than Will Schuester, if only because she was known to be one of the strongest, most effective and least scrupulous Slayers of her generation. Her Slayer *must* be good.

"Mercedes trained at the Figgins School," Kurt whispered. "She's good, but she wouldn't be half as good without Shannon. She can be a bit lazy when left to her own devices."

Kurt kept up a stream of steady commentary about everyone present as they introduced themselves to Blaine and joined in the conversation.

The mohawked boy next to Finn was Noah Puckerman, heir to the Puckerman estate, and as close to an Alpha wolf as the pack had, "although who knows if that would be the case if it weren't for mommy's money."

Next to him was Mike, also a wolf, and quite new to their inner circle meetings. "His parents still don't know and he still lives at home. I have no idea how he manages it."

The boy in the wheelchair was Artie, the warlock that Burt and Kurt had been discussing turning to for help when Brittany went missing. "He's an apprentice, but he's good enough to be full-fledged. He's taking the hit so he can work with Lauren, though. She's absolutely the best in the state and she has very specific criteria for taking on students." Artie had petitioned for Lauren's inclusion in the inner circle, but no one

else was convinced that she could be trusted yet. She would be showing up for the meeting later with her other students.

Then there was Rachel and Will, of course, and Emma, who sat with one arm wrapped around Will and used the other to give Blaine an excited little wave when she caught his eye.

Blaine nodded pleasantly to everyone and tried to follow the threads of conversation that swirled around him. There was "the ritual" that Quinn, Tina and Dave had spoken of, and Blaine noticed Burt shifting uncomfortably when Artie proclaimed that he was sure Lauren would be able to figure out what it was. There was the Sylvester School and the Brittany incident – Blaine's main role in this conversation seemed to be swearing up and down that Brittany could never pose any sort of threat to any living person – and speculations as to who on the Council might be working for the advancement of evil generally and the Tea Party in particular. This seemed to be a rather sore subject, and almost everyone had an opinion.

"I'm telling you, that coven in Dayton is hiding *something*," Artie insisted.

"But they haven't even been properly inducted into the Council," Mercedes protested. "They couldn't possibly have enough information to be a real threat."

"Or maybe that's just what they *want* us to think. Maybe they have someone on the inside."

"Right, but *who*?"

"I bet it's that Lauren chick," Puck spoke up. Artie rolled his eyes.

"Puck. For the last time. It's *not* Lauren. You just think she's evil because she won't go out with you."

"Well, that *is* pretty evil of her. I mean, *look* at these guns." Puck flexed his bicep proudly and wagged his eyebrows at Rachel, who smiled and went slightly pink. Finn glared at Puck and made a low noise that almost sounded like a soft growl.

"Guys," Will said in a tone of condescending near-patience. "It's bigger than that. Who do we know with ties to politics?"

"Sue Sylvester," Rachel said quickly just as Mercedes started to open her mouth. Rachel gave her a smug smile while Mercedes glared at her in return.

"Really. Sue Sylvester. Just because she made you cry once or twice while you were at school," Mercedes spat.

Blaine kept his mouth carefully shut. Sue had definitely made Rachel cry more than once or twice.

"She did not make my *cry*," Rachel insisted. "And I think it's obvious. She has ties to several politicians in the Mid States, and something is *definitely* going on at that school if they're claiming that *Brittany Pierce* of all people is a threat. I heard they even have armed guards stationed outside the walls now."

Shannon frowned. "They do. Something's definitely not right up there, but I don't think it's Sue. I mean, insufferable – yes. Evil? Hardly. Sue was probably the second toughest Slayer in the field when we were active. And from what I understand, she's only keeping her toe in the political stream so she can alert us if there's something we need to prepare for again."

"Like more witch trials," Artie muttered.

"Or more government-mandated reconditioning camps for homosexuals," Burt added stiffly, throwing a fiercely protectively glance at Kurt and Blaine.

"Or whether or not they know..." Emma paused to clear her throat delicately, "about Blaine."

Everyone went silent and turned to stare at him.

"Well, that pretty much rules out Sylvester," Shannon said thoughtfully after a long moment. "She never would have let him just walk out of that school alive if she'd known."

"Known about...about what?" Blaine asked tentatively. He *really* hoped this wasn't one of those things Kurt had mentioned when Blaine was supposed to be listening to him during a study session but had been daydreaming about his soft-looking lips and bright blue eyes instead. That would be pretty embarrassing.

Emma's eyes went wider than Blaine had ever thought strictly possible as she looked around the room. "You haven't – haven't told him? Kurt? Burt? *Carole*?" The three she'd named shifted uncomfortably in their seats and avoided both Emma and Blaine's eyes.

"Emma," Will said after a moment. "We just thought..."

"We?" Emma asked incredulously. "William Schuester, just who is Matriarch of Western Ohio, thank you? You mean to tell me that you took this boy out of school, put him in more danger than he's equipped to understand and you made the decision to tell him nothing without even consulting me?"

Will swallowed hard, his eyes alight with what appeared to be real fear.

Blaine liked Emma. He liked her a lot.

"Blaine," Emma said briskly, turning toward him. "I apologize for the confusion, but you should know-"

"We wanted," Kurt began quickly, nervously. "We...we thought it might be better coming from...from *family*. It's kind of a lot for anyone to take in, and these past few weeks haven't exactly been easy on Blaine." Kurt gave him a sheepish smile. "We've had a bit of a rough start."

"We've had a *wonderful* start," Blaine whispered, unsure if Kurt had even heard him.

"But when...?"

"Tonight," a voice said from the doorway. Blaine whipped his head around to see a tall man with solid, serious features standing perfectly still in the entrance to the living room. And he was staring straight at Blaine.

It was as if no one in the room was breathing at all. The drop of a pin could have been heard throughout the house.

"I hope it's okay that I let myself in," the man added, walking toward them but not taking a seat. "It sounded like you were in the middle of something."

"No, that's fine," Burt said. "I told you you're always welcome. You are...ah...alone, right?"

"Yes." The man moved closer to Blaine. There was something intensely familiar about him that Blaine couldn't place.

"Blaine," the man said simply, holding out his hand. Blaine stared at it blankly for a moment before remembering his manners and rising to his feet to shake the stranger's hand.

A hand that was as cold as marble in midwinter.

The hand. The eyes. Something...

She was in his bedroom, in Blaine's own bedroom, and at first she had been beautiful with sparkling wings and he'd said I don't have a tooth, I have a loose one but it's still in there, you're early, because he was sure she was the tooth fairy, but then the woman's face twisted into something out of a nightmare, out of one of those fairytale books that Blaine's mother said his grandfather shouldn't have bought for him. Her eyes were red and she had a knife in a weird shape and she was saying things to him in a language he didn't understand and she was a monster, a real-life monster and Blaine wasn't even asleep and he was too scared to scream, but then the man was there. The man his mother had let in the night before because he offered her a free demonstration of something he was selling and his mother always liked to spend money when she was bored. And the man grabbed Blaine and his hands were cold but his eyes weren't mean and he moved Blaine behind him and he fought the thing that used to be a woman and then he had the knife and he stabbed it into the monster and she screamed and there was smoke and then there was nothing, nothing where she should have been, nothing left of her at all, and Blaine couldn't move but the man whispered "You're safe now, Blaine," and then he was gone even though Blaine didn't even see him leave and then his mother was there and Blaine was screaming and crying and she just kept saying "you had a nightmare sweetie, shhh, it was just a nightmare, it was just a dream, a dream, a dream," and eventually, Blaine had believed it.

It had never felt like a dream, but of course he had believed his mother. What other explanation made any sense?

But this man...it was the same man. Blaine was suddenly and completely sure of it.

And he hadn't aged a day since Blaine was five.

"I...I know you," was all Blaine was able to choke out.

The man nodded. "We've had a couple of encounters. I wasn't sure you remembered."

"Who...who are you?"

The man looked around at the circle of faces staring up at him. He gave a small, mirthless chuckle.

"Let's go find somewhere a little more private to talk if you don't mind."

Blaine remained anchored where he stood. "Not until you tell me who you are."

The man sighed. "All right. Well, let's see. I'm your great-great-great-great grandfather. Give or take a few greats." Blaine wasn't really sure how to process what this man was telling him. It didn't make any sense at all. Unless-

The man gave him the tiniest ghost of a smile. "My name is Angel," he added.

Blaine felt like he was going to faint.

Chapter Nine

Blaine wasn't sure when he came to his senses enough to begin following Angel outside. He didn't remember Carole offering tea. He didn't remember Kurt putting his own jacket around Blaine's shoulders so that he wouldn't get too cold. All he knew was that they were sitting on the back porch, a warm mug of strong black tea between Blaine's hands, and a mug of...something in Angel's hands. Something Blaine really didn't want to think about.

"So," Angel said awkwardly. Blaine looked up at him expectantly. "You...ah...follow any sports teams?"

"You can't be serious," Blaine said with a sharp laugh that was a little too high.

"Sorry. It's just...it's been awhile since I've done this. And you...well, look at you. You're all grown up."

"Such as it is," Blaine assented. "You know, you really are tall. Are you sure we're related?"

Angel laughed softly. "Yeah, I'm sure. It's amazing what throwing a little Filipino blood into the mix will do."

Blaine winced slightly at the reference to Filipino *blood*. Angel seemed to catch on, and his gaze dropped to his lap. "Sorry," he murmured.

Blaine bit his lip and looked at Angel, waiting until he met Blaine's gaze to reply. "It's Okay. I know you didn't mean...it's okay."

Angel nodded. When it became clear that he wasn't going to resume speaking anytime soon, Blaine forged ahead.

I...I don't really know where to start. So you must have had kids before you were turned..."

Angel shook his head and stared into his mug. "No. Well, none that I know of, anyway."

"So, how..." Blaine furrowed his brow. "Connor Reilly?" Angel nodded. "But he...he never had any children."

"None that anyone knew of," Angel answered. "I mean, after Jasmine...you know about Jasmine?"

Blaine nodded. "Every Slayer in school knows about Jasmine. We spent almost a semester on you, you know."

Angel's lips quirked into a small smile. "Well, after that there was some...concern. About what might happen if Connor fathered any children." Angel paused and looked around the yard sharply, leaning forward as if listening for something. After a moment he relaxed and continued.

"He didn't want to feel responsible for something like that happening again, and he was convinced that if he had children it might. I wondered about it too."

Angel's tone seemed to grow heavier and heavier as he spoke.

"Connor was never meant to be, and he knew that. I wanted him to have a normal life, a family...but he didn't see it that way. He decided that he was never going to have children and he didn't. Well, as far as he knew he didn't. He had a daughter that he never met. Raven."

"But you met her."

Angel shrugged. "I watched over her. And her daughter. And her daughter's sons." Angel glanced back at Blaine. "I've been keeping an eye on you your whole life, Blaine, and even if you weren't...even if you weren't *special* like you are, I still would. Connor was my son."

And there was something so painful in those words that Blaine felt an insane urge to hug the man. Vampire. *Vampire, Blaine, not a man at all.* Except...

Except if Angel wasn't a man, then what did that make Blaine? Because Blaine somehow, impossibly but seemingly irrefutably, had vampire blood flowing through his veins.

"How did you know about her?" Blaine asked softly, as if somehow Angel would break, as if he hadn't borne a thousand lifetimes of pain and still lived on.

"Her...her mother came to me when she realized she was pregnant. She wanted to keep the baby but..."

Blaine watched him through the pause, didn't interrupt. There was such a weight of sadness to him that Blaine could hardly bear it.

"But then there was the prophecy. And when she found out...we knew that giving Raven up would be the only way to keep her safe. To keep the entire *line* safe. Until...well, until it got to you."

"Me." Blaine's voice was barely a whisper.

"You. The one that the prophecy spoke of." Angel closed his eyes, his voice taking on the tone of recitation. *The blood of two vampires, wombs of three Slayers, the power of the first demons to roam the Earth. A man amongst women. Innocent.*"

Blaine swallowed hard. He felt dizzy, greedy, overcome. "What else does it say?"

"It gets a bit more...esoteric after that. We don't have a complete translation, but...it seems that you are the one with the ability, the *destiny* to break the curse."

"Your curse?"

Angel looked down at his lap and gave a short, bitter laugh. "I wish it was just mine," he answered softly. He looked up and met Blaine's eyes, and Blaine flinched slightly at the intensity he saw there. "I used to think it was, but the Kalderashes didn't just curse me. They cursed us all. Our entire line. And somehow that ended up affecting...everything else."

"What do you mean?" Blaine whispered. He could barely make his voice work at all.

"I mean that it affected everything. Jasmine. Darla. Connor. *All* of us – it was all just leading up to this moment. To you, Blaine. I mean that the fate of the world is in your hands," Angel answered. "But no pressure or anything."

Brittany fidgeted near the motel window. "We need to get to Ohio," she said urgently.

Santana sighed and stretched out her legs on the bed where she sat. She looked up from the book in her lap. "I know, Britt, but Willy and I can't drive in the daytime. It's too dangerous."

"Don't call me Willy," Spike muttered from the other bed in the room. His arm was thrown across his eyes against the bedside lamp that Santana had insisted on keeping on.

"We're not even going in the right direction," Brittany protested. "We're getting farther away from them."

"I know. But people are looking for you. We need to throw them off the trail a bit."

"You sure you're not just avoiding your little reunion with Pappa and baby Kalderash?" Spike asked, his lips quirking into a slight smirk.

"Don't you mean Pappa and baby *Summers*?" Santana snarled. "You'd still be stalking them like something out of a really crappy horror movie right now if Angel hadn't insisted on taking his turn."

"I made a promise," Spike said harshly, sitting up. "I *keep* my bloody promises, you miserable-"

"All right, all right. *Itzamna**, Willy, don't get your panties in a twist over a promise to a dead woman," Santana muttered, going back to her book.

Spike leapt to his feet and strode over to Santana's bed, ripping the book out of her hands and throwing it to the floor.

"Say that again," he hissed, moving his face mere inches from hers.

Santana's eyes narrowed and she shoved Spike back hard, leaping to her feet. "I said, *Spike*, that you need to *move the fuck on*. What has it been, fifty years since your precious *Buffy*-" Her words were cut off with a yelp as Spike delivered a powerful blow to Santana's jaw, sending her sprawling to the floor.

"Forty-one years, five months, two weeks and six days," Spike replied, his voice dangerously soft.

Santana sprung to her feet with a snarl, now in full vamp face. "Yeah? Well, you'd think that would be enough time to grow your balls back," she spat before kicking Spike hard in the chest. Spike stumbled backwards before regaining his footing and lunging at Santana again. His human face had been replaced with his vamp face as well, and he was growling quietly.

Santana sidestepped him easily, and Spike roared in frustration, pulling the bedside lamp off the table and ripping the cord out of the wall in the process. Santana laughed at his first wild swing, her evasive movements fluid as a cat. They circled one another pensively.

And then screamed.

Spike and Santana flew to separate ends of the room, shielding their faces with sizzling fingers. Sunlight poured through the large picture window that faced both beds, illuminating Brittany's features in front of the window. She finished opening the curtains and then turned to smile at the two vampires huddled in the shadows on either end of the room.

"You bloody idiot girl, what do you think you're-"

"Don't call me an idiot," Brittany said firmly. "It makes me want to throw you outside and watch you burn to death."

Spike and Santana stared, slack-jawed and speechless.

"I don't want to kill you," Brittany amended softly, "but I don't like it when people call me stupid. And I'm tired of going the wrong way and listening to you fight. I'm *not* stupid. I'm strong. I'm special. I'm a Unicorn."

"Fuck," Spike groaned. He was wearing his human face once again. "Another fucking *Harmony*, aren't you?" He looked pointedly at Santana. "Well, I can see how this is going to go. We both know how it is with you and ditzy blondes."

"Ditzy is another word for stupid," Santana said with a smile that was clearly vicious even upon the return of her human features. "You should really throw him outside, Britt."

"I didn't *mean* it," Spike backpedaled nervously. "I was talking about Harm, anyway, not *you*. You're lovely. Unicorns all around. In fact, I think Harm may have left a stray figurine in the trunk if you want to-"

"In the trunk? How recently was she with you?" Santana asked sharply.

Spike smirked. "Well. Wouldn't you just love to know."

"You don't even *respect* her! How can you keep jerking her around like this?"

"She doesn't have a bleeding *soul*, Santana. And besides, you're hardly one to talk. I'd say you two spent *more* than enough time jerking one another-"

"It wasn't like that. I respected her. You just used her."

"Right. You *respected* how much she looked like Elizabeth."

"I'm about ready to respect your *face*."

"Ah, there we are. That must be the legendary Mayan wit everyone's always talking about."

"Now I kind of want to throw you both outside," said Brittany conversationally.

Santana's eyes widened. "But I thought our destinies were entangled. Or interrelated. Or *something*. Aren't they?"

Brittany sighed and closed her eyes. "They are. But you're never going to become my vampire lover if you keep fighting with Spike and driving me away from Ohio."

Santana made a strangled sound like she was choking on air. Spike laughed.

"We should probably sleep until it's dark again," Brittany said, firmly closing the heavy curtains. "But then we need to get to Ohio. We don't have a lot of time, and if they get Kurt-"

"They won't get Kurt," Spike interrupted fiercely.

"We won't let them *touch* Kurt," Santana confirmed with equal force.

Brittany's eyes flickered between them for a moment. "You know, it's a good thing Kurt isn't a girl," she said. "You two would be *killing* each other over him if he was."

"So would Angel," both vampires muttered. Startled, they glanced at one another and laughed.

Brittany beamed. "See? I knew you guys could be friends!"

Spike raised his eyebrows and Santana rolled her eyes at that, but neither one of them actually responded to the statement.

"Santana, can I borrow some pajamas?" Brittany asked, pulling off her sweater and heading toward the bathroom.

"I...um, I don't really have any pajamas. I have a few extra shirts, but..."

"Oh, that's okay," Brittany answered with a smile. "As long as you don't mind me sleeping beside you in just a shirt and underwear."

Santana swallowed thickly. Her skin seemed to take on an almost-human flush. "Y-yeah. That's great. I mean, that's fine, Britt. Whatever. Cool."

Spike snorted and Santana shot him a glare. She walked over to her suitcase and quickly shoved her long overnight shirts and comfy cotton underwear to the bottom of the bag. She pulled out a tiny purple T-shirt and a black pair of low-rise string bikini briefs. She turned to Brittany and handed her the items with a wide, innocent smile. "Here you are, Britt."

"Thanks," Brittany chirped, and bounced into the bathroom to get ready for bed. Santana stared at the bathroom door for a very long moment before covering her face with her hands and falling back onto the bed with a groan.

"Sweet dreams, love," Spike said, the smirk evident in his voice as he settled back down on top of the covers on the opposite bed.

"Die," Santana muttered, wondering how she was going to get a single moment of sleep before nightfall.

Kurt's eyes sparkled in the morning sun, the full spectrum of their endless colors clearer than Blaine had ever seen them before. Blaine pulled him down flush on top of him, the heat of Kurt's smooth, naked skin making him moan.

"Good morning." Kurt's voice was soft and breathless, his face so close to Blaine's that they were almost touching. Blaine poked his tongue out and lightly traced the contours of Kurt's perfect pink lips.

Kurt sighed as his eyes fell shut, lowering his slightly parted mouth onto Blaine's so that Blaine's tongue slipped inside of his mouth as their lips met.

Blaine reached up to pull Kurt even closer, one hand threading into his soft hair and the other resting gently on his pert, lovely ass. Firm and soft and just plump enough to feel *amazing* when Blaine allowed himself to gently squeeze. Perfect. Fucking *perfect*.

They began to move together as they kissed, and it was a bit vague what they were doing exactly, but it felt incredible, Kurt's breath on his face and his strong, slender body bringing Blaine quickly to the brink.

"Kurt," he whispered. "Kurt, Kurt, *Kurt*. I want you so badly, Kurt."

"I want you too," Kurt whispered back.

Blaine moaned again and buried his face in Kurt's neck, placing soft kisses against the tender sweat-damp skin.

"Blaine." There was something different about Kurt's voice. It sounded less breathless and wanton, more crisp and businesslike.

They kept moving together, faster and faster. Blaine whimpered, feeling himself get close.

"*Blaine*." And then there was someone knocking at the door.

"No..." Blaine whined. "Please...they can wait. Just let them wait. I'm so close, Kurt, you feel so good..."

"*BLAINE!*" The knocking at the door grew louder, more persistent, and suddenly Kurt dissolved like a ghost in his arms and he was alone, tangled in the sheets of his bed.

"Blaine, so help me I am going to come in there if you don't answer me right this second!"

Blaine groaned miserably and opened his eyes. "I'm awake," he called.

"It's about time," Kurt called back from the hallway. "It's almost ten-thirty. We have a long day ahead of us, and there are some people I want you to meet."

Blaine groaned again. His dream was *so* much better than this shit.

"Okay," he called back, sitting up. "Just...um, give me half an hour? I need to take a shower first."

"All right," Kurt replied, his voice taking on a gentler tone. "I'll have breakfast waiting."

Blaine jumped out of bed and smiled while he stretched. He looked down at his raging hard-on and sighed. Silently thanking god for the invention of en-suite bathrooms, he made his way toward the shower to try and clean both his body and his mind.

When Blaine reached the kitchen, post-orgasmic and freshly showered, there was a pot of coffee waiting for him. On the coffee maker there was also a note in Kurt's neat script informing him that half of his breakfast was warming in the oven and the other half was in the refrigerator. Blaine smiled. Since Brittany had gone missing, Kurt had allowed Blaine to forgo his morning tangerine-and-long-jog in favor of comfort food and sleeping in. He was still decidedly relentless when it came to Blaine's training and studies, but the small nurturing gestures didn't escape Blaine's notice.

Kurt had made him whole wheat pancakes with raspberry preserves, turkey bacon, and a fruit and nut plate to go with his coffee. As Blaine ate, he slowly became aware of voices in the next room. And not just the familiar voices of the household members.

Blaine and Angel had talked long into the night. They had missed the official Council meeting, but Kurt had assured him that he would fill him in later. Blaine knew that a few attendees had stayed late and opted to stay over in some of the Hummel-Hudson house's many guest bedrooms. As a work-house largely funded by the Council, it was expected that they house any members that needed lodging. Kurt had told Blaine that it sometimes felt like living in a hotel.

Blaine finished eating and washed his dishes before proceeding to the living room. Kurt, Carole and Artie were there with three others Blaine vaguely remembered having seen before he went to sleep the night before. There was a large, striking woman with shrewd eyes and an almost terrifying air of confidence as well as two good-looking men around his own age with floppy hair.

"Ah, speak of the devil," Kurt said cheerfully, walking over to stand beside Blaine and give his arm a brief, gentle squeeze. Blaine raised his eyebrows at him.

"Kurt was just telling us all about you," the brunette boy said smoothly. "A male Slayer. *Fascinating*. I'm something of an expert on Slayer lore. Would you consider allowing me to conduct a magical analysis of-"

"Shut it, Jesse," the woman said firmly but without much bite. "Don't mind him, I'm pretty sure he has narcissistic personality disorder and it sometimes affects his social skills. I'm Lauren." She held out her hand and Blaine found himself on the receiving end of one of the firmest handshakes he'd ever experienced.

"This is Jeremiah," she added, indicating the blond man standing next to an affronted-looking Jesse. Jeremiah gave Blaine an almost-shy smile that seemed to be throbbing with warmth. Blaine felt an odd tug in the pit of his stomach as he smiled back.

Jeremiah was a *cute* guy.

"So. Slayer strength, huh? Hot. What team to you play for, Blaine?"

"*Lauren!*" Kurt admonished.

Blaine blushed. "No, that's okay. I don't mind. Uh, I'm gay, so..." he shrugged, unsure of what else to say on the subject.

"Hmmm. Shame. I'm sure Hummel and Jerry are happy to hear that, though."

Kurt rolled his eyes. Jeremiah blushed deeply and looked at his feet.

"So, Blaine," Lauren said, her voice taking on a brisk tone. "We need to talk. J1, J2 – go outside and play or something."

"Oh, come *on*," Jesse protested as Jeremiah headed toward the door.

"Out," Lauren snapped.

"But Artie gets to stay? He can't even-"

"When you've shown me almost four years of loyal service *without* a consistent attitude problem, we'll talk about you joining us at the big kids' table. Now *go*."

Lauren's tone grew sharp enough that Blaine felt himself involuntarily flinch. Glaring heavily at Artie, Jesse turned and stormed out of the room.

Lauren motioned toward the couch, and everyone moved to sit. Even those that had lived in the house for years seemed to react to the gesture as a sign of *permission*. Blaine suppressed a smile. He liked Lauren already.

Once they were settled, Lauren turned toward Blaine, her expression serious. "The Council has asked me to perform a locator spell on Brittany Pierce," she said. Blaine tensed.

"It's okay, Blaine," Kurt added quickly. "Artie convinced us that we could trust Lauren. She knows the real story. As much as the rest of us do, anyhow."

"About time too," Lauren said, sounding slightly irritated. "Your sad little operation could have used me *months* ago."

"Well, we're grateful to have your help now," Carole said warmly. Lauren smiled back, her annoyance seeming to dissipate completely.

"I'm planning to do two spells," Lauren continued. "A false spell to throw them off the trail, and a true one so that we know where she is and can lead them as far away from her as possible. From what Burt has told me it sounds like this girl has some psychic ability. Is that true?"

Blaine nodded. "It's not consistent or predictable, but she has prophetic dreams and sometimes she just *knows* things. Most people don't take her seriously because she has this kind of...um...dreamy quality about her, but she's almost never wrong."

Lauren nodded. "So she's a true prophet then. Those are rare. And I'm willing to bet my fine ass that she's headed this way."

"Probably," Blaine answered. "At least, I hope so. I'm really her only friend, and I would hope she'd come here if things are getting bad at school."

"That's sweet, Blaine, but that isn't why I think she's coming here. I mean...you *can* feel it, can't you?"

"Feel what?" Blaine asked nervously.

"Shit's about to get real," Artie supplied. Lauren nodded in agreement.

"This is where it's happening," she added. "The end is coming, unless we can stop it."

Blaine bit his lip. "Apocalypse?" he whispered, his stomach clenching in fear.

Kurt reached over and covered Blaine's hand with his own. The warmth in the touch allowed a tiny rush of calm to wash through him.

Lauren gave a short, harsh laugh.

"Nah," said Artie, "that shit's *old*."

"Times change and so do strategies," Lauren added with a nod.

"They've almost won already. They've just been so quiet and methodical this time around that we didn't notice early enough," Kurt added softly, squeezing Blaine's hand. It occurred to Blaine that the action might be as much for Kurt's comfort as Blaine's own.

"Unless, of course, you can stop it," Lauren added with a sad smile. "From what we've gathered of the prophecy so far, if you can end the curse to your line, we've got a shot."

Blaine felt his stomach drop. He suddenly wished that he hadn't eaten such a big breakfast.

"But no pressure or anything," Lauren added with a wink.

"I think I might take a walk down to that little corner store I saw on the way in," Jeremiah said. "Want to come?"

"No," Jesse sighed. "I need to make a phone call."

Once Jeremiah had left, Jesse wandered over toward the living room window. He couldn't hear anything through the double-paned glass nor see anything through the blinds. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a tiny blue orb.

"*Accendo*," he whispered. The orb rose into the air and hovered in front of the window. The blinds fluttered slightly and then went translucent. No one inside the room reacted.

Jesse took in the scene in front of him. He couldn't make out what they were saying, but it wasn't always about the words. When searching for points of weakness, in fact, it rarely was.

He studied the boy Slayer and his Watcher. It didn't take long; anyone could see it. Jesse's face split into a wide grin. He took his phone out of his pocket and dialed.

"Well?" demanded the voice on the end of the line by way of greeting.

Jesse laughed. "Hello to you too."

"Look, I don't have time for-"

"I know. This isn't a social call, I swear."

Jesse paused for effect, enjoying the tension it created. "I have an idea," he continued, studying the boys on the couch, oblivious to his observation.

Soon it would all be worth it. The subservience, the humiliation, the insults. All of it.

Jesse smiled again. "I know how we can get the Summers boy."

*A/N: *Itzamna is the name of an upper-level god of creation in Mayan religious mythology.*

Chapter Ten

"Blaine, faster!" Kurt's breath was hot on his ear.

"I'm going as fast as I can, Kurt."

"You are not. You're holding back. Come on!"

"Kurt, I don't want to-"

"Come *on!*"

Blaine took a deep breath and surged forward, Kurt's grip tightening around him as he did.

"Blaine, there!"

"What...you can't mean *there?*"

"Yes. Right there. Come on!"

"I'm not going to fit!"

"You'll be fine."

"Kurt..."

"Blaine, your body can move in ways the rest of us can only *dream* about. You've got this. Now *go!*"

Blaine bit his lip and leaned to the right, guiding the motorcycle toward the tiny gap in the crumbling stone wall that bordered the forest they were traveling beside. Behind them the van was closing in fast, and he and Kurt were very clearly outnumbered. Finding way to put some distance between themselves and the Hellions hot on their tail was the only immediate solution.

"Hold on!" Blaine's throat was sore from yelling to be heard.

Kurt tightened his arms around Blaine's waist even more, his hips flush against Blaine's ass. Blaine swallowed hard, switching the bike to its proper setting for off-roading seconds before leaving the pavement. The loud mechanical whir of the tread readjusting itself was slightly audible over the quiet purr of the engine and the loud thrum of the wind in their ears. The bike leapt slightly as it hit the dirt, and the gap was so narrow, and god – what if they couldn't-

Blaine gritted his teeth as he took aim, holding as steady as possible over the uneven terrain, trying not to even think about what would happen if Kurt had miscalculated and they couldn't make it through. He pressed his legs in hard against the frame of the vehicle, and prayed that Kurt was doing the same.

The van was even closer, and Blaine heard an alarmingly loud bang, a bullet whizzing past them and hitting a tree with a loud crack. Blaine didn't spare a moment to react to the noise or what it signified, didn't allow himself even a nanosecond to wonder how on earth the Hellions had gotten ahold of *guns* (or why they were driving a van, for that matter). Instead he slammed down the accelerator, focusing his entire concentration to that one tiny finite gap that maybe, if he was very, very lucky, he could manage to get himself and Kurt through without getting killed...

Kurt's hold grew impossibly tighter and Blaine willed himself not to close his eyes as they shot through the narrow opening. Blaine felt a sharp flash of pain on his outer calf followed by the sensation of cool air on the skin of his leg. He felt Kurt go slightly lax behind him, his grip loosening ever-so-slightly.

They were through.

Blaine allowed himself only the barest second to relax before registering that the danger had not left them. They were hurtling down a tiny, thin, and badly overgrown dirt path through the trees, and as they heard a sickening smash of metal against stone behind them, their way suddenly grew quite a bit darker. The Hellions, with obvious disregard for both the state of their vehicle and their own hides, had smashed the van into the wall, handily destroying both headlights in the process. Regardless of the obvious intensity of the impact, it was only a few seconds before the sounds of shouting and the mindless firing of guns filled the air, the demons extracting themselves from the ruined vehicle and proceeding to follow them on foot.

Blaine concentrated on maintaining control of the bike as he thought. The solar cells would be almost depleted soon, and he hadn't replaced the back-up unit in almost a week. Kurt definitely had an extra battery with him, but it would mean stopping long enough to change the batteries out.

The bike was fairly quiet, but not entirely silent. They would have to put a fair amount of distance between themselves and the Hellions before Blaine could cut the engine without alerting the demons to their whereabouts.

Not wanting to yell, Blaine reached down with one hand and gave Kurt's clasped hands a brief squeeze. Kurt took the hint and wrapped his arms around Blaine more securely.

Blaine took a deep breath and flicked the turbo switch. The bike very nearly *flew* forward as its speed increased exponentially. Concentrating hard, Blaine hurtled them forth into the night.

"What do you *mean* you don't have a battery pack?" Blaine whispered harshly as he walked his now-depleted motorcycle down the path.

"Do you honestly want me to repeat myself, or are you just asking for dramatic effect?" Kurt snapped.

"But you *always* have an extra battery pack on you!"

"Well, there wasn't enough room in my bag for the battery *and* my water bottle, Blaine. I thought you replaced it this morning. You *should* have replaced it this morning."

Blaine sighed miserably. "I forgot."

"Clearly."

"All right, well I suppose we can-"

Kurt looked up. "It's a full moon tonight," he observed.

"Um...Kurt, we kind of have a situation here. Maybe we could stay on-topic?"

Kurt looked back at Blaine and rolled his eyes. "The moonlight should be strong enough to give us a decent recharge. We'll just have to lay low for a bit and hope they don't sniff us out."

Blaine glanced up at the moon through the branches above them and then back at Kurt. "*Moonlight* can recharge it? How is that even possible?"

Kurt shrugged. "The solar cells are very powerful." He curled his lips into a slight smirk. "And it is possible that my father just *might* have charmed the cells to take a lunar charge. But you didn't hear it from me."

Blaine smiled. "Your father is kind of amazing."

Kurt beamed back at him and shrugged. "Yeah."

It didn't take long for them to find a tiny clearing with enough exposure to the moon to allow the bike to charge, but secluded enough to (hopefully) keep them safe from discovery. Blaine knew he could fight if he needed to, but nine large demons armed with rifles were definitely more than he could handle on his own. Once the bike recharged, they could hopefully rejoin Rachel and Mercedes and coordinate a more realistic plan of attack.

Kurt sat down on a patch of soft moss and leaned back against a large boulder. He patted the ground next to himself. Blaine smiled and sat down next to him.

They were quiet for awhile, listening for sounds of the demons that had pursued them. Blaine hoped they would give up the chase, giving Kurt and himself the opportunity to find the others and regroup before facing them again. But he held himself at the ready just in case.

"How's your shoulder?" He whispered to Kurt. Kurt laughed softly.

"For the fiftieth time, Blaine, it's *fine*. Lauren knows what she's doing. She fixed me right up."

Blaine smiled sheepishly, and leaned his head back against the boulder. "I know. I just...I don't want you patrolling with me if you're hurt."

"Blaine, I *told* you, I'm-"

"And I don't want you getting hurt again because of me."

Kurt sighed and reached out, stroking Blaine's cheek softly. Blaine sighed and leaned into the contact before Kurt blinked and pulled his hand back quickly.

"You...I just..." Kurt turned his gaze to his hands, his cheeks slightly pink. He picked up a pebble from the ground beneath his knees, and began turning it around in his hands.

"It wasn't your fault, Blaine. If I get hurt on the job, it isn't your *fault*," Kurt said firmly, his eyes trained on the pebble. It was pale orange, shot with a band of mottled gray. It really was quite pretty.

"But it's my job to keep you safe," Blaine argued softly, gazing at Kurt's pebble as well.

Kurt looked at him. "And it's *my* job to keep *you* safe. You need to understand that, Blaine. It's why the Council still pairs Slayers with Watchers. We're a team. We need each other, and we both know what we're signing up for." Kurt sighed, his face shifting into a sad smile. "Even if you didn't exactly have any choice in the matter."

Blaine smiled back. "Maybe not. But it was my choice to stay with you. I can't imagine being with anyone else."

Kurt dropped his gaze back to the pebble in his hands. Neither of them said anything for a few moments, Kurt watching his pebble and Blaine watching Kurt's long fingers as they spun the little rock in tight, deft patterns. His eyes flickered to Kurt's face when he began to speak.

"I never did check in with you properly about your conversation with Angelus. How was it?"

"It was...illuminating. But I doubt he told me anything you didn't already know."

Kurt shook his head. "I don't imagine so. I'm sorry you weren't able to get answers sooner, but I really thought they should come from him, and he's difficult to get ahold of at the best of times."

"How long have you known him?" Blaine asked, resting the side of his head against the boulder again.

Kurt looked up at him.

"I've always known him. He's always kind of just...been there. He's saved my life on more occasions than I'd care to count. I never know when he'll swoop in. He's like my extremely flammable guardian angel." Kurt chuckled softly.

"He's always watched over you," Blaine whispered. Kurt looked at him and nodded. "He said he's done the same for me. Because I'm his family. But your family...well, you..."

"Cursed him?"

Blaine shrugged nervously in affirmation.

"Yes, well, I don't know that he has any particular allegiance to the Kalderashes, though he does owe us a few times over *despite* the curse." Blaine raised his eyebrows at the trace of bitterness in Kurt's tone. "But the Summers...Well, you know about Buffy Summers, of course."

Blaine nodded. "The last lone Slayer."

"Did you know about...her history with Angel?"

Blaine simply stared at him.

"They were lovers," Kurt provided.

Blaine swallowed, unsure of why exactly that information made his throat go dry. "Oh."

"It was complicated, from what I gather – they could never *truly* be together, as the one time they tried they ended up breaking the curse and releasing Angelus and the world almost ended, but they loved each other. And they were...with each other in one sense or another, although never completely, never *really* together, until the day that she died."

"That...that's so sad," Blaine whispered, his eyes shining.

Kurt turned to face him, leaning his head back against the boulder to mirror Blaine's position. "I know. And he promised to watch after her children, and their children...I don't know if she meant to ask him to look after *all* her descendents, but he seemed to take that as a given. And now...well, I'm the last one."

"Maybe not," Blaine argued. "You could have children one day." Kurt gave a short laugh.

"Not if I have to stay in the Mid States, Blaine. You know it's illegal for those of us who have *chosen the homosexual lifestyle* to raise children here. And even if I do raise children one day, it's unlikely that they'd

be of my bloodline." Kurt sighed. "Besides," he added, "I don't know if I could live with myself if I chose to bring a child into this world."

"Don't say that," Blaine admonished softly. "The world needs children."

"Does it?" Kurt asked sadly, gazing back down at his pebble. "The world has more children that it can reasonably take care of. If I do raise children...I think it would be one of those that have been orphaned or abandoned. I wouldn't take pains to *create* a new child, when there are so many without love in the world already."

Kurt looked back at Blaine, and his eyes were brimming with emotion. With grief and compassion and an acceptance of the world as it was without resignation to its failings. His eyes were so intense that Blaine could feel Kurt's gaze rippling all the way down to his soul.

And he didn't think. He couldn't. Blaine's body moved as if of its own accord. Because one moment he was staring at Kurt, and the next moment his eyes were closed and he was pulling Kurt close and his lips were soft and warm and slightly dry against his own.

He didn't think as he threaded his fingers gently through Kurt's hair, didn't think as he tilted his head and parted his lips to deepen the kiss, and when his brain finally did re-engage, set and ready to panic, he didn't even take pause. Because in that moment it became entirely clear that Kurt was *kissing him back*.

Kurt wasn't merely kissing him back, Kurt was clutching Blaine's face with one hand, his other snaking around Blaine's waist, and Blaine allowed Kurt to slowly lower him to the ground, parting his knees to allow Kurt to settle between them.

Kurt pulled back slightly, panting. "Blaine..." he whispered hoarsely, and hearing Kurt say his name like that only made Blaine surge toward him and kiss him even harder. Kurt began melting into him, the warmth of his body pressing Blaine into the cool grass beneath him. Blaine felt his mind drift, his conscious thoughts begin to dissolve into a mist of pleasure and comfort and absolute serenity.

Which was probably why he didn't react quickly enough when Kurt grew slightly stiff in his arms, and then tore himself off of Blaine, sitting bolt upright and staring at him with an utterly bewildering mixture of lust, confusion and horror.

"Oh, fuck. Blaine, I'm...I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have...I wasn't thinking, I just...fuck. Fuck. *Fuck*."

Kurt rubbed his hands across his face hard, continuing to swear under his breath.

Blaine propped himself up on his elbows. "Kurt, it's *okay*. I was the one...I mean, I started it. I thought...I thought you liked it."

Kurt's hands dropped into his lap and he stared at Blaine incredulously. "Of course I *liked* it, Blaine, that isn't the point. The point is that our relationship is important, *boundaries* are important, and we can't *do* this. We can't work together if we're going to do this."

Blaine's eyes went wide. He scrambled into a sitting position, desperately reaching for Kurt's hand. Kurt pulled it away with a harsh gasp.

"No...Kurt, I want to stay with you. I want you to be my Watcher. I honestly don't think I could stand to work with anyone else. Please. We can...it doesn't have to be one or the other, Kurt. We can be more to each other too, we can-"

"Blaine, we *can't*," Kurt said fiercely. "We can't have it both ways, it doesn't work that way."

Blaine gave him an incredulous look. "What are you *talking* about? There aren't any rules against it – there have been Slayers that have married their Watchers, Kurt."

Kurt shook his head. "That's different. That's...we can't jeopardize our professional relationship over a physical attraction, Blaine. I've just been alone for a fair while, and I'm sure you have too, and it's only natural that this kind of thing could happen. But it's just an *attraction*, Blaine. It's not enough to risk everything for."

Blaine couldn't even blink. He swallowed hard. "Just an attraction," he echoed hollowly.

Kurt looked at him, his eyes softening. "Well, what else could it be?" He asked pointedly.

Blaine didn't answer. He couldn't answer. He felt like he'd been punched in the chest repeatedly. He felt like he was about to start crying, and he didn't even know why. Words felt small and flimsy and pathetic and he couldn't even begin to imagine how to use them to express anything. He just continued to stare at Kurt.

"Look, Blaine," Kurt continued, leaning back against the boulder and sighing. He didn't have his little pebble anymore – he must have dropped it while he was kissing Blaine – so he merely stared at his hands instead. "You...I've been training you pretty hard and you haven't had much of a social life outside of work. You should...you should get out more. Meet some people. Date. You need to know that I'm not your only option, even if it feels that way."

Blaine shook his head. "No," he whispered. "It's not...that's not it. That's not why I like you, Kurt."

Kurt bit his lip. "Blaine, it's just-"

He stopped abruptly at a faint sound in the distance. Both boys sat up a bit straighter.

The growled cursing and graceless clomping through the underbrush was still a ways off, but moving unmistakably in their direction.

"Do you think it's charged enough?" Blaine whispered.

"I think so. Enough to get us back into Lima, anyhow." Kurt quickly jumped to his feet.

Blaine simply stared at Kurt's figure moving toward the bike for a moment and sighed. He cast his gaze to the ground for a moment and something caught his eye.

It was the little pebble Kurt had been toying with.

Casting a quick glance toward Kurt, who was checking the charge levels on the solar cells on Blaine's bike, Blaine slipped the stone into his pocket before standing up and moving to join him.

Dave ducked just in time to miss the large ceramic jug being hurled at his head.

"Is there actually anything you *can't* fuck up?" Quinn demanded. "Really. Because I'd like to know."

"You know, if you'd stop being such a bitch and *listen* to me for five se- *fuck!*" Dave clutched the back of his head where a plate had just slammed into him, landing on the hard concrete floor and shattering noisily.

"*Listen* to you?" Tina intoned. "The last time we *listened* to you, that little fucking boy Slayer plucked the Summers boy right out of our hands, you ugly cretin. And then you go creep around his house without even *consulting* us first-"

Dave managed to dodge a second plate from Tina, though Quinn's sugar bowl clipped him in the chin. Dave caught it before it hit the floor and threw it back at her.

Quinn's eyes widened in shock as she ducked to miss the heirloom. She glared up at him.

"What exactly do you not understand here, Dave? You're *out*. Everything you touch turns to sunlight and ashes. If it weren't for you screwing up all our plans-"

"But that guy. The one at the house. I'm pretty sure I know who it is. It's-"

"Was it Spike or Angel?" Tina asked, sounding bored. She dropped the last few plates, and moved to stand beside Quinn.

"Uh...Angel. But how did you know that?"

Tina and Quinn glanced at one another and giggled softly. "Oh, Dave. This is the *Summers* boy we're talking about here. Don't you do your homework? Talk to other vampires? *Listen* when Tina and I have conversations?"

Dave scratched the back of his neck. "Uh...no?"

"Well, then that's another thing we can add to the list of things that make you an idiot. Trust me, Dave, those two skulk around the Summers' like panting dogs, waiting to rut up against anything the Summers women spit out. Of course now that he's seen you, Angel probably won't leave the perimeter for the next decade. So thank you for making *everything* about this that much more difficult. I'm sure the boss will be staking us any day now."

Dave glared at Quinn but glanced up the basement stairs before responding. A soft chuckle drifted down from the landing, and Quinn and Tina both froze.

"Yes, Dave, I think it's probably best if you let me take it from here," Jesse said smugly as he descended the stairs. "In fact, I probably should have-"

Jesse broke off in an undignified shriek as Tina lunged at him hungrily.

"*Back off!*" He snapped, regaining his composure just in time to thrust his palm toward her, creating an invisible barrier. Tina clawed at it furiously.

"Fuck, Dave, you can't even bring *dinner* without fucking it up! Seriously? A *warlock*?"

"He isn't dinner," Dave started to explain.

"Then why did you bother bringing him?" Quinn hissed. "The old woman that lived here was all skin and bones. And she was disgusting - I think she had a blood disease or something. We haven't had a decent meal in *days*."

"And he'll be sure to make sure that you get one before the night is through, isn't that right, Dave?" Jesse asked smoothly.

Dave sighed and shrugged. "Yeah. I...I wasn't trying to be a fang-tease or anything, guys, he just...he told me if I brought him to you you'd take me back maybe. It's a lot harder to get guys to follow me places without you around."

"Oh how sweet," Tina cooed. "And here I thought you just loved us for our minds, Dave. So what's this smarmy little fleshpot got that would make us want you back anyway?"

"We're all working for the same cause," Jesse answered. Quinn laughed.

"Sweetheart, I'm just working for fresh blood and pretty shoes. Whatever *cause* you might think I'm invested in-"

"Oh? So you *aren't* trying to get ahold of the Summers boy? You *don't* want to ensure that he's available for the ritual?"

Quinn's eyes narrowed. "What's your angle, blood puppet?"

Jesse smiled. "Does it matter?"

Tina laughed sharply. "Of course it *matters*. Are you asking us to just blindly trust you or something? How could you *possibly* benefit from the ritual?"

Jesse's smile turned cool. "I've been promised some things of value. Look, all you need to know is that we have the same boss. And she's *not* pleased with your performance thus far." Jesse removed his ear-clip and held the phone out to Quinn as she rolled her eyes in response. "Here. Call her if you don't believe me. I'm sure she'd just *love* to hear from you – she's been wondering why you've been out of touch for so long, actually."

Quinn eyed the phone with disgust. "So let's say you are telling the truth. What do you need us for? And why drag Mr. Universe back into it?" she gestured vaguely toward Dave.

"Well. I was *hoping* you would ask," Jesse answered, pausing dramatically to meet each of their eyes in turn. "I've been inside the Summers boy's house. I have his trust. Or at least...I have the trust of someone that can help us get to him. But I'll need your help. All three of you."

The three vampires stared at him for a long moment. Finally, Quinn sighed. "Fine. But can we *please* get something to eat first? And...see if you can find a scarf or something. Your neck is fucking *distracting*."

Jesse laughed triumphantly. "But of course. Shall we?" He motioned for the three to precede him up the stairs.

Tina rolled her eyes. "I *really* want to kill him," she muttered to Quinn.

Quinn smirked. "Shhh. Let's just get the kid. I'm sure the boss won't care *what* we do with the mouthy warlock after that."

Both women smiled sweetly at Jesse as they brushed past him and made their way up the stairs, Dave giving Jesse a pointed look as he followed. Jesse simply smiled in return, and gave Dave a nod before ascending the staircase behind them.

"Hello?"

"Is this Blaine?"

"Um, yes. Who..."

"This is Jeremiah. We...um...we met the other day? At your house?"

"*Oh*. Of course. How are you doing?"

"Fine. I was actually calling to see if you wanted to...uh, get together sometime?"

"Oh. You mean like..."

"Just dinner. Or..or coffee. Something like that. It doesn't have to be a-"

"Sure."

"What?"

"I'd love to."

"*Oh*. Well...um...great. Are you free tomorrow?"

"I don't know, I can che- actually? I think I've earned a night off. Tomorrow sounds great. Maybe around 7?"

"Wow. I mean...yeah. Sounds great. I...uh...I'll pick you up at 7."

Jeremiah tapped his ear-clip to disconnect the call, and exhaled mightily, sinking down into the dining room chair he had been pacing around.

"Well?" Jesse asked, walking into the room with two steaming mugs and nudging him gently.

"He said yes."

Jesse gave him a smug smile and sat down across from him, handing Jeremiah one of the mugs of coffee in his hands. "Of course he did. I told you he liked you."

"Yeah...I just...I don't know if I should have let you talk me into this, Jesse. I mean, Kurt-"

Jesse waved a hand dismissively. "Kurt's fine with it. He told me so himself."

Jeremiah looked a bit skeptical. "He did? I just thought...I mean, things between he and I ended kind of...well, *you* know."

Jesse chuckled. "That was practically *eons* ago, Jerry. You guys seem to get along fine now."

Jeremiah traced the rim of his coffee cup. "Yeah, I just...after what happened, I mean...going out with his *Slayer* and all seems a little below the belt, don't you think? Maybe I should call him, just to make sure."

"Jeremiah." Jesse's tone was serious. "Don't call Kurt." Jeremiah looked up and met his eyes, swallowing his mouthful of coffee very slowly.

"I..." Jeremiah's eyes took on a glazed quality for a brief moment, and then he blinked rapidly, clearing them. "Yeah. That was a stupid idea. I won't call Kurt." Jeremiah fidgeted a bit, and then broke into a wide grin. "God, he is *cute* though, isn't he? And he seems so nice...fuck, Jesse, I can't *wait* for tomorrow night!"

Jesse sipped at his coffee and looked back at Jeremiah. "Neither can I," he said with a wink, a smile crawling across his lips.

Chapter Eleven

Blaine paced the living room, wringing his hands nervously.

It was a good thing things couldn't possibly get any more awkward between he and Kurt, or he might actually be worried about the conversation they were about to have.

Because things really *couldn't* get any more awkward.

Oh, god...could they?

Blaine felt his entire body go rigid as a car pulled into the driveway, followed by Kurt and Finn's animated voices.

"Seriously though Finn, what did you *do* last night?" Kurt was asking as they proceeded through the front door. "Attack a bull-dozer?"

Finn groaned, rubbing a palm gently across his somewhat mangled face. "Apparently I challenged Puck again. I don't know why, I don't even *care* about being Alpha."

"Well obviously some part of you does," Kurt responded, hanging up his coat and walking into the living room. He swallowed hard when he saw Blaine and gave him a nervous smile. "Hi, Blaine," he said, his voice just the slightest bit too high.

"Hi," Blaine murmured, trying not to let his nervousness show. Finn followed Kurt into the living room and flopped onto the couch with an intensely vocal groan, seeming oblivious to the tension in the room.

"Have you considered the possibility that it might have something to do with Rachel?" Kurt asked, perching himself on the arm of the couch. Finn opened a puffy, bruise-ringed eye. "This need to prove yourself, I mean."

"Rachel wasn't even *there*, Kurt."

"No, but hasn't she gone out with Noah a couple of times?"

Finn's expression darkened. "Yeah," he muttered gruffly.

"Well, and we all know about your *issues* with Rachel being stronger than you..."

"She is *not* stronger than me!" Finn protested.

Blaine raised an eyebrow. "Seriously?" He asked.

"Well, I mean, maybe when I'm just...*me* she is, but when I'm a wolf..."

"...she's still stronger than you," Kurt finished for him in a bored voice, inspecting his nails.

Finn sighed. "I'm not trying to be, like, *sexualist* or anything, but isn't the guy supposed to protect the girl?"

Finn was looking straight at Blaine, as if he expected him to sympathize with Finn's predicament.

"Well, first of all, Finn, I believe the word you were angling for there was *sexist*, and that is *exactly* what you're being," Kurt snapped. "And why should it matter that Rachel's stronger than you? She obviously likes you."

"It's just kind of...I don't know. It's just kind of immaculating, that's all."

"*emasculating*," Kurt and Blaine corrected him simultaneously. Blaine shot Kurt a shy smile, and Blaine was *positive* that Kurt blushed slightly in response.

"And Noah Puckerman obviously doesn't think it's emasculating, does he?" Kurt continued. "Rachel deserves someone who isn't threatened by her strength, Finn. If you can't give her that, I can guarantee that becoming Alpha wolf won't impress her one bit."

Finn looked at the floor. "I guess..." he muttered, his brow knitted in thought. "Hey!" he brightened considerably, looking up at Blaine. "You know, I bet Slayer strength is fucking *awesome* for sex, isn't it?"

"Uh...yeah," Blaine agreed, glancing at Kurt out of the corner of his eye. "It kind of is."

Kurt's face was absolutely *scarlet*. Blaine couldn't suppress a small smirk.

"You know, it was the last wolf moon last night," Finn said thoughtfully. "You think Rachel might want to hang out tonight? Like...maybe we could *all* hang out, you know?"

"I don't know," Kurt murmured. "Seeing as how we've continued our unbroken pattern of not finding Dave, Quinn and Tina up until now, it probably isn't a good idea to-"

"Oh come *on*, Kurt," Finn whined. "Rachel's your friend. If you're there you can stop me from saying something stupid. And besides, you'll have two Slayers with you. It's safe. We can go play pool or something. Pool's awesome, and we haven't done anything fun in *forever*."

"Well, I supposed we *have* earned a night off," Kurt conceded, looking at Blaine.

Blaine smiled back nervously. "Oh. Um, good. Because I was going to ask you...I mean, I was going to ask you if it was okay if I took tonight off. But I'll have to take a rain check on pool with you guys because I sort of, uh, have plans."

"Oh?" Kurt asked, his eyes over-bright and a terrifyingly wide grin on his face. He flinched slightly at how shrill his voice came out.

"Y-yeah. I, um, have a date."

"*Oh*. That's...that's wonderful, Blaine," Kurt said tightly, his eyes unreadable.

"Yeah. You already found a gay dude in the fold besides Kurt and you've only been here a couple months? *Damn*. Kurt hasn't even found anyone since-"

"Shut up, Finn," Kurt snapped. "So who's the lucky man? Anyone we know?"

But Finn's words were some distance ahead of his brain as usual. He finished his sentence just as Blaine was giving his answer.

"Jeremiah," they both said.

All three men stared at each other. After a moment Finn emitted a low whistle.

"Harsh, dude," he muttered, shaking his head at Blaine. "*Harsh*."

It was just past noon when Brittany woke up screaming.

"Bloody h-"

"Shut up, Willy. Britt, honey, what is it?"

"No," Brittany whispered, clutching at her head. "No, no, *no*. We have to go. We have to get to them, we have to *tell* them."

Spike managed to maintain his look of irritation even while a look of concern spread across his face.

"What are you prattling on about now?" He muttered.

"They...it's Kurt. We have to warn Kurt. There's a fox in the henhouse and we have to warn Kurt."

"What?" Spike demanded, exasperated.

"I don't know!" Brittany screamed, clutching her head, her face twisting in pain. Her eyes were glazed and she was breathing hard and fast.

"Don't be an idiot," Santana snarled. "She's saying there's someone Kurt trusts that's going to betray him."

Brittany looked up, finally seeming to take in her surroundings. "They're going to kill him," she whispered. "They're going to kill him and the world will suffer. Santana, we don't have time. We have to go *now*."

"I know you want to, but Britt..." Santana made a helpless gesture toward the heavy curtains blocking out the midday sun. She sighed and looked at the girl beside her, tears streaming down her lovely face, and briefly considered allowing herself to burst into flames so that Brittany could have what she wanted.

"Surely a *quick* phone call from the front office..." Santana murmured, knowing it wasn't really an option.

Spike shook his head. "There's no way to make a call without getting traced, especially when we're so close. I *used* to just smear black paint over the car windows, but it's not the kind of thing a bloke can just get away with these days." Spike sighed and gazed at the wall, murmuring something to himself about the nineties.

Brittany stood up, sliding her jeans on.

"Britt, what are you...?" Santana allowed herself to trail off as it became completely evident just what it was that Brittany was doing.

"I'll meet you there," Brittany said as she tied her shoes, her voice a bit calmer.

"No," Santana said firmly, standing up and grabbing Brittany's arm. "It's not safe. People are looking for you and-"

"Santana." Brittany's voice grew soft as she fastened her hair into a ponytail and pulled on a hooded sweatshirt. "No one is going to catch me. And if they do, you'll just have to rescue me." Brittany cupped Santana's chin in her hand and leaned in to plant a swift kiss on her lips.

"Okay?"

Santana stared at her, stunned, barely able to manage a nod. And with a radiant smile and a squeeze to her hand, Brittany was out the door at a run.

Santana didn't move an inch for at least a solid minute.

Behind her, Spike snorted. "And you say *I* have a Slayer fetish? Please."

Santana merely glared at him.

It wasn't luck that had brought them to this place, but it sure as hell felt like it. It had been *ages* since Quinn had had a proper soak in a jacuzzi, had slept the day away on cool silk sheets with thick velvet drapes blotting out the sun and casting the room in a lovely red glow.

It had been ages since she'd felt this relaxed, this utterly satiated. She'd had two full girls to drink, and she was fairly sure at least one of them had had some serious benzos in her system, which only made everything feel more dreamy and delicious.

The only thing that could have made her day complete would have been some really great sex, but she was frankly not in the mood to move for anyone or anything.

No, it wasn't luck. It was Jesse St. James that had brought them to this place. Quinn lazily debated keeping him around for a little longer than originally planned. He was definitely irritating, but he had definitely also come in handy.

The house was supposed to be empty; the spoiled brat that had lived there had gone off to college in the Eastern States and her parents had left early to spend the winter in Europe. The brat had flown some of her preppy friends home for a secret drug-and-sex-filled weekend.

All it took was a wink and a charming smile from Jesse, and the girl had let them all in the door.

No one else knew that the girl and her friends were there. The Estate was large and isolated, so no one had heard them scream either.

Best of all, there had been plenty for everyone. After years of careful rations while they crept from place to place, trying not to leave too many bodies and thus call attention to themselves, the experience of absolutely *gorging* herself on healthy young blood had been an utterly mind-blowing experience. Two floors below, Quinn could still make out the faint sounds of tortured screaming. While Quinn had taken her fill fast and hard, Dave had spotted a particular boy the second they walked into the house. A pale boy with very pretty features.

The kind of boy that Dave liked to take his time enjoying for hours and hours on end.

Quinn felt her fingers creep between her legs as she listened to the screaming and remembered her own feast. It had truly been the most glorious night-into-morning that she had had in a very long time. Quinn sighed dreamily as she began lazily stroking herself. Nothing could ruin this perfect, beautiful moment. Absolutely *nothing*.

"That has got to be the absolute *stupidest* plan I have ever heard!"

"Calm down. How can you call my plan stupid when you don't even understand what it *entails*?"

"Well as far as I can tell, all it *entails* is playing with the love lives of boring human children. This isn't some little Shakespearean farce, Jesse, if we don't get the kid-"

"We'll get the kid."

"Bullshit. Give me one good reason not to kill you right now."

"Well, I did bring you to this beautiful house full of beautiful boys and girls. So *ungrateful*, Tina..."

"Try again, blood puppet. We're already in the house, which gives you exactly *zero* leverage."

"The...the boss won't be happy if you..." Jesse's voice was starting to waver nervously.

"The boss will forgive me." Oh, fuck. That was Tina's pre-bite seduction voice. Quinn knew that voice like the back of her fucking hand.

"Why can't I have nice things?" Quinn muttered irritably to herself as she pulled the covers back and jumped to her feet.

Quinn burst into the hallway to find Jesse backed up against the wall and producing erratic silver sparks instead of a barrier in front of himself, nerves obviously disrupting the spell. Tina was in full vamp face, inching slowly closer, drinking in his fear like it was precious nectar.

"Not so cocky when you don't have some big entrance planned, hmmm? You know, I'm actually not even all that hungry, but your neck is just-"

"*Tina!*"

Tina flinched and whirled around to face Quinn. "What?" She demanded, her voice etched with irritation.

"Leave him alone. We still need him."

Tina snorted. "Oh, please. Have you heard his big amazing *plan* to get the kid? He's basically setting the kid's Slayer up on a blind date and then messing with him." Tina rolled her eyes in disgust, her voice taking on a deeply mocking tone. "My god," She gasped dramatically, hand clutching her breast, "how can something with a *soul* come up with such a nefarious scheme?"

Quinn cocked her head to the side. "Is that true, Jesse? Because if it is, I must say that I'm fairly inclined to agree with my friend Tina here."

"Look," Jesse said nervously. "I know it might *sound* silly, but please just...just trust me on this one. I know Kurt Hummel. I've known Kurt Hummel for a long time. And I know *exactly* how he handles heartbreak." Jesse pushed off the wall, seeming to gain back a bit of confidence. "Believe me, ladies," he added with a wink. "Kurt Summers-Kalderash is as good as ours."

Kurt stared at his reflection in the mirror.

He had absolutely no idea what he was feeling anymore.

*"Kurt, I didn't know. I **swear** I didn't know that you two had a history. Look, if you want me to call it off right now-"*

Kurt sighed and smoothed the sloughing serum over his face. What did it matter anyway? He had actually thought Jeremiah had changed, that maybe he wouldn't instantly try and get into Blaine's pants just because he could.

"Kurt, please just talk to me. You said I should date, I was just – I was just doing what you told me to do."

Kurt moved to the next step in his regimen, fighting back tears. He was enraged at himself for feeling them start to prickle at all, enraged at himself for these *feelings* that kept forcing themselves on him whenever he thought about Blaine.

"Is it because you're not over him yet? Is that it?"

For all Kurt knew it wasn't even Jeremiah that had initiated this at all. It could just as easily have been Blaine. After all, Blaine was gorgeous, and so was Jeremiah. Kurt stilled his hands and really *looked* at himself.

"I just really don't want you to end up hurt."

Who was he kidding? They were both out of his league. Maybe Blaine had only kissed Kurt because Jeremiah had turned him down. Maybe Jeremiah only agreed to go out with Blaine after Blaine had *persisted*. Maybe Jeremiah *had* changed, and they were going to be happy together and move to the Eastern States and get married and be the most powerful and beautiful couple in the world while Kurt

muddled along in Ohio as a barely competent Watcher whose youth – the only thing that distinguished him in the field – had long since diminished, alone and unloved and–

"Dude!" Finn knocked perfunctorily on the door before barging in and throwing himself across Kurt's bed. "Are you seriously not coming out with us tonight? That sucks. And Blaine's not coming, so it's just *me and Rachel*. What the hell are we even going to talk about?"

"Well, what do you normally talk about?" Kurt asked, wiping his eyes discreetly before wringing out a warm washcloth and draping it over his face.

"I don't know. Her, mostly. She kind of likes to talk a *lot*, so mostly I just watch her say stuff."

"Don't you mean you mostly *listen* to her say stuff?" Kurt asked, his face slightly muffled beneath the cloth.

"Uh...kind of? I mean, sometimes. Mostly I just watch her. She's really pretty when she talks. She's really pretty most of the time, actually."

"Don't worry about it, Finn. You'll do fine. Just...pay her compliments every now and then and try not to say anything offensive." Kurt paused, considering. "Anything *too* offensive," he amended.

"But if it's just the two of us then it's like...a *date*."

"That would be the idea, yes."

"You sure you don't want to come? You deserve a night off too, you know."

Kurt sighed. "Finn, having a nice, quiet evening in *is* a night off. All I want to do is give myself a proper facial, which I haven't taken the time to do in *months*, and curl up with a cup of tea and the Lei-Ach Doxologies."

"That's one of those big old stinky books of yours, isn't it?"

"One of the stinkier ones," Kurt admitted.

"That really doesn't sound like a night off, Kurt."

Kurt peeled the washcloth off his face. "Is that what you're wearing on your date?"

Finn looked down at his bleach-stained T-shirt and worn jeans. "Uh...yeah? I mean, we're only playing pool, so..."

Kurt sighed. "All right, up." Finn ambled off Kurt's bed as Kurt stood up from the seat at his vanity. "Play pool if you must, but you are taking her out to dinner first. Your treat, since you're the one that asked her. You'll want to choose someplace with vegetarian options."

Finn groaned. "But Kurt..."

"No buts. If you want to actually date this girl, bringing your brother along on your first date is not the way to make a good impression. Besides," Kurt added with a smile, "I have it on very good authority that Rachel would most *definitely* enjoy an evening alone with you."

Finn perked up. "Yeah?"

"Yeah," Kurt confirmed with a smile as they headed toward Finn's room. "Now let's go see if we can find something presentable in that closet of yours."

Kurt couldn't help but pause for a moment as he passed Blaine's darkened room. "Did Blaine...um...leave already?" He asked softly, trying to sound casual.

"Yeah. Jeremiah picked him up about half an hour ago. Can you *believe* that guy? After he-"

"Finn," Kurt said gently, "it's fine."

"Yeah, but-"

"Just let it go," Kurt said a bit more firmly.

"Yeah, okay," Finn agreed softly. "But Kurt, if you want to talk about-"

"What I want to talk about is making you look fabulous for your date. Now come on. Ms. Berry does not like to be kept waiting."

Kurt forced a smile as he strode into his brother's room, trying to ignore the worried look in Finn's eyes.

Blaine tried hard to look interested while Jeremiah launched into some story about a practical joke he and Artie had played on Jesse.

It wasn't that he didn't *want* to be here, not at all. He deserved a night off and Jeremiah was cute, and Kurt had told him he should date-

Kurt. He couldn't stop his mind from wandering back to Kurt.

Blaine pushed a bit of pasta around on his plate and tried not to sigh, tried to force himself to be polite and listen to what Jeremiah was saying.

Which at the moment, was nothing. Jeremiah had stopped talking, and god knows how long it had been. He was staring at Blaine with a raised eyebrow.

"Uh...yeah. Yeah, that's hilarious," Blaine stuttered, throwing in a forced chuckle.

"You have no idea what I just said, do you?"

Blaine sighed. "I'm sorry."

"You all right?" Jeremiah began buttering a roll, looking genuinely concerned.

"Did you use to go out with Kurt?" Blaine asked suddenly, before he could even consider his words.

Jeremiah's hand froze, buttered roll midway to his mouth. "Um, yeah. I thought you knew."

"Not until this morning. Finn sort of blurted it out," Blaine answered.

Jeremiah furrowed his brow. "Huh. But that doesn't make sense. I...I don't know. I guess I sort of got the impression that Kurt was okay with this, that it was all out in the open?"

Blaine remembered Kurt's look of genuine shock when Blaine had said Jeremiah was going to be his date. "How did you get that impression?" He asked.

"I..." Jeremiah gave a nervous chuckle. "I guess I don't really remember, to be honest. I'm sorry, Blaine, is this weird?"

"Kind of," Blaine mumbled. "But it's not your fault. I mean, I could have canceled. I wanted to come."

Jeremiah smiled. "I'm glad to hear that."

They ate in silence for a moment. Jeremiah looked thoughtful. "Blaine, *does* Kurt seem okay with this?" He asked.

"I...he definitely seemed caught off-guard. Did you...I mean, did it not end well?"

Jeremiah gave Blaine a level look. "You really don't know anything about this, do you?"

Blaine shook his head.

Jeremiah sighed and looked down at his lap. "Look, Blaine, I really like to think I've changed, but Kurt's your Watcher. I should probably tell you what happened before we take this any further."

"Okay," Blaine answered softly.

"It was...well, it ended over a year ago. Closer to two years, actually. We were together for about ten months. For the most part it was good, but..."

"But?"

"But when it ended...it was my fault, Blaine. I accept that fully now. I wasn't ready to be monogamous, and I..."

Jeremiah looked up and met Blaine's eyes. "I cheated on him. And it broke his fucking heart."

Kurt was roused from his absorption in the Doxologies (those Lei-Achs had some seriously *fucked up* religious views, even for demons) by the soft, rising melody of an incoming call. He slid his ear-clip in and quickly tapped out the sequence to accept the call.

"Hello?"

"Kurt?" The voice was full of laughter, words shouted out against the backdrop of a lively dance club.

"Speaking. Who is this?"

"Hey, Kurt, it's Jesse. Hold on, let me take this somewhere a little quieter."

Kurt let his eyes skim over the text in front of him while Jesse made his way to what sounded like outside.

"Sorry, I should have thought of that – your Slayer just asked me to call and I've had a few, so I wasn't really thinking-"

"Blaine asked you to call me? Why? Is everything okay?"

Jesse barked out a laugh. "Oh man, that would be an *understatement*. Who knew he and Jerry would hit it off so well, huh?"

Kurt felt like all the air had been knocked out of his lungs. He couldn't even bring himself to formulate a response.

"I mean, I thought when Jerry told him what happened between you two he'd bolt for sure, but he just said that everyone makes mistakes and everyone deserves a clean slate, and then – my god, Hummel, you should have *seen* it. They were all over each other."

"Oh?" Kurt managed to ask, trying to concentrate on breathing. Just breathing. So they were having a good time. So Blaine didn't care about the fact that Jeremiah had cheated on Kurt. They were probably just having fun, that was all. And why did it even *matter*? Kurt had been over Jeremiah for a very long time, and Blaine was free to date whomever he pleased.

"Oh, shit. I'm sorry. Look, Kurt, I'm drunk, so my filter is *totally* non-operational tonight. It didn't even occur to me that you might still have feelings for Jerry-

"No...I...no..." Kurt answered weakly.

"Oh good. And look, you don't have to worry, he really *has* changed. Blaine wanted me to call and let you know he's staying at our place tonight so you shouldn't worry when he doesn't come home. But I don't think they're even planning to do anything, you know? They were talking about taking it slow, and just holding each other. It was so sweet I kind of wanted to puke. Blaine even said he'd never felt this way about *anyone* before and he didn't want to screw it up by-"

"I have to go," Kurt blurted out. "I-I'm sorry, I just...thank you for calling."

Kurt disconnected the call and finally allowed himself to burst into tears.

He couldn't handle this. He *couldn't*. If they were just having sex it might not really mean anything, but-

Kurt didn't even understand what was happening inside of him. He couldn't breathe and he couldn't think and the walls were closing in around him and all he wanted to do was the same thing he always needed to do when his heart got ripped open, and he wasn't even really aware that he was actually in the process of *doing* it until it registered that the cold autumn air was biting into his skin through the thin material of his pajamas, and thank god he had at least put shoes on because he wasn't going back – not for a coat, not for proper clothes, not for *anything*. He was barely holding himself together at all, and he just needed to get there more than anything.

He just needed *her*.

"Hurry *up*!" Brittany screamed at the man driving the car. He raised his eyebrows.

"Now, sweetheart, the speed limit around here is-"

"I don't *care*, we don't have time. I have to get there. Just...I'll do *anything*."

"Anything?" The man's face spread into a lascivious smile.

"But no sex stuff," Brittany amended. The man deflated considerably.

"I won't kick you out of the moving car, though," Brittany added cheerfully. "Which is actually *better* than sex stuff if you think about it."

The man looked skeptical so Brittany sighed and ripped his rearview mirror out without so much as flexing a bicep. She looked at him with a smile. "Could you tell that was as easy as picking an apple for me? Because it was."

The man drove faster.

Angel swore to himself as he watched Kurt's pajama-clad form hurl across the lawn and into the wooded area across the street. He didn't know what had set it off, but he knew *exactly* where Kurt was going.

He hadn't even reached the property line when he found his path blocked.

"Well, well, Quinn purred, crowding into his personal space. "Long time no see, dreamboat."

"Yeah," Tina added, moving smoothly to the side to prevent his escape. "We have *so* much catching up to do."

"I'm not saying that people can't change, Jeremiah, I just...you cheated on *Kurt*. I just...I don't think that's something I can get past. I'm sorry."

Jeremiah sighed. "Yeah, I guess the idea that this might work out was just wishful thinking. I just...I like you, Blaine."

"I like you too. But I...my loyalty has to be to Kurt. I hope you can understand that."

Jeremiah smiled wistfully. "Of course I can. He's your Watcher."

"Maybe...maybe we could be friends, though?"

"*Definitely*," Jeremiah enthused. "So...are we cool, or should we just call it a night?"

Blaine reached across the table and squeezed his hand. "Let's finish eating. Friends eat together, right?"

"Right."

It didn't take long for them to fall into a fairly comfortable rapport, and Blaine briefly considered not even answering his phone when the familiar melody started up.

"I'm sorry, Jeremiah, I don't mean to be rude, it's just that this is Burt's ring and something might be-"

Jeremiah waved his hand dismissively at Blaine's apology. "By all means."

"Blaine?" It was immediately evident that something was wrong.

"What happened?" He asked.

"It's Kurt. He...we lost him. He's out there on foot all alone, and *Jesus*, Blaine, I'm sorry to call you on your night off, but I don't think he even brought any weapons, and-"

"Burt. It's fine. I'm on my way."

Blaine disconnected the call and started to pull his jacket on. "Jeremiah, I'm sorry, it's just...I think Kurt might be in trouble."

Jeremiah nodded and began putting his jacket on as well. "I'm coming with you."

Kurt barely even noticed the cold anymore when he arrived. All he could perceive was the recently-full moon casting cool light on the clearing before him, on all the other stone structures, on *her*.

Kurt sank to his knees in front of the headstone, tears nearly freezing to his hot cheeks.

"Mom," he whispered. "I need you."

Kurt curled into a ball on the mound of grass and earth that covered ashes of the vampire she had been and a few select mementos of the woman she truly was. It wasn't much; wasn't even a real grave really, but it was the closest thing he had. It was *all* he had.

Kurt sobbed, because it wasn't *fair*; he had tried so hard to keep his heart safe, to keep something like this from happening to him again. He hated how little control he really had over his emotions. He hated how little control he really had over his *life*. He hated how hard he loved and how easily he broke.

"Damn. You crying on your mother's grave like this might just be the hottest thing I've ever seen, Hummel."

Kurt stiffened, his eyes flying open in horror.

Dave chuckled softly as he strolled closer, hands in his pockets. "Sorry. *Kurt*. I keep forgetting to call you that. Really, though. You look so fucking beautiful right now, you probably have no idea."

Kurt scrambled to his feet, limbs stiff with cold. "Just stay the hell away from me, Karofsky!"

Dave smiled, continuing to advance. "Hey, now, no trying to seduce me again, Kurt. You saw the kind of trouble you got me into the last time."

Kurt tried darting to the side, but before he could even start to run Dave was beside him. He grabbed Kurt's chin roughly. "You little fucking tease, trying to make me kill you fast. Well, not this time."

Kurt spit in Dave's face, which only made him laugh, seemingly with delight, as he pulled Kurt against him and kissed him hard while Kurt struggled to break free. When Dave finally did pull back, gasping and in full vamp face, he glared at Kurt.

"This time, Hummel, you're coming with me."

And with that, Dave grabbed Kurt by the throat and smashed his head into his mother's gravestone.

Kurt crumpled to the ground and Dave smiled as he lifted his unconscious body and slung him over his shoulder.

Dave jogged over to the spot where he knew the car would be waiting. It roared to life as he approached.

"Excellent," Jesse murmured from the driver's seat as Dave carefully deposited Kurt in the back seat. "No problems?"

"Nope," Dave responded, closing the back door and slipping into the passenger's seat. "Looks like Quinn and Tina kept Angel occupied, and I didn't see any Slayer bitches around either."

Jesse smiled and tapped his ear-clip.

"Hey boss, we've got him," Jesse announced proudly.

The familiar voice in his ear took on an all-too-rare tone of satisfaction.

"Outstanding," was her reply.

Chapter Twelve

Jeremiah screamed in alarm as a blonde streak flew past the front of the car.

"Fuck!" He gasped out, eyes growing wider as another streak followed the first, trailing silky black hair and red lace-trimmed cape, the figure rolling easily across the hood of his car before landing gracefully and continuing on her way.

Jeremiah slammed on the brakes. "What the hell was-" he began, but his words trailed off into a sharp scream as a third streak – much larger than the first two – appeared. Jeremiah and Blaine were thrown forward with the force of the impact that followed, Blaine already reaching for the door handle as he began to register what was happening.

Almost as soon as he hit the pavement Angel was back on his feet, continuing his pursuit of the other two vampires.

Jeremiah turned to Blaine, his eyes wide with shock, but the passenger seat was already empty. Jeremiah swallowed and locked his car doors quickly, not moving from the spot.

"*Angel!*" Blaine screamed as he followed the other man.

"We can't let them get away," Angel tossed back over his shoulder without breaking his stride. "They've got Kurt!"

Blaine didn't answer. He simply picked up his pace, closing the distance between Angel and himself.

Blaine's heart was thundering in his chest, and it wasn't from the exertion of running. *They've got Kurt.* Blaine didn't want to think about what it meant. Kurt obviously wasn't with Tina or Quinn, so by "they" he could only assume that Angel was talking about someone else.

Someone like Dave.

Blaine forced down the wave of nausea that rose up to meet this realization. He redoubled his efforts, not wanting to waste any breath on a single syllable more, no matter how desperately he wanted to

understand what was going on, what had happened, *how* they had managed to get Kurt out of the house and into Dave's hands.

Blaine didn't even want to think about what Kurt might be thinking, might be feeling. He refused to even let himself consider the possibility that Kurt might not be feeling anything at all anymore.

He ran faster.

Tina and Quinn were too far ahead of them for Blaine to see anymore, but Angel seemed to know what direction they had gone, so Blaine simply followed. For several moments the only sounds around them were their feet pounding hard against the pavement, and then the crunch as they hit the gravel path that cut through the woods, and Blaine's hard breathing and the near-audible pounding of his heart.

Suddenly Angel swore loudly and seemed to surge forward even faster. Blaine gritted his teeth as he pushed his body impossibly harder in an effort to keep up. Angel had obviously heard something that Blaine's ears were not yet able to pick up, and whatever it was, it definitely wasn't anything good.

Before long Blaine heard loud voices, followed by the slamming of car doors. Angel darted to the left and tore through the trees, not following any discernible path.

By the time they reached the road Angel had already slowed down.

Because he knew it was too late.

By the side of the road were two bodies. A middle aged couple, dead but not completely drained. Quinn and Tina had clearly not wanted to waste time. There were skid marks next to the crumpled human bodies.

Angel knelt and touched the tracks gently.

The silence around them was deafening.

When Kurt came to, the first thing he was aware of was the pounding in his head. He opened an eye and then clamped it closed quickly when white-hot pain shot through his skull, making him nauseous.

He was lying on his side, and as he began to gingerly experiment with tiny movements he encountered an overwhelming sense of *restriction*. Upon further experimentation, it became evident that his wrists were bound tightly behind his back, as were his ankles.

He at least seemed to be on a reasonably comfortable surface – a couch or a bed by the feel of it. Kurt tried not to pay too much attention to the excruciating the pain in his head. He felt tired and heavy and he wasn't sure he could make it to the edge of whatever he was lying on if he did actually end up having to vomit.

Soft voices wafted into his consciousness, muffled as if they were coming from another room. One of them had to be Dave, but Kurt couldn't even concentrate on being afraid.

Kurt let the voices lull him back toward sleep. It all felt so familiar – tied up and kept alive for no discernible reason while his fate was discussed just out of his earshot.

But he was alive. Alive, alive, *alive*.

"Alive," Kurt whispered very, very softly, because he needed to hear the word, even in his own voice, just to be sure that it was true.

No matter how temporary it might turn out to be.

When Blaine and Angel returned to the house, empty-handed and miserable, it was to find Jeremiah softly conversing with Burt and Lauren, Burt's eerie calmness causing the other two to exchange frequent nervous looks. Burt's expression barely flickered when Blaine and Angel joined them.

"Tina and Quinn were..." Blaine swallowed, looked down at his feet. "They got away."

"Figured as much," Burt responded, his voice a little too sharp. "I don't see any hostages and I know you boys wouldn't be stupid enough to dust them when they've got Kurt, now would you?"

"Burt," Angel said softly, meeting his eye.

"What? You gonna tell me to calm down? I'm calm. I'm *damn* calm."

"Too calm," Lauren said pointedly. "Burt, you can't just..."

"Thirteen years," Burt said thoughtfully, his tone still chillingly even. "Thirteen years all I did was try to keep him from this, try to stop this from happening. I even let him take the damn Watcher exams, let him take on the *prophesied* Slayer, because I thought it would keep him safe. But it was all useless. It's too late." Burt took a deep, shuddering breath. "It's too damn *late!*"

And with that the calm was shattered, as Burt reached for the table lamp beside him and hurled it across the room with a deep howl of rage. Carole ran into the room but stopped in the doorway, silently watching him along with everyone else.

No one stopped Burt from upending the coffee table or smashing three delicate-looking glass vases against the wall. No one said anything, only moving to get out of the line of fire when necessary, allowing him to completely melt down. Burt pulled books from the shelves and threw them one by one, screaming about how *useless* they were, how they hadn't kept Kurt safe, hadn't kept his only son *alive*.

When he finally sank to his knees and allowed himself to be consumed by loud, choking sobs, Carole moved to his side and knelt down to hold him.

And that, of course, was the moment that Finn and Rachel chose to burst into the house.

"He wasn't at the graveyard," Rachel began breathlessly, "but we found-" she stopped short at the sight of Burt and Carole crumpled in the middle of the room, the state of disarray all around them, the stony expressions on everyone's faces.

Finn, on the other hand, didn't seem to notice anything other than Blaine and Jeremiah, who Blaine hadn't even noticed that he'd ended up standing next to in the course of avoiding flying objects.

"What the hell are *they* doing here?" He demanded through gritted teeth.

And then he lunged.

"Hello, boys!" Quinn called as she and Tina swept into the house. "Tell me we've still got a coed or two stashed in the basement, because I am *starving!*"

"Did you get him?" Tina asked eagerly as Dave and Jesse appeared at the top of the staircase.

"Come see for yourself," Jesse said with a smirk. Tina squealed with glee and bounded up the stairs and into the first bedroom on the left.

"You didn't kill him, did you?" she asked after taking a good look at Kurt sprawled across the bed. "You know the ritual won't work with dead man's blood, right?"

"He's fine," Jesse said dismissively. "A little concussed, maybe, but perfectly alive." He smiled broadly. "We should have a toast! To the end of the Rosenberg curse!"

"Maybe we should wait until the boss gets here," Dave said nervously.

Jesse rolled his eyes. I'm sure they – er, *she* won't mind if we start celebrating a little early."

Tina frowned. "No, but I think she'll want to see the kid in better shape than *that* when she gets here. Should we feed him or something? How often do humans need to eat? I honestly can't even remember."

"He'll probably be all right for a little while," Jesse said lightly, "though we will be wanting to feed him and clean him up within the next few hours, I imagine, if Mistress is still planning to arrive tomorrow. Maybe you and Quinn could give him a bath after you've both fed?"

"Why can't you do it?" Tina demanded. "If we have to go in there and put our hands all over him it's going to be pure torment, *regardless* of how recently we've fed."

"I'll do it," Dave volunteered immediately.

"No," Tina and Jesse answered sharply in unison.

"Dave, you are not going *near* that boy without at least one chaperone until after the ritual," Tina insisted, "and not even with an *army* of chaperones if he's going to be naked."

"But I-"

"No buts. You are not biting him and you are not fucking him, and we *know* that one of those two things is going to happen if we leave you alone for five minutes. I've seen how you are with him. I've seen how you *look* at him. No way. You are not screwing this up for us again."

"I can't even fuck him? Come *on!* How's that going to affect the ritual?" Dave sounded outraged.

Tina looked him square in the face. "Are you honestly telling me you can fuck that kid *without* draining him? Really, Dave? You've spent the last three years with us, and you expect me to believe you've somehow developed that kind of self-control since the *last* time you had your way with a pretty boy, let alone one you've apparently been obsessed with since-"

"*Okay,*" Dave cut in irritably. "I get it. But that doesn't mean I can't even be alone in the same room with him without-"

"No, Dave," Tina interrupted firmly. "Jesse will do it."

"It makes the most sense," Quinn agreed, ascending the stairs and sucking blood from her fingers. "There's still a couple pretty ones down there, Tina, if you're hungry."

"I can't," Jesse insisted. "Look, if this plan goes sideways for any reason, we don't want Hummel to know I'm involved. It's a basic safety measure."

"For you, you mean," Quinn said flatly.

"No, for *us*. Hummel trusts me. If he were to somehow escape, that trust will be *crucial* to getting him back again. The ritual isn't for three days, after all. A lot can happen in three days."

"Just so you know, Jesse, I know it's you out there and I've *never* trusted you," came Kurt's voice from the bedroom.

The three vampires laughed heartily as Jesse's self-satisfied smirk fell into a frustrated scowl.

Rachel was trying to distract Finn from realizing that she was in fact bodily restraining him while he stood in the living room and screamed at Blaine and Jeremiah (they'd found a little of Kurt's blood on his

mother's gravestone, the place Kurt apparently always went when he was *really* upset, and Finn had his theories about who precisely was to blame). Blaine couldn't speak, his voice trapped in a state of shock, unable to stop his mind from running through a litany of things that were probably happening to Kurt right now, the ways in which he was being made to suffer. Dave was probably feeding from him, perhaps torturing him, possibly *raping* him. Blaine winced and hung his head, letting Finn's rage wash over him. It was no less than what he deserved. Maybe Dave had even turned Kurt already, that is if he didn't have to save him for that ritual that Quinn and Tina had been-

Wait. The ritual. How had Blaine forgotten that there was supposed to be a ritual?

Jeremiah cowered behind him while Finn yelled and Blaine tried to work out why this seemed important all of a sudden.

"The ritual," he said suddenly.

"What?" Burt and Angel asked sharply in unison, turning to look at him.

"I..." Blaine looked at Burt carefully. "I know you said it was probably just some kind of full-moon nonsense, but maybe...I mean, they *were* talking about a ritual when they almost got Kurt before."

Burt swallowed. "Yeah, it's...yeah. There's a ritual," he said, standing up and smoothing his flannel shirt. Carole rubbed soothing circles on his back and led him to the couch to sit down. He gave her a warm smile before continuing. "It's the whole damn reason they've been after Kurt all these years. It was the reason they were after Lizzy before that."

"Well, that doesn't change the fact that *these two*-" Finn began, pointing an accusing finger at Blaine and Jeremiah.

Lauren sighed. "Finn, sit down and shut up," she said in a bored but authoritative voice. Finn's mouth clamped shut and he moved to comply as if controlled by invisible strings, a look of pure shock on his face. "Now, Burt. It seems there's a piece of information you've been keeping from some of us. Care to share?" Her voice was still unwavering, but it softened slightly when she addressed Burt.

Burt looked around nervously. "All right. Look, don't get offended, the only other person here that knows about this is Carole."

"And me," Angel added quietly, looking strangely conflicted at the admission.

Burt looked at him. "Yeah? Huh. Well, I shouldn't be surprised. Makes sense that you'd know. You were around when the whole thing started..." Burt looked around the room. "We found out about the ritual about a year before Lizzy died. Some folks in the demon world discovered that there was a way to reverse the Change, make it so there was only one Slayer in the entire world to worry about instead of thousands. Thing is, the ritual is pretty tricky. It can only be performed when Jupiter is in Scorpio, which only happens every twelve or thirteen years. And they need the blood of the last lone Slayer, and the only person left who can give them that is-"

"Kurt," Blaine whispered. Suddenly he remembered Burt's panic when he had mentioned Quinn and Tina's names, how he had been desperate to pack bags and move house, but Kurt hadn't let him.

Why hadn't Kurt let him?

"We have a few days until Jupiter goes into Scorpio," Burt continued, "so at least we know Kurt's still alive. For now, anyway."

Blaine remembered Kurt's story about the Unholy Trinity keeping him in a cold crypt overnight when he was little, the fact that Kurt couldn't explain why they had bothered keeping him alive at all.

"Kurt didn't know about it, did he?" Blaine asked suddenly, looking over at Burt. Burt shook his head.

"But why – I mean, how could you keep something like that from him? " Blaine demanded, trying not to sound as angry as he was starting to feel. "He just thought they were out for revenge. He didn't realize how serious-"

"Because Kurt's too damn noble for his own good," Burt snapped defensively. "He's the last one left of that bloodline. If he...if he weren't around for them to sacrifice, the threat of the ritual would be gone forever and the Change could never be reversed. If Kurt *knew* that, I wouldn't put it past him to..." Burt couldn't finish, fresh tears springing to his eyes. He buried his face in his hands and heaved a shuddering breath.

Blaine finally allowed himself to drift into an empty chair, letting Burt's words sink in.

"He's my son," Burt continued shakily. "And even if it was selfish to-"

"It's not selfish, Burt," Carole countered quickly.

"It's not," Blaine agreed, heart clenching with the idea of Kurt finding out about the ritual, choosing to end his own life rather than make the world suffer, as if the world wouldn't suffer for losing someone like Kurt.

"Yes it is." Blaine looked up in surprise at Angel. "But it's not as selfish as what I've done."

Burt's eyes narrowed.

"Oh, fuck, something *else*?" Finn muttered.

"I didn't think it would come to this. They knew about the ritual, but they didn't know..." Angel looked Burt squarely in the eyes, as if they were the only two people in the room. "I tried to keep them both safe, Burt, I did. But I had a son too, and Blaine...he's my *kin*."

"What are you getting at here, vamp?" Burt asked, his tone growing cold. Angel didn't flinch.

"What I'm getting at is that we need to find Kurt *now*. The ritual may not be for three days, but they'll kill him a lot sooner if they find out that he isn't the one they're looking for."

"If you're implying Kurt isn't a Summers-" Burt started, his tone dangerous.

"I'm not implying that at all," Angel replied patiently.

"Whatever your big reveal is, could you spit it out sometime this century, Monsieur Melodrama?" Lauren demanded. "I'm *aging* here, even if you aren't."

Angel glanced at Blaine with a somewhat nervous expression that Blaine couldn't read. "The *big reveal* is that Summers blood won't work," Angel said, "because Buffy Summers wasn't the last lone Slayer. Faith Lehane was."

Blaine knew that he probably looked just as confused as everyone else in the room.

"I'm quite sure you're mistaken about that, Angel," Rachel piped up. First of all, Faith Lehane *couldn't* have been the last lone Slayer unless all of the documented history on the subject is either false or missing some kind of major-"

"It is," Angel interrupted firmly.

"And *second* of all," Rachel continued, raising her voice and giving Angel a hard look to let him know exactly what she thought of being interrupted, "Faith Lebane never had any children."

"That's not true either," Angel replied, looking at Blaine. "She had a daughter."

Blaine swallowed thickly and raised his eyes to meet Angel's gaze. "Named Raven?" he guessed with a steadily sinking feeling in his gut.

"Named Raven," Angel answered with a nod.

Chapter Thirteen

113 years earlier:

Faith sank down into the chair with a sigh. "How do you always have like, fancy antique furniture no matter how many times the places you live get destroyed? How can you afford it? Come to think of it, how do you even have money in the first pl-"

"Faith."

She glanced up at Angel and rolled her eyes. "Yes, I'm sure it's Connor's. Why else do you think I'd be here?"

Angel sat down on the edge of his bed frowning. "But couldn't Robin-"

Faith gave a sharp laugh. "I think it's safe to say...yeah, no. Robin and me...it's been awhile. We're kind of taking a break," she muttered, finishing her sentence with air quotes.

"And apparently that break included seducing my son?"

Faith laughed again, even harsher than before, sitting up straight and giving him a hard look. "Are you serious right now? Have you met your son? Have you seen me, Angel? The kid was gagging for it. I've been practically beating him off with a stick for months. I guess I just finally figured, hey, who needs a stick when-"

"All right. I...I get it. But why are you here, Faith? Isn't this a conversation you should be having with Connor?"

"No. Connor doesn't need to know anything about this. No one does. I need your help and I know you can keep your mouth shut, okay?"

"Faith, what-"

"I was gonna get rid of it. I just...I can't be someone's mom, Angel, I'm not Buffy."

Oblivious to Angel's slight wince at the name, she continued. "But it's weird, y'know? I know it sounds retarded, but it's like this kid wants to be born or something. I had this weird dream, and..."

Faith sighed heavily and looked up at the ceiling. "I just...I had this weird feeling, and I wanted to see if the kid is right, you know, I mean, who knows what Connor actually is-"

"He's human," Angel cut in defensively.

Faith shrugged. "Okay, more or less, but Angel come on. The kid is literally demon spawn. You can't get pissed at me for being careful. I mean, Cordelia's whole mind-control pregnancy thing was pretty freaky."

"That's true," Angel muttered.

"Anyway, Red hooked me up with this Seer-"

"You told Willow?"

"Not so much. She figured it out. Read my aura or some shit. And she thought it was a good idea to come to you, so here I am. You gonna help me or not?"

Angel looked down at his hands. "What do you need?" He asked softly.

"I need to keep my daughter safe." The tone made Angel look up almost sharply, unprepared for such naked vulnerability coming from Faith.

"Yeah," she confirmed softly. "It's a girl."

"How do you..."

"I just do." Faith blinked rapidly, trying desperately not to let her tears take over. "She's gonna be fucking beautiful, Angel."

"Faith, tell me. What did the Seer uh...you know...see?"

"She's important," Faith answered with uncharacteristic softness, resting her hand gently on her own belly. "I don't know exactly why, but she is. But there's something else."

There was a lot else.

Some of it they learned during Faith's lifetime, and some of it Angel discovered in later years, and all of it made keeping the bloodline a secret more and more important.

The Summers would always be targets. That much could probably never be avoided. But if no one knew that Faith had had a child...

"No one's gonna remember I was the last lone Slayer anyway, Angel. The Council doesn't know Buffy died that one summer, and besides, it's not like anyone's gonna remember that I existed, is it? The most popular version of the legend these days has me written out completely." Her words had grown slightly bitter, but she smiled.

"Faith..."

"Nah, Angel, I'm five by five. Raven's got a family that loves her now, and no one would ever think to trace her back to me. She's safe. That's more important than posterity any day, right?"

Angel only met Raven once, the night he carried her in his arms and left her on the selected doorstep in a wicker basket. It was a classic for a reason, and Angel had always appreciated the classics.

She was two months old when that happened, an uncharacteristically quiet baby with a shock of black hair and enormous hazel eyes that seemed to drink in everything around her. Angel selected a family that was in the fold, but on its outskirts. A family that would know what to do with her if Raven turned out to be a Slayer, but not well-connected enough to truly investigate her origins.

A couple that had been trying to adopt a baby for months.

Angel slipped the right amount of money into the right hands, allowing the couple to navigate the complicated matter of Raven's adoption with shocking ease.

She was left with a pewter necklace on which her name was inscribed. It was the only thing Faith ever gave her.

Faith met her once outside of those first two months together. The girl was living in Manhattan and attending NYU, and she had a part-time job at a coffee shop near campus.

Angel regretted telling Faith about the coffee shop when she showed up at his apartment, clutching a half-finished bottle of Jack and trying desperately to pretend that she hadn't spent the last several hours crying.

The crux of it was, she was still named Raven and she still wore the necklace.

She always wore the necklace. This is something Angel was well aware of. He had been looking after her from the shadows her whole life.

Faith didn't leave Angel's couch for three days. When she finally pulled herself together she asked Angel to never tell her where to find Raven again. She couldn't see her again. She *couldn't*.

And she never did.

"So you threw Buffy under the bus to protect Faith's kid because she was your own flesh and blood," Burt spat. "You know, all these years, when you said you were looking out for Liz and Kurt-"

"I *was* looking out for Liz and Kurt. Burt, I had the chance to keep Raven safe. I had to take it."

Burt opened his mouth to argue further but Angel held a hand up. "Buffy's daughters had me *and* Spike *and* a wall of protections spells around her built by Willow Rosenberg herself. There have been numerous plots to kidnap, sacrifice and generally kill those with Summers blood. Knowing about Raven wouldn't have changed that. I admit that part of why I did it was selfish, but Burt – Connor was my *son*. I mean, if *Kurt*-"

"Okay," Burt said with an irritable sigh. "I get it. I still don't know that I like it, but I get it."

Angel gave Burt a ghost of a smile. "Thanks," he said softly.

"Okay, I'm really glad that you guys have worked everything out, and it's really fantastic news that I now have a prophecy *and* a ritual to deal with, which is at least two more things than I signed up for," Blaine added tightly, "but can we please just find Kurt? It's not like someone *else* is going to save him."

Burt squared his shoulders and nodded. "Yeah, kid. So the location spells we've already tried aren't working -"

"They've jammed his signature," Lauren confirmed. "They've definitely got a witch working for them. But some of the older spells might work, if we could get some DNA..."

"I'll get his hairbrush," Finn volunteered.

Burt clapped Finn on the shoulder. "Good thinking, kid. Jeremiah, why don't you run back to your place and grab some of the more obscure books. Bring Artie with you when you come back. Lauren and I will keep trying to break through the spell that's hiding him from us in the meantime. Blaine, take Angel and Rachel and do some good old-fashioned detective work. They can't have gone far. Ask around, rough up whoever you have to. Angel knows the places to start. And guys?"

Everyone looked at him expectantly.

"Let's not waste any more time, OK?"

Kurt pulled his knees to his chest and glared at Quinn, who looked utterly mutinous beneath the layer of bath foam that clung to her features.

"Hold still, you little bitch, or I'll-"

"You'll what? You obviously need to keep me alive and clean me up for *something*, so you'll probably get in trouble if you hurt me," Kurt answered coolly. "What you're asking me to do is make all of this *easier* for you, and I'm afraid I'm not feeling inspired to do that at all." Kurt traced a path through the bubbles on the surface of his bath water. "I honestly don't know why you can't just let me take a bath on my own, what do you think I'm going to do?"

"Don't worry your tasty little neck about that, sweetie," Tina said from the doorway. "Need some help, Lucy? Looks like he's just as fiesty as I remember."

"Yeah. Hold him under until he passes out so I can wash him properly. And don't call me Lucy."

"Now, now. If we do that, who's going to resuscitate him? Jesse isn't here."

"Of course he isn't," Quinn muttered bitterly.

"Do you know why the magics that can hurt you most are so deeply rooted in Christianity?" Kurt asked conversationally.

"Oh, this should be amusing. Why, sweetie?" Tina asked condescendingly.

Kurt continued to trace shapes on the surface of the bath water. "A lot of people think it's because Christian principles represent ultimate truth and good. But really, it's because the early Catholics had some of the most powerful warlocks in recorded history. A lot of people don't know that."

"Fascinating," Quinn replied in a voice that was equal parts hostile and bored. "Now can we-"

"Most of their spellbooks, in fact most records of their very existence were burned – and most of the warlocks themselves were killed by those of the very faith they sought to protect. But their magics were so strong that they continued on. The power of the cross to hurt your kind could just as easily have been bestowed upon any other type of symbol."

Quinn sighed and rolled her eyes, raising an eyebrow at Tina. Tina smirked and advanced on the tub.

"The magics weren't lost *completely*, though. Some gypsy tribes preserved some of the simpler charms." As he said this, Kurt lifted his hand from the surface of the water around him, and there was a brief flash of indigo from the depths of the tub.

As the two women bolted toward him, Kurt looked up with a vicious grin. "Just call me Father Kurt," he said with a smirk, and splashed as much water toward the two vampires as he could. They recoiled, screaming, from what had effectively become a tubful of holy water.

Kurt threw even more water toward them, not stopping until they were huddled into balls, their flesh sizzling and the tiles echoing with their agonized wails.

Kurt leapt from the tub, pulling the robe Quinn and Tina had brought for him over his dripping skin. He scooped some water from the tub into a pitcher that had sat on the windowsill, and ran out of the room and down the stairs.

"Oh, I've *heard* of this place," Rachel enthused. "It's a demon bar, isn't it?"

"A little louder, Rachel, please. I'm pretty sure not everyone in a five mile radius caught that."

"Blaine, I know you're anxious about Kurt's safety, we all are. But that is no reason to be rude."

"Fine, I'm sorry, but this is serious. This isn't some *fun* adventure, Rachel. This is real. Kurt could be dead."

"He's not dead."

"You don't know that!"

"All right, both of you. Stop talking." Angel's voice was quiet but firm, and both Slayers fell silent, continuing to exchange slightly irritated looks. "Stay close and pay attention. This might be our only chance to find him."

The bar looked innocuous – if seedy – from the outside, and the bouncer at the door could easily have passed for human if those observing him didn't know to question it. After all, eyes that shade of orange could certainly be achieved with colored lenses, or maybe it was just the light. And the strange, coiling shadows underneath the the streetlight could certainly explain the flicker of what looked like a second set of eyelids...

Tinny music and the sounds of revelry wafted out of the crumbling brick building, growing louder as the three advanced down stone steps to the basement entrance.

"Is there something I can assist you with?" The bouncer asked, each s extending into a soft hiss. He was short, shorter than even Rachel, but solidly muscled and radiating an air of cool confidence. His skin was so pale as to almost look albino.

"Just stopping in for a drink," Angel said smoothly.

"I don't believe you three are on the guest list."

Angel smiled and slipped something into the man's coat pocket. "Why don't you check that list again?"

The man (or whatever he actually was) looked at Angel with disgust. "I don't need your filthy human money, bloodsucker. Now, if you're looking to rent out a couple of pretty necks, this isn't the place. We don't do that kind of business here."

"You think I'd let a vampire drink from me for *money*?" Rachel shrieked indignantly. "I'll have you know, sir, that I am a *vampire slayer*, as is my friend, and I think I speak for both of us when I say that I really don't appreciate the implication that-"

She let her voice falter as the three of them watched the creature before them begin to grow rapidly, his eyes glowing like living fire.

"We do not allow killers of our kind into this sanctuary," the creature (and he was looking decidedly less *man* and more *creature* with every passing second) intoned, his voice impossibly deep and seeming to reverberate through the very bricks and stone and pavement that surrounded them.

"We just need to ask some questions. We're not looking for trouble," Angel said steadily, neither his voice nor his composure changing in response to the increasingly unpleasant appearance of the bouncer.

The creature's face had settled into something that more closely resembled a stone gargoyle than a human man. "If you leave now, you may leave with your lives. But I will not allow you into this sanctuary."

"They – *someone* – has my Watcher," Blaine bit out desperately. "*Please.*"

The bouncer stared at Blaine almost thoughtfully. "You are the boy Slayer."

Blaine nodded.

The creature leaned toward him. Blaine focused very hard on not flinching while still remaining ready to react. The bouncer closed his eyes and inhaled deeply.

"You are of demon blood."

"I...yeah. I guess I am."

The bouncer looked between Blaine and Angel almost thoughtfully. "Keep her under control," he said finally, standing aside to let them enter the bar as he began to shrink back into the form he had taken when they arrived.

"Keep *me* under control?" Rachel sputtered. "How can you – I mean, *I'm* the one who – how dare – I can't -"

Blaine bit his lip to suppress his slight smile as he followed Angel into the smoky pub.

Kurt had almost made it to the front door before he encountered Dave. Dave smirked, allowing his eyes to rake slowly up and down Kurt's form, the thin, soaked robe he wore leaving absolutely nothing to the imagination.

"Hey Kurt," he said, leaning back against the door. "Couldn't stay away, huh? I knew sending those girls to do a man's job – AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGH!"

The scream tore through him as Kurt heaved the jug of water in his direction, the water splashing him full in the face and trickling down to soak his clothing. Dave fell to the floor, writhing in agony and tearing at his clothes as he bellowed, Kurt managing to push him aside and wedge the door open in order to slip outside.

Kurt hissed through clenched teeth as his bare feet made contact with cold stone walkway. He could see his breath escaping in plumes as he panted, running as fast as his legs would carry him, his body attempting to seize up and shiver uncontrollably and his teeth chattering loudly.

He didn't stop. It didn't matter that he was cold and wet and the late autumn wind felt like it was cutting through to his bones. It didn't matter that every part of his body was screaming at him to go back inside where it was warm, human sacrifice or no human sacrifice. He'd run through the cold night in order to fall directly into Jesse's trap – he could run now to escape it.

He would run until his legs stopped working if he had to.

Kurt was more than halfway to the main road that ran past the estate when he heard a bit of commotion behind him that could only be Quinn, Tina and Dave. He pushed himself even harder, biting his lip against the debris that cut into the tender flesh on the bottoms of his feet. He was nearly there.

Kurt burst onto the main road just in time to find himself nearly blinded by the headlights of a car bearing down on him. He willed his legs to move, but he felt completely frozen with shock. Should he keep running? Wave the car down? Let it hit him so he could sabotage whatever horrible ritual his captors had planned to use him for?

Before he could decide the car screeched to a halt in front of him, the suddenness of it jolting him off-balance. Kurt fell to the ground, bracing himself for the impact that never came.

Rolling onto his back with a groan, Kurt listened to the sound of a car door opening, and desperately willed his body to get up, to move, to *run* again if he had to. He slowly allowed his eyes to open and almost sobbed in relief when he saw who it was that was climbing out to approach him.

Blaine clutched the dashboard with white knuckles, straining so see into the thick, dark woods that bordered the road.

"Angel, can't you go any faster?"

"Yes, but that probably won't help us. We don't even know exactly what we're looking for."

"If that succubus had just given us a straight answer..." Rachel muttered.

"She was cursed to speak in riddles, Rachel. At least we know that Kurt is being held in East Lima," Blaine reasoned.

"Unless *the caves of riches cradled by waves of elm* referred to that new development over by Elm Circle..." Angel mused with a sigh.

"No, she specifically mentioned the *Tree of Many Faces*. That's *got* to be that hollow tree with the carvings inside that Kurt showed me," Blaine insisted.

Angel glanced over at him with a sigh. "I really hope you're ri-"

"*WATCH OUT!*"

Angel slammed on the brakes as someone darted out of the woods and onto the road. The figure stumbled to the ground mere inches in front of the car.

Blaine stared at the familiar face illuminated by the headlights. And he couldn't believe what he was seeing.

He opened the door and broke into a run the second his feet hit the ground, the tears of joy and relief hitting him like a punch to the gut.

"Well, that certainly was a surprise," Sue Sylvester mused calmly as she peered down at Kurt. "You're quite a sight for sore eyes, Mr. Hummel. I'd say you look like a drowned rat if I didn't think the comparison would be offensive to the entire drowned rodent community."

Sue reached out a hand to help Kurt to his feet. "Sue," Kurt mumbled weakly. "They...the house. Vampires. There's a ritual and they..." his voice trailed off as two other people climbed out of the car. One was a red-haired woman that looked vaguely familiar.

The other was Jesse St. James.

Kurt stumbled backward reflexively. "No. He's – Sue, he's one of them, he's in on it, he's -"

Kurt looked around slowly, fighting the horrible realization that was starting to settle over him.

"You catch up yet, Porcelain, or do I have to start spelling things out for you?" Sue asked with a smile devoid of warmth.

Kurt swallowed hard, racking his brain for something, *anything*-

"It's over, Kurt," Jesse said, his grin smug and triumphant. "Now let's get you back inside. The last thing we want is for you to die of *pneumonia*."

Kurt closed his eyes and tried not to cry as the air around him rang with hearty laughter.

Blaine ran and threw his arms around her with a level of force that would have instantly knocked the wind out of any run-of-the-mill mortal girl.

"Britt. *Britt*, oh my god, you're alive, you're all right, Brittany I couldn't – I didn't–" Blaine didn't care if he was babbling through his tears because his friend, his sister, his *Brittany* was there and she was going to help him save Kurt, and everything was going to be all right.

Brittany held Blaine tight while he wept. She didn't say anything for a long time, rocking him gently with softly closed eyes and a sweet smile, pressing feather-light kisses to his forehead.

Everything was going to be all right.

"Blaine," Brittany murmured into his hair with a happy sigh. "I missed you too." Blaine couldn't help but laugh through his tears at that, because it was so *simple* and so *perfect* and so *Brittany*, and it somehow made everything a little less horrible. He was so absorbed in the fact that *something* had gone right, that there was *someone* he hadn't lost, that he almost missed what she said next.

"Blaine. I know where Kurt is."

His head snapped up, his eyes meeting hers. "How? I mean – scratch that. Is he OK?"

"He's...alive," she said carefully. "But Blaine, we have to *hurry*."

Kurt finally lost the battle that raged inside of him and began to cry.

His hands were bound again, and he had been clothed in another robe. It wasn't warm enough, and the material was so light as to be almost sheer, but it was dry. He wanted to wrap his arms around himself to defend against Dave's eyes boring into him with unmasked hunger, but his arms were bound once again. He was thrown into a corner of the dining room, gagged and trussed up like a holiday turkey while Sue berated Quinn, Tina and Dave for letting Kurt escape.

"Sue, how were we supposed to know that a *bath*-" Quinn began to protest irritably, lightly touching the rapidly-healing skin on her face.

"He's a gypsy. What did you *expect* him to do? Maybe you should try drinking from someone with a brain for a change. It might help."

Quinn glared at Jesse. "Well, you'd think someone who understood witchcraft would think of that, wouldn't you," she answered dryly.

"Now, now. There's no need to place blame," Jesse said smoothly, flashing a grin to everyone in the room. "He's back now, and I think we've all learned what he's capable of, haven't we?"

"Well, *I'm* not a witch," the red-haired woman said firmly, "but if I may?"

She flicked her wrist, a small ball of green energy settling in her palm.

"Help yourself," Sue assented as the woman approached Kurt.

She crouched down until her face was almost parallel to his own. Her smile was one of the most horrible things Kurt had ever experienced.

"Well, look at you," she cooed softly. "You have no *idea* how long I've been looking for you." She trailed a perfectly-manicured fingertip along Kurt's cheek, gathering his tears. She pushed the fingertip into the ball of energy in her other hand and stirred it counter-clockwise, murmuring unintelligible words under her breath. The ball began to gleam golden.

The woman smiled, pulling her fingertip out of the ball, a thin film of golden-green moisture clinging to her flesh. She closed her eyes, sighed happily, and slid the fingertip into her mouth.

And screamed.

"You *idiots!*" she bellowed, shooting to her feet, spitting and grimacing as if she'd tasted something utterly disgusting. The ball of energy fell to the floor and shattered like glass. "You can't even...*Sue*." Sue's eyes widened with apprehension. "This is not the boy."

"That's impossible!" Tina wailed. "This is the Summers-Kalderash boy. I *know* it is! I'd know him anywhere!"

"Perhaps he is," the woman said, her voice shrill with faux-cheer. "But this is not the boy I seek. The boy we seek. He does not carry the blood of the last lone Slayer."

"How do you know?" Quinn asked with narrowed eyes. "If you're not a witch..."

"I'm not," the woman cut in sharply. "The Lord has simply seen fit to equip me with particular abilities."

She gave Kurt one last look of disgust before shaking her head and striding briskly across the room. "This was a waste of a trip," she muttered. "I don't like having my time wasted."

"We'll find him," Sue promised quickly. "If I have to kill every Slayer alive to do it, I will *find* him. Sue Sylvester doesn't lose."

"What should we do with *this one*, though?" Dave asked, his eyes burning even hotter across Kurt's body.

Tammy waved a hand dismissively as she and Sue walked out of the room. "Kill him," she replied.

Dave smiled.

Chapter Fourteen

"Sue, was it really necessary to employ the most incompetent underlings you could possibly find? Jupiter is only in Scorpio for so long, you know."

"It will stay in Scorpio for almost a year," Sue stated calmly, her eyes following Tammy's manic pacing around the decimated bedroom. It was difficult to tell which of the two of them had done more damage when they had first entered it, but the discovery that Kurt was not the boy they sought had thrown them both into a destructive rage that only smashing fragile and expensive objects could quell.

"It took us *thirteen* years to find him after the last time," Tammy hissed, whirling around to glare at Sue. "And it wasn't even the right boy. Do you really think we can find the true descendant in a single year? Darn it, Sue, I don't even want to *think* about enduring another decade of this...this *witchcraft*. More than one Slayer is just...these girls shouldn't be out killing demons, they should be at home taking care of their families, allowing demonkind to cull the herds as god sees fit."

"Amen," Sue assented solemnly, forcing herself not to inquire about Tammy's own husband and children – or lack thereof – while she herself rose through the ranks of both politics and the dark arts.

"If it will make you feel better, you are of course free to kill any one of the four of them," Sue offered easily. "The warlock in particular has been practically *begging* someone to rip that smug little face right off his skull."

Tammy hummed thoughtfully, coming to a stop before an antique vanity and straightening her hair in the uncracked portion of the mirror on top of it.

"Perhaps not just yet, but thank you. Didn't you say the decoy has a Slayer? It might be helpful to keep them around in case *that* becomes a problem."

Sue snorted derisively. "His Slayer is the *boy* Slayer. I wouldn't worry about that."

"Boy Slayer," Tammy mused. "Yes, I believe I recall that mildly retarded girl you had me rooming with at your school mentioning him. He sounds fascinating."

Sue shook her head. "My theory is that he's a pygmy demon with small, mannish breasts and an inverted vagina. He's less coordinated than a blind house cat, and he can barely hold a stake to save his life. I can assure you, he'll be no problem at all to deal with."

Tammy chuckled. "Oh, Sue. Do you really think I'm concerned about a *vampire Slayer*? Really."

Sue narrowed her eyes. "The boy is nothing. But my girls are *champions*, Tammy."

"Mrs. Albertson," Tammy corrected her with a mild smile. "And you sold all of *your girls* out, if you recall."

"That doesn't mean I'm not proud of them," Sue snapped.

Before Tammy could pair her slight smirk with a verbal response, Tina burst into the room, eyes dark with anger.

"Sue, you can't let Dave do this," she began firmly. "I know he may not be useful for *your* immediate purposes," she added, side-eyeing Tammy, but the boy is pure Summers. The bloodline isn't tainted, I assure you. Buffy Summers just wasn't the last lone Slayer."

"Well, I fail to see how that makes him important," Tammy responded pleasantly, plucking a nail file from the makeup box she had found on the vanity and beginning in on her pale pink fingertips.

"Even if there is another line they kept hidden from us, Summers is still the most pure and powerful line we know of," Tina explained patiently. "The kid's blood may not be the most precious substance around, but it's a *damn* close second."

Tammy glanced up from her nails. "Go on."

"The magics we could perform with *Summers* blood would be astounding. Not to mention how valuable – I'll just bet there are demon overlords out there that would be willing to trade an entire hell dimension for a few ounces of the stuff. And that particular goldmine is about to be drained dry by a very hungry and very horny vampire."

Tammy and Sue exchanged glances.

When the three women returned to the dining room, Quinn and Dave were engaged in a full-on brawl, faces fully vamped as they snarled and lunged at one another. Jesse was hanging back near the doorway, looking nervous and conflicted.

Sue didn't waste a single moment before grabbing Dave by the shoulders and hurling him halfway across the room.

"Slayer strength doesn't fade with age," she said in response to the shocked looks around her. "Just because I'm twenty-nine, it doesn't mean Sue Sylvester isn't still the best." She glanced over to where Dave was springing back to his feet. "If you drain the kid I'll stake you, bloodsucker."

Dave was outraged. "But you *said*-"

"I think you've been hearing what you want to hear, lumberjill, but this boy is far too valuable to sacrifice at the alter of your arrested psychosexual development. Now get the hell out of my sight."

Kurt looked around him, wondering exactly what he wanted to have happen. Dave wanted to turn him, which he supposed would be the worst outcome possible. Except maybe not. As they talked, it became clear that Tammy wanted to harvest his blood in order to strengthen demonic control of the Mid States through spellwork, while Sue seemed intrigued by the idea of selling him to the ruler of a hell dimension. He wasn't sure precisely what Quinn and Tina were angling for, but they were both looking at him like he was either a sack full of gold or a five-course gourmet meal, and they couldn't decide which they wanted more. Jesse just looked smug.

Kurt closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "Blaine," he whispered, barely conscious that he'd said it.

He was thinking of how much he wanted Blaine to find him, to hold him gently and tend to his wounds with those big, shining eyes that cut right to Kurt's soul.

He wasn't thinking about the fact that vampires have excellent hearing.

Something in the whisper, perhaps the deep yearning in it, appeared to be the straw that finally broke the camel's back.

Dave snapped.

"I've had *enough* of you people," he roared, moving faster than his bulky frame - even possessing vampire speed - would seem to allow. Before she could entirely register what was happening, Dave picked Sue up and hurled her at Tammy, the two women crashing into an antique chair in the corner of the room and breaking it to splinters. Jesse scampered under the table, muttering an incantation quietly. Before he could manifest whatever spell he seemed to think the occasion called for, Dave dragged him out by his collar, grabbed him by the back of the head and slammed his face into the dining room table, ignoring his unconscious body as it slumped to the floor. He advanced on Tina and Quinn, who were both blocking his path to Kurt.

"We're not going to let you have him, Dave," Quinn said, her voice awash with chilled calm.

"I don't give a shit what you bitches don't want to *let* me do," Dave growled. "He's always been mine. He was *born* to be mine."

Kurt couldn't even look. His eyes were clamped shut and he had to concentrate just to breathe properly. "Back off," Tina said, a slight edge arriving in her voice.

"Go fuck yourself, you slanty-eyed c-"

Tina punched Dave in the face hard.

And then it was chaos.

Something in Dave's wild desperation seemed to increase his strength, or perhaps it simply allowed him to break through to a level of strength he hadn't discovered yet. Even though Tina and Quinn were holding him back, he was really making them work for it, especially considering that it was two against one. Kurt opened an eye carefully, wondering when Dave had gotten flexible enough to do a high kick and nail Quinn in the throat like that.

Sue had managed to regain her footing, and was wielding a broken shard of wooden chair as a stake. She strode up to Dave from behind, coming within a hair's breadth of staking him before he ducked, Sue continuing her trajectory forward with the stake toward Tina. Tina's eyes widened and she kicked Sue in the chest on instinct, causing Sue to land on top of Quinn.

Dave whirled around and, seeing his opportunity, ran to Kurt and scooped him up in his arms. Dave leapt across the table and ran toward the foyer, locking the dining room door behind him and propping a chair

beneath the doorknob to slow the others in their pursuit. He tore down the hall, holding Kurt firmly even as he screamed and writhed, consumed by a blind need to get *away*, even if it meant being dropped on the floor.

"Don't do this, Dave. You're not going to get away."

"Like hell we're not. I swear, Kurt, you're gonna remember this as the best thing that ever happened to you one day. I *swear*." Dave smiled down at him as he rounded the hallway into the foyer, moonlight shining through the large stained glass window on the wall making his face seem to glow red.

Kurt felt goosebumps rise up on his flesh.

"You're mine, Kurt. And there's nothing anyone can do to change that."

The words were barely out of his mouth before the colored glass beside them shattered, something small bursting into the house.

Or rather, *someone* small.

Kurt could barely dare himself to believe it.

"Blaine?"

It was a genuine question; he wasn't entirely convinced that he wasn't having some sort of trauma-induced hallucination when his Slayer rolled to the floor and then sprung off his hands, landing neatly before them.

But his eyes...

Kurt had never seen Blaine's eyes look quite like *that* before. Full of so much rage.

"I can't *believe* how hard I'm going to kill you," he snarled at Dave.

The sound Dave emitted in response made the hairs stand up on the back of Kurt's neck. The only other time Kurt had heard a noise like that was when Finn had lost control and wolfed out during a waning

moon, bearing down on a pockla demon that was threatening Carole. It was nothing less than the deep growl of a wild animal poised to eviscerate its prey.

Blaine advanced on Dave, and he squeezed Kurt so tightly against his chest that Kurt felt himself gasping for air. "One step closer and I'll snap him like a twig, prettyboy," Dave snarled.

"You wouldn't." Blaine's voice was low, disturbingly calm.

"You wanna test me?"

"I'll test you," came a cheerful voice from behind him. Suddenly Dave felt warm hands on his shoulders, and then pressure as a blonde blur used him as a launching pad to flip herself into the air above his head, rotate in a perfect somersault, and land facing him.

"He totally is gonna kill you, you know," Brittany added brightly before kneeing Dave hard in the balls.

Dave staggered forward with a grunt of pain, Brittany taking the opportunity to wrench Kurt from his grasp. She slung Kurt over her shoulder like a sack of flour and scurried out of the way, leaving Dave and Blaine to face one another.

For a moment there was silence save for muffled shouts coming from the dining room. The two men stared at each other.

"You think this changes anything?" Dave asked, his lips twisting into a vicious grin.

They slowly began to circle one another.

"You're a tiny little fairy who can barely hold a stake. You think you can give him what he needs?"

"I think what he *needs*," Blaine replied evenly, "is to get the fuck away from *you*."

"Brittany, will you please *put me down*?" Kurt hissed. "This whole situation is humiliating enough without getting draped across your body like last season's messenger bag."

Brittany put Kurt down and, to his surprise, handed him a stake. "You'll probably need it," she reasoned. "Unless you're too hurt to fight, or you're afraid you're going to flash us if your robe opens up."

Kurt pulled at the robe self-consciously and glanced over at Blaine and Dave as they continued to circle each other, Blaine clutching his stake so hard that his knuckles were turning white, the air thick with tension.

"Brittany," Kurt whispered. "How many are with you?"

"Well, Rachel's in the dining room – Blaine and I were going to go in there, but then Dave ran out with you, but Rachel thought-"

"Okay. So Rachel. She'll probably need some help. Who else?"

"Well, Angel, but he can't come inside. And we called your dad – he should be on his way with some other people too."

Kurt closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "Okay. I think we should let these two have at it, because I doubt there's anything we can do to stop that anyway. You go help Rachel. Watch out for the redhead, she's more dangerous than she looks. And if the smarmy-looking guy wakes up, knock him out again. He'll just get in your way."

Brittany nodded. "But what about you?" She asked, her eyes wide.

"They've been keeping a bunch of college kids in the basement. I think some of them are still alive, and I'm excellent with knots, so I should be able to untie them pretty quickly. I'm going to see if I can get them out of here, so that Angel and I can get them somewhere safe. I want you, Blaine and Rachel to deal with these guys and then get out as fast as possible, okay? Meet us at the crossroads just southwest of the estate."

Brittany bit her lip. "But Blaine said-"

"Brittany." Kurt's voice was firm but gentle. "I'm Blaine's *Watcher*. I need you to trust me, all right?"

Brittany nodded. Kurt began moving in the direction of the basement door as quietly as possible, hoping that Dave's current focus on Blaine might keep him from noticing.

It didn't.

Dave lunged for Kurt.

Blaine lunged for Dave.

Blaine caught Dave around the middle, slamming both of them to the floor as Kurt took off down the hallway as fast as he could manage, Brittany hot on his heels. He needed to pass the dining room in order to access the basement, but before Brittany could decide on the best manner in which to burst into the room, there was a loud crash. The door flew off its hinges, Rachel landing heavily on top of it. She jumped to her feet and dusted herself off, and Brittany reached out to grab her hand.

"I'm coming to help you," she said. Rachel beamed at her, and the two women ran into the fray.

Kurt took a deep breath, wrapped the thin robe more tightly around himself, and continued on his way, hoping that everyone (and no one in particular, of course not, because everyone's life is of equal value, of *course*) would be okay.

Please let him be okay.

"You have no idea how long I've wanted to bust up that pretty face of yours, you pathetic little faggot," Dave seethed, kicking Blaine square in the chest. Blaine took the impact, slamming into the wall behind him but recovering quickly and rounding on Dave with a kick to the stomach.

"Pathetic little *faggot*, huh? So I guess internalized homophobia gets vamped along with the rest of you. Interesting fact."

"What, you think your big fucking words are going to get you into Hummel's pants?" Dave snarled, blocking Blaine from plunging the stake into his chest. "*What he needs-*" Dave began, punctuating each word with a solid punch to Blaine's face and throat, "*is a real fucking man.*"

Blaine managed to catch Dave's fist in his own hand before it could slam into him once again. He gripped hard and twisted Dave's arm with as much force as he could muster. "Well, then I guess you're shit out of luck, aren't you?" He replied, head-butting Dave hard and causing him to stumble backward several steps. "Have you ever even called yourself gay out loud, you fucking coward?" Blaine hissed.

Dave gave a roar of rage at the word *coward*, and lunged once again.

The two men met in a clash of limbs, Blaine almost losing his stake in the process. He managed to wrench himself far enough away for a clean shot at Dave's chest, and pulled his arm back to take aim.

Blaine jerked in surprise when he found Sue Sylvester's hand wrapped firmly around his wrist, holding him back.

"Easy there, toy boy," she murmured, her breath hot against his ear. "Now, if you don't want me to let the jolly gay giant here have his way with you, you'll tell me where Mr. Hummel has run off to."

"Fuck you," Blaine gasped, ducking just in time to miss a blow to the head from Dave, and managing to yank his arm free of Sue's grasp.

Within seconds, Sue had been thrown to the ground by Rachel, who had in turn been thrown into a wall by Quinn.

And so it began.

There were only two survivors, and they weren't in particularly good shape. Neither was fully conscious, but both were most definitely alive. Kurt and Angel half-carried them toward the road, discussing what to do next.

Kurt scowled when Angel asked him if he was feeling OK to drive. "I'm not leaving, Angel. Not until I know everyone has made it out of there in one piece."

"Kurt, someone needs to get these guys to a hospital. There's no reason for you to-"

"There's every reason. My *Slayer* is in there, Angel. And after what they did to me-"

"They're not going to leave you alone. At least this way you'll be safe."

Kurt laughed bitterly. "Safe, Angel? *Safe*? I'm sorry, but I don't believe I'm familiar with the term. You see, I've spent my entire life having no idea what it could possibly feel like to be safe. This would be an odd time to start, don't you think?"

"I just-"

"I'm not a coward."

Angel sighed. "I know that. I'm not trying to imply that you are. I just-"

"Made a promise to a girl?" Kurt's mouth quirked into a half-smile as he said it. Throughout his life, whenever he felt that Angel was being too protective or that he was treating Kurt like some sort of weakling, Angel had used that very statement to defend himself.

True, the promise had been made well over a hundred years ago. But still. Angel kept his promises.

"Uh. Yeah."

Kurt smirked. "Look, maybe we can convince my father to bring them to the hospital when he gets here."

"He'll insist on taking you with him. You're crazy if you think he'll let you go back in there."

Kurt sighed. "You're probably right. Here." Before he could stop him, Kurt had heaved the weakened girl from his arms into Angel's, and spun around to start back toward the house.

"Kurt, what are you – oh come on, no," Angel groaned, shifting the two students in his arms. "Get back here. You can't – *Kurt!*"

But Kurt was already halfway back.

"Watch out!"

Rachel dove for the floor as a bolt of what looked like actual lightening grazed the top of her head. Tammy blew smoke from her fingertips and smiled, holding her palm out and wiggling her fingers in an odd rhythm. Rachel gasped and clutched her throat.

"She...I c-ca...br..." Rachel struggled to speak, gasping fruitlessly for air. Tammy watched her with a pleasant smile, her eyes glowing an unearthly green. Blaine saw what was happening and pulled his

attention away from Dave long enough to grab Tammy by the shoulders and slam her into the wall. She blinked and her eyes shifted back into their usual dark green. Rachel took deep, gulping breaths of air interspersed with dry coughs.

"You disgusting little deviant," Tammy snarled. "It ought to be legal to execute you in a public square." She pushed Blaine away with a surprising level of strength and swiped at him, one of her long, pointed false nails catching on his cheek and drawing blood.

Blaine slammed her into the wall once again for good measure, the palm of his hand pressed to her forehead to ensure a hard impact with the back of her skull. Tammy's eyes went slightly unfocused and she slid to the floor (Jesse was lying in a heap beside her. He had woken up long enough to stumble out of the dining room, and Brittany had promptly kicked him in the head, causing him to lose consciousness once again).

Blaine turned back to Dave, only to discover that he was gone.

"He went that way!" Brittany called from the midst of fighting both Tina and Quinn. She motioned toward the front door.

"Shit," Blaine muttered. "Shit, shit, shit, *shit!*" He managed to slip past Rachel and Sue's confrontation and ran as fast as he could.

When Blaine ran out of the house, the first thing he saw was Kurt walking up the path.

The second thing he saw was Dave running right toward him.

Blaine tackled Dave to the ground, pinning him and drawing his stake back. Dave managed to twist out from under Blaine and wrench the stake out of his hand.

"All right, that's *it!*" Dave screamed. "I'm fucking done with you, freak, you got it?" He threw himself on top of Blaine, fastening his large hands around Blaine's neck. Blaine gasped for air, clawing at Dave's hands desperately. Without loosening his grip, Dave lifted Blaine's neck and then slammed his head to the ground.

And then Dave's hands were gone, but his face was close. *So fucking close.*

Blaine knew what was about to happen a split second before it did. It didn't stop him from howling in agony when Dave pulled his head back by the hair and sunk his teeth into Blaine's throat.

"God," Dave groaned, dislodging himself. "They were right about Slayer blood. This is...*fuck*." He licked at the wound on Blaine's neck and then smiled. "Nice knowing you, sweetheart," he very nearly purred, baring his teeth again. Blaine winced and clamped his eyes shut. He was still struggling, he would *never* go down without a struggle, but even he knew that-

...that...

Well, that something should be happening, actually. He opened his eyes and looked into Dave's to see them wide and shocked.

"But...I...we were supposed to..."

"You were *supposed* to leave me the hell alone after high school and never come near me again," Kurt spat from behind him.

As Dave turned to look at him, Kurt drove the stake home, covering Blaine with ashes.

"Well," Tina said, tight-lipped, as she paced the hallway, kicking shards of colored glass out of her path. "They got away. And now we have to get out of here, and we don't even have anything left to *eat*!"

"This place was depressing me anyway," Sue muttered, cradling her injured arm. "Besides, we know where we can find porcelain and his precious gay blood. Next time we'll be on the offensive. We'll get him back."

"We don't have the kid, we don't have the descendant of the last lone Slayer for the ritual, Jesse might be brain damaged beyond repair from all the blows he took to the head, Dave's been dusted-"

"Dave was a liability," Quinn observed.

"The point is, we're back at less than square one. What could you possibly be happy about?" She peered down at Tammy, who was still sitting on the floor against the wall, a glowing green ball in her palm as she dreamily sucked the last of Blaine's blood from her fingertip. She looked up at Tina.

"Well, I certainly think not having to put up with all those pesky Slayers anymore is something to smile about," she replied.

Tina furrowed her brow. "What the hell are you-"

"This evening couldn't have gone better, honestly," Tammy cut in happily. The other three stared at her in disbelief. Tammy laughed. "*Ladies*. Don't you see?" She deposited her index finger back into the ball of energy in her hand and watched it race and swirl.

"We *found* him."

Chapter Fifteen

Blaine was toweling his hair dry when he heard the soft knock at his already-open bedroom door.

"Hey," Kurt said simply with a tiny smile. His eyes flickered to meet Blaine's momentarily before falling back down to his own hands, clasped neatly in front of him.

Blaine returned the smile and gestured for Kurt to come in. "I thought you'd be in pajamas by now," Blaine said, taking in Kurt's perfectly tailored trousers and soft hip-length green sweater.

Kurt groaned. "The last thing I want to put on my body right now is *sleepwear*. If I never see another robe again it will be too soon."

"Well, you look...um...you look great," Blaine murmured shyly. Kurt *was* wearing bedroom slippers, but Blaine chose not to point that out.

"Thanks." They stood in silence for a moment before Kurt made his way over to Blaine's bed and sat down. "Blaine, I...I'm so sorry. To put you through that, probably ruin your date. I shouldn't have run off like that, it was incredibly reckless."

"Why did you?" Blaine asked, careful to keep his voice as gentle as possible. Suddenly remembering that his pajama shirt was hanging open, he began to button it up self-consciously.

"I...Jesse called me. He told me some things that upset me, and I suppose he knew just what to say. I wasn't thinking straight – or at all, really."

Blaine swallowed. "What did he say?"

Kurt looked up at him. "He...he just really knows how to push my buttons, that's all."

Blaine was burning to press for more information, but forced himself to simply nod instead. He sat down beside Kurt and took his hand. Kurt inhaled sharply.

"Kurt...you don't have to tell me what he said, but please at least promise me you won't do that again. I...if anything happened to you..."

Kurt squeezed his hand. "But it didn't. You saved me."

"You saved *me*." Kurt smiled at that, then let his gaze settle on Blaine's throat. He gently extricated his hand from Blaine and moved both hands to very, very gently touch the twin punctures on Blaine's neck.

"Are you all right? He really...he really hurt you, Blaine."

Blaine winced slightly at the touch. "I've got a monster headache and my neck is still a little tender," he admitted. Kurt lowered his hands quickly. "But Slayers heal fast, Kurt. I'm already feeling a lot better. What about you? Your head..."

"Carole looked at it. I don't have a concussion, I should be all right. The bottoms of my feet are a mess, though."

"Does it hurt to walk?"

Kurt shrugged. "She bandaged them up, but kind of, yeah."

Blaine smiled. "Well, if you want someone to carry you so you don't injure them further-"

"You are not *carrying* me, Blaine, my god. I just have to take it easy."

Blaine laughed softly. Kurt cast his eyes downward. "Besides...I don't think Jeremiah would look too fondly upon you carrying me around. You know."

Blaine stared at him. Oh, yeah. Last Kurt knew, Blaine was on a date with Jeremiah. "Kurt-"

"*She is not setting **foot** in this house, and that is final!*"

Burt's voice made them both snap to attention, clear and loud and full of rage.

"We, um, should probably see what's going on down there," Kurt said as he climbed to his feet with a small wince. Blaine sprung up beside him and wrapped an arm around his waist for support.

Kurt shot him a perfunctory glare, but allowed Blaine to help him down the stairs.

"Are you sure about this, Brittany?" Angel's eyes were heavy and piercing as they searched hers. "I don't...this is a big risk, and I have to be sure that-

"I'm sure. We just have to find a place where-

"I know the place."

Brittany grinned. "I thought you probably would. This is going to work, Angel, I swear. It's gonna be so hot."

"I..um." Angel furrowed his brows, seemingly at a complete loss as to how to respond.

"It's kind of romantic, don't you think?" She continued. "That it was all leading up to this, I mean."

Angel swallowed reflexively, unnecessarily. "I don't know, I-

He stood up from the porch swing they were sharing and looked out across the back yard with unseeing eyes. Brittany studied him, but said nothing.

They remained in comfortable silence for a few moments, Brittany rocking herself gently on the porch swing and humming a soft tune while Angel pondered.

"So both of them are important after all," Angel finally said, his back still to Brittany.

"Of course they are. But don't worry, you're important too."

Angel turned around and gave her a small smile. It quickly turned back to a frown as his eyebrows knitted together in thought. "But what about...we don't know how it's going to affect me, Brittany. We can't risk letting Angelus out."

"Oh, don't worry about that," Brittany answered brightly. "You're not *that* important. If that happens, I've got Rachel and Mercedes and Ms. Pillsbury and that scary witch lady and Kurt's dad to help me kill you. Santana and Spike will probably be here by then too, and you're no match for all of us together."

"Oh. Uh...good. I'm glad you...uh...have a plan for that."

"You're welcome," Brittany said, kicking her legs up slightly on an upswing and beaming at him.

"Wait. How do you know Santana and-"

*"She is not setting **foot** in this house, and that is final!"*

"They're here!" Brittany squealed in response to Burt's booming, rage-filled voice from inside the house. Angels's eyes went wide.

Brittany leapt to her feet and ran inside, Angel following close behind.

They reached the front hallway to find a red-faced Burt, angrier than Blaine had ever seen him before, glowering through the open door at a man and a woman on the front porch.

"Burt, take it easy. You'll give yourself another heart attack," the man was saying. He was blond and sounded British (he also sounded sexy, but Blaine tried not to notice).

"I *told* you-" Burt continued as if he hadn't heard, leaning past the man to jab a finger in the woman's face - "that if I ever saw you again I would kill you. You're not trying to make a liar out of me, are you?"

"Yes, Burt, actually, I am. Because I'd really like to see you *try*." Her voice was cool and calm, but lacked true venom. Blaine peered around Burt's shoulders to look at her. She was beautiful; there was something classic and almost untouchable about her, as if she belonged in some other time, some other world altogether. She was captivating.

And there was something...

Blaine was startled from his thoughts when he felt Kurt's weight abruptly leave his side. Biting his lip against a wince of pain, Kurt strode purposely toward the wooden bench by the doorway that doubled as a storage chest. He opened the chest and pulled out a stake, and then stormed past Burt, lunging at the woman.

"*Kurt!*" Blaine and Burt called out almost simultaneously. Kurt's aim was perfect, and if her reflexes had been the minutest bit slower, the woman would have found herself very thoroughly dead.

Or – so it appeared – very thoroughly dusted. Kurt's attack had caused her to reveal her vamp face, and she moved so fast she was nearly a blur. She grabbed his wrist and twisted the stake free, but the whimper of pain that came from Kurt didn't seem to slow his reflexes either. He landed a hard kick to her stomach (in *bedroom slippers, ouch*), and the woman stumbled back with shock, falling backward over the porch's railing and landing with an audible crunch in the rhododendrons. Kurt managed to wrench the stake back from her hand in the process, and promptly scaled the railing to jump down beside her.

Blaine, Burt and the blond man ran out after them, ready to jump into the fray the second it seemed necessary. They stopped several feet from Kurt, none of them wanting to incur his wrath for stepping in too soon and implying that he couldn't hold his own.

"How *dare* you come here?" Kurt screamed. His voice was shrill and edged with hysteria. "Killing my mother wasn't enough for you, is that it? What do you want now? My friends? My father? My *Slayer*?"

"I didn't know it was your house, Summers," the woman growled, rising to her feet with liquid grace and brushing crushed leaves and petals off of herself. "Angel just said help was needed." She continued to sound calm and cool, her face lovely and human again, but the glare she tossed Angel made the hairs on the back of Blaine's neck stand up.

Kurt laughed bitterly. "Oh, is that *so*?"

"Yes, I did," Angel confirmed from behind Blaine. Blaine turned and stared.

He wasn't sure when Angel had joined them on the lawn. Brittany was standing beside him, her eyes huge and round, looking as overwhelmed by the situation as Blaine felt.

"I didn't mean for you to...you guys are early. I meant to, uh...ease them into the idea. Spike was supposed to send me a message when you guys were near the Helmsworth mausoleum."

The blond man shrugged. "Blondie here seemed to think things were a bit on the desperate side," he said, gesturing to Brittany. "We would have ended up here anyway, what's the difference?"

"You told her to come here." Kurt was staring at Angel now, and Blaine hoped he'd *never* give cause to have that particular expression directed at him.

"Kurt, this is serious. There's a hellmouth that's about to open, Sylvester and Albertson and their cronies will be coming for us again *with reinforcements*, and we need all the help we can get. You know how valuable Santana will be in a fight."

Kurt laughed bitterly. "The next thing you're going to be saying is that we can trust her."

"We c-" Angel stopped in mid-sentence when the blonde man grabbed his shoulder and gave him a pointed look.

"Looks like you managed to weave this one into a mighty clusterfuck already, Angel. What say Santana and I go find ourselves a nice hotel, put it on your credit card, and let you sort out this little mess, hmmm?"

Angel growled in frustration. "Spike, if you had just gone to the mausoleum like I *told* y-"

"Sure. Blame it on Spike. Looks like that game never gets old, hey? Come on, Santana, clearly we're not wanted here."

The man – Spike – walked over to Santana and began to pull her gently toward the driveway.

Kurt stepped in front of them. "No."

Kurt's mouth was in a thin line and his eyes were the most intense ice blue that Blaine had ever seen. He was staring unblinkingly at Santana.

Spike raised an eyebrow. "Problem, Nibblet?"

"Get out of the way, please, Spike. I'm going to kill her."

Santana smirked. "Are you, now? You are aware of how incredibly *cute* that is, aren't you?"

She pushed Spike aside and began making slow, deliberate strides toward Kurt. "You want me, Summers? Well, here I am." She spread her arms out, leaving her chest open and unguarded, before allowing her features to shift out of their human mask once again. "Stake me already."

Kurt raised his stake.

"Santana, *no!*" To Blaine's immense surprise, Brittany darted between Kurt and Santana, blocking them from one another. "Don't kill him, *please!*"

Santana looked at Brittany with a mixture of shock and-

and something else. Something soft. Something Blaine was pretty sure he didn't like.

"Britt, I wouldn't. I was just going to-"

"Excuse me," Kurt interrupted. "I believe *I'm* the one holding the stake here."

Brittany reached over and snatched the stake from Kurt's grasp before he even seemed to register that she had moved.

"Stakes kill, Kurt," she said seriously.

"They're *supposed* to kill!" Kurt grated. "Brittany, I don't know if you noticed, but this woman is a *vampire*. We *stake* vampires in this household."

"But she's got a soul!"

"What's the difference? She's still a vampire."

"*Ouch.*" Blaine tore his eyes away from Kurt to glance at Spike, who looked downright offended. "So that's how we feel is it, Little Bit?" He asked. "I'll have you know I saved your life on more than one occasion. I taught you to do a proper roundhouse kick. I changed your *nappies*, for fuck's sake."

Kurt rolled his eyes. "I'm not talking about *you*, Spike. You know that." He folded his arms across his chest and narrowed his eyes as Brittany slipped an arm around Santana's waist.

"Yeah, well, we're the three bloody amigos, whether I like it or not," Spike said, looking appraisingly from Angel to Santana. "Judge one and you judge us all, I'm afraid."

"*You* didn't kill my mother," Kurt said sharply.

"No, I believe it was your father that did that," Santana cut in.

"Santana," Angel said, his voice a soft warning.

"*What?*" she snapped. "I'm sorry, were you attempting to put a muzzle on me, Angel? Wild creature that I am?"

Angel simply stared at her for a long moment, and she held his gaze. Nobody spoke.

Finally, Santana sighed. "Whatever," she muttered, casting her eyes to the ground. Brittany gave her a squeeze.

"Kurt, we've got to-" Angel began.

"No."

"Kurt-"

"*No.*" Kurt threw his hands up and stormed up the porch steps. He paused and turned back to the small, tense crowd on the lawn. "If she sets foot in this house, I'll...I'll burn it to the *fucking ground*, okay?"

He turned and stormed into the house quickly.

But not so quickly that Blaine didn't see the tears in his eyes.

"Burt-"

Burt shook his head. It wasn't until that moment that Blaine realized he'd been silent for almost the entire confrontation.

"It's asking too much, Angel," Burt said softly, his eyes on his shoes. "Do what you gotta do to get the best group of fighters you can. I'll fight beside whoever I have to. But don't ask me to invite that thing into my home."

He lifted his head, and the strength of his gaze actually caused Angel to take an unconscious step backward. "And don't you *ever* pull a stunt like this on us again either. Now excuse me, but I gotta go see if my kid's okay."

And with that, Burt quietly retreated into the house, closing the door firmly behind him.

Blaine had barely moved a muscle since joining Kurt and Santana on the lawn. Staring at the front door, he chewed his lip and considered before glancing over to Angel. "Do you think I should go talk to him?" he asked. "I mean-"

Angel shook his head. "Give them a few minutes," he murmured. "Burt's the only one who can talk to him when he..." Angel closed his eyes and sighed. "Just give them a few minutes," he repeated.

"What's the story with this one, then?" Spike asked suddenly, and Blaine realized with a start that Spike was looking right at *him*. "Some poor mutt pappa Kalderash dragged home?"

"This is Blaine, Spike," Angel said distractedly, glancing up to where the light had gone on in Kurt's bedroom.

"*Riiiiight*," Spike responded with a smirk, and began to circle Blaine. "So let's have a look at the little chip off the 'ol block, shall we?"

Blaine narrowed his eyes at the man as he continued to look Blaine up and down while he walked. Blaine was almost certain he was a vampire, and he wasn't sure how on board he was with yet *another* vampire seeming to reside in Kurt and Burt's inner circle.

"Who are you?" Blaine asked. Spike chuckled.

"You know, if the bleeding council had decided to be half as generous to me as they did to the boy wonder over here," he began, gesturing to Angel, "you wouldn't be asking me that. Written out altogether, I was. Not like I did anything important, though, only saved the ruddy *world*."

Angel rolled his eyes. "Spike, you saved the world *one time*. What do you want, a parade?"

"All I'm saying is that a little recognition wouldn't hurt. You haven't been the only ensouled vampire on the block for a long time, *mate*, but the way the council goes on about it-"

"I don't write the history books, Spike."

"Maybe not, but you seem perfectly happy to see them rewritten," Spike muttered.

Blaine raised an eyebrow and glanced back and forth between them. "Are...you guys exes or something?"

A peal of sharp laughter split the night, and Santana clutched onto Brittany's shoulder for support.

"Oh, that's priceless. I like this kid already."

Blaine turned and looked directly at her for the first time that night. "I'd prefer it if you didn't talk to me," he said coolly.

Santana blinked, and the faintest glimmer of what looked like actual *hurt* shot across her face before her features hardened into a sneer.

"What, you think not talking to me will get Summers to grab his ankles for you?" She snapped.

"You're disgusting," Blaine replied tonelessly. "You're the one who – you *ruined* his *childhood*. You killed his mother and almost got his father killed in the process, you kidnapped him and almost killed him, you stalked and terrified his family, you...why would you show up at his house like this? I thought you were supposed to have a *soul* now. I-"

"Not that it's any of your *concern*," Santana spat, "but I *didn't know he lived here*. All I did was-"

"Well you know he lives here now," Blaine cut in, his voice rising in both pitch and volume. "Why the hell haven't you left yet?"

Santana simply glared at him for a moment, and Blaine felt himself *itching* for an excuse to fight her. To stake her. To make her scream with agony for everything she'd ever done to Kurt's heart before he ended her completely.

"You know what, dwarf?" She asked, her voice unsettlingly calm and quiet. "That is an *excellent* point."

Brittany clamped down on Santana's arm as she moved to leave, silent tears streaming down her cheeks. "No," she whispered. "Don't...Blaine, she didn't *mean* to. It wasn't even her, it was the demon that took her body when her soul went away. *She* didn't kill Kurt's mother, I swear she-

"Brittany, let go," Santana said softly, not meeting the other woman's eye.

"But Santana, we need you for this, *I* need you, I-"

"No one needs me," Santana cut her off sharply, wrenching her arm free. She turned and stalked off, heading toward the densely wooded land across the street from the house.

Brittany bit her lip and looked back and forth between Blaine and Santana. She walked up to Blaine and hugged him. "Be careful," she whispered. "Just do what Angel tells you, okay?"

Blaine swallowed. "I...Brittany, don't. She's a vampire and you don't know her, and-"

"I'll be careful if you will," Brittany murmured into his neck, giving him one last squeeze. "Promise me, please?"

"I'll be careful," Blaine whispered.

And before he could say anything else, Brittany was gone.

"Well, I see you haven't rescinded my standing invite. Way to make a bloke feel welcome."

Kurt looked up at Spike with red-rimmed eyes from where he and his father were sitting on Kurt's bed.

"How could you?" Kurt asked, staring at him. Spike swore under his breath and turned his head sharply.

"Put those eyes away, would you?" he muttered. "They remind me too much of-" he sighed and scrubbed a hand across his face. "Look, Nibblet. You know how much I cared for your mum, and I'm not excusing any of it, so understand that. But Santana didn't kill her. The creature that killed her is *gone*."

"Don't talk to me like in my first year of Slayer school," Kurt muttered irritably. "I *know* that, I just – how could you bring her to our *house*, Spike?"

"I wasn't-" Spike sighed and stopped himself. "I'm *sorry*."

Kurt and Burt raised their eyebrows nearly in unison. Those were not words one heard Spike utter often.

"I didn't really think things through. Brittney joined up with us and she was prattling on like Drusilla on a bad day, and then she took off saying that you were in danger, and someone was going to kill you, and I just-" Spike's eyes softened as he looked down at Kurt. He put his hand on Kurt's shoulder and gave it a gentle squeeze. "I didn't think things through," he said again. "I was too worried that something might have happened to you, all right, Nibblet?"

Kurt reached for a tissue from the box on his night stand and dabbed at his eyes, nodding. "All right," he answered softly. "But I can't – I don't want her here."

"We could really use her help, bud," Burt said gently, and Kurt sighed and looked down at his lap. "And I wouldn't say that if things weren't serious. But it's only a matter of time before Sylvester and her cronies find out that Blaine-"

"I know," Kurt sighed.

"She's not coming inside," Burt added, his voice still soft but his tone fierce. "So you don't have to worry about that, OK? I would *never* give her an invitation. None of us would."

"I don't know that that will be an issue anyway," Spike added. "Your Slayer had a rather *spectacular* go at her, and she ran off into the woods. I get the feeling she doesn't feel particularly welcome around here."

"She isn't," Kurt said coldly. He glanced back up at Spike. "But Blaine...Blaine really...what did he say?"

Spike shrugged. "Well. I believe he called her disgusting. Said if she really had a soul, she wouldn't have shown up here. That sort of thing."

Kurt couldn't fight back the tiniest of smiles. "Oh," he said.

Spike arched an eyebrow at him with a slight smirk. "Oh, so it's like that, is it?"

"I don't know *what* you're talking about, Spike," Kurt said primly, sitting up very straight.

"Don't bother, Bit, I can read you like a book. *Someone's* gone soft on his Slayer, hasn't he?"

"You're insane," Kurt answered with a glare. He glanced at his father, who seemed to be suppressing a smirk of his own. Kurt glared at him too. "I'm done talking about this," Kurt announced, standing up. "Now drop it, Spike, or I'll rescind your invitation as soon as the sun comes up."

Spike smiled and ruffled Kurt's hair until Kurt swatted his hand away with a yelp. "*There* you are, Nibblet," he said. "I knew I could wrestle a bit of snark out of you if I tried."

When Kurt finally emerged from his room with Burt and Spike in tow, the first thing he saw was Blaine standing awkwardly in the hallway, wringing his hands together.

"I didn't...I wasn't sure if you wanted me to come in, so I-" he swallowed nervously. "I just. Are you okay?"

Kurt smiled and walked over to Blaine as Burt and Spike ascended the stairs. "I'm fine, Blaine, thank you. It was just a bit of a shock, seeing her."

Blaine bit his lip and nodded. "Well, she's – she's gone now, so – well. She's gone."

Kurt smiled. "Thanks to you, I hear."

Blaine blushed. "I didn't – I wasn't sure what I should – god, are things always this *complicated* around here?" Kurt laughed and took his arm.

"Oh, Blaine," he answered fondly, "of course they are." He started to lead Blaine toward the stairs to follow Burt and Spike, but Blaine gave his arm a gentle hug.

"Actually, Angel's waiting in my room. He said he needed to talk to us."

Kurt tried not to notice how much he loved the feel of his arms wrapped around Blaine's body. He tried not to notice how warm and firm and perfect he felt.

He really did try. He just wasn't necessarily successful.

Blaine shifted gears when they hit a particularly long, empty stretch of road, and Kurt tried to force himself to focus on anything other than the fact that he had just tightened his arms around Blaine as they picked up speed.

"You need to leave," Angel had said. "Both of you."

He had been infuriatingly vague, which was certainly nothing new, but it seemed that Brittany had had a vision.

Tammy Jean Albertson knew that Blaine was the descendant of the last lone Slayer, a fact that Kurt himself hadn't been privy to until that very night. Tammy Jean Albertson, Undersecretary to Julius Wolfram, Chief Minister of the Mid States. And she appeared to be working with Sue Sylvester, a woman with the Council in the palm of her bony hand.

Their combined resources were truly staggering.

Kurt and Blaine had both argued with Angel – they didn't want to run, they wanted to stay and fight, it didn't make any sense. But Angel had been adamant: This wasn't just about Blaine. This was about The Change. This was about preserving Willow Rosenberg's gift to humanity, no matter how little humanity may appreciate it. This was about all Slayers, everywhere.

Angel had been decidedly less clear on the subject of why Kurt needed to accompany Blaine, but he had been just as adamant. It hadn't helped that Burt had leapt at the chance to keep Kurt out of harm's way.

Finally, Burt had pulled out his ace card: *"You boys need to go somewhere they can't find you, can't get to you no matter what tricks they've got up their sleeves. There's only one place like that I can think of, Kurt, and you know Blaine can't get there without you."*

Kurt had been on the verge of shooting back *"you could bring him,"* but he didn't. He just...

Well. He just didn't.

Kurt couldn't rid himself of the pangs of guilt that still shot through him. He probably *should* have insisted that Burt take Blaine instead. Burt was far older than Kurt and had a heart condition, even if he was a stronger warlock.

Back at the house, Kurt knew the people he loved were readying for battle. He imagined Puck and the pack would join them, as well as Will and Emma, Rachel and Mercedes, Shannon and Lauren and Artie.

And, of course, Jeremiah.

Kurt tightened his arms around Blaine's waist even more.

Everyone else was readying for battle, and Kurt could only hope that they survived. And he was running off to hide in the woods like a coward.

Alone. With Blaine.

As they approached a familiar intersection, Kurt leaned in so that Blaine could hear him over the wind whipping past.

"Turn left here," Kurt told him, his lips hot on Blaine's ear.

Blaine turned onto the old road, potholed and bumpy and devoid of artificial lights.

And Kurt held onto him as they surged forth, allowing the night to swallow them whole.

Chapter Sixteen

It was over two hours of Kurt's directions shouted into his ear before Blaine pulled the bike over at a long-untended rest stop and cut the engine, the absolute silence around them almost oppressive.

"I've just got to..." Blaine muttered, climbing off the bike and stretching his stiffened limbs.

"You're not going in *there*, are you?" Kurt asked, horrified, eying the ramshackle restroom that may or may not have still had running water.

Blaine gave a short laugh and shook his head. "No, I'll just – over there is fine."

Kurt decided that he may as well relieve himself too, and after both men found discreet corners to do their business, they met back up at the bike. Blaine smirked fondly when Kurt handed him an antibacterial wipe.

"So," Blaine said, leaning against the bike and cleaning his hands off with the wipe, "Where exactly are we going?"

"I can't tell you until we get there," Kurt answered. He reached into his satchel and pulled out two apples and two granola bars, handing one of each to Blaine. "No, I mean I *physically* can't," he added at Blaine's raised eyebrow. "It's one of the magical protections around the...c...place. But it's the safest place I know by far."

Blaine nodded thoughtfully as he chewed a bite of apple. "What about the other magical protections? Are you sure we'll be able to..."

"We'll be able to get in," Kurt cut in quickly. "It's attuned to my bloodline, and as long as you're, um, touching me you'll be able to get through as well." Kurt's cheeks went slightly pink as he spoke.

Blaine stared at him thoughtfully for a moment. "Kurt, what did Jesse say?"

Kurt coughed, almost choking on his granola bar. He had *not* been expecting that. "Um, what?"

"I want to know what Jesse said to you to make you run off like you did. It's been driving me crazy, actually."

Kurt's eyes shifted everywhere but Blaine's face. "Blaine, I don't really think that *now* is the time to discuss this."

Blaine gave a sharp laugh and looked around pointedly. "Are you waiting for a *better* time? We've been banished from battle, we've got nothing *but* time."

Kurt fiddled with the wrapper of his now-finished granola bar. "Why are you asking this now?" He asked softly.

Blaine sighed. "When you said – I just – all right, fine. Things have been weird since we kissed. And then you told me to go ahead and date, but then you seemed really upset when I did, and...please just tell me. What Jesse said – was it about me and Jeremiah?"

Kurt sighed and bit into his apple. Blaine threw his own apple core into the trees and started on his granola bar.

"Look, Blaine, I don't want – it's okay if you like him," Kurt said, not meeting Blaine's eyes. "It's probably for the best, actually."

Blaine stared at him. "Do you mean that?" He asked quietly. Kurt nodded. "I'm not – my feelings about this are complicated, but I'm not possessive, Blaine. If you two are happy together, I want that for you both."

After a few moments of silence, Kurt glanced up to see Blaine looking absolutely crestfallen.

"You look upset."

Blaine shrugged. "I guess I am."

Kurt sighed. "I'm trying to...I don't know what you *want*, here, Blaine."

You. All I want is you.

Blaine jammed his granola bar wrapper into his pocket. "I want something I can't have," he replied.

Kurt furrowed his brows. "I'm sure he'll *survive*, Blaine. He's...well, he isn't exactly the most powerful warlock around, but he isn't bad, and Lauren and my father will make sure-

"Not Jeremiah."

Kurt swallowed. "I...what?"

"I don't want Jeremiah," Blaine answered softly, locking eyes with Kurt. Kurt inhaled sharply, looking away after a moment because Blaine's gaze was far too intense to bear.

"Neither do I," Kurt whispered after a heavy silence. Blaine felt his eyes go wide, but before he could respond, Kurt's tone changed entirely. "We should go," he said briskly, "before Sue realizes you're gone."

"Kurt--"

"I'm your *Watcher*, Blaine," Kurt said, putting far too much emphasis on the word. "It is my job to keep you safe and it is your job to follow orders."

Blaine stared at him for a moment. "Yes, *sir*," he finally said coolly, and reached for his helmet.

~000~

Burt had done his best to clear the neighborhood; most neighbors seemed to more or less believe that Burt was in the mafia or something equally intimidating, and no one liked being the one to foot the bill for a call to Lima's private police force. It worked well as a cover story – organized crime had absolutely *flourished* since the privatization of law enforcement – so Burt did nothing to discourage the rumors. When he began spreading the word that there might be some *visitors* at his house that evening, and it might be safest if those living nearby found somewhere else to spend the night, most of them did. And those that stayed...well. It was their choice and there was nothing Burt could do about it.

No one was sure quite what to expect. The house was as secured as possible – both physically and magically – and everyone was gathered in the living room.

Waiting.

"Maybe...maybe no one's coming," Jeremiah ventured. Rachel sighed.

"I can't believe Kurt ever dated such an ignoramus," she muttered.

"An ignor-what?"

"Nothing, Finn. Never mind."

"They're definitely coming," Angel said. "And I'd be willing to bet they know we're waiting for them."

"Then what's *taking* them so long?" Puck growled.

"They're savoring their advantage.," Mercedes answered, pacing.

The group fell into speculation, the din of overlapping conversations filling the room. Puck and Finn were in favor of "taking the fight to them," while Mike argued in favor of maintaining "home court advantage." Lauren reassured Burt and Angel for the five hundredth time that the scrambler spell she had laid on Kurt and Blaine before they left *should* keep anyone from finding them before they reached their destination, and Spike shook his head solemnly when Shannon quietly asked if anyone had seen Brittany and Santana since they had disappeared earlier in the evening. Carole wove through the room, making sure that everyone knew where they were supposed to be if and when Tammy and company did show up as expected, and Burt once again tried in vain to convince her to wait in the reinforced safety of the attic until the battle was over.

"Wait," Spike said loudly all of a sudden, just as Angel bellowed for quiet. The room fell silent almost instantly.

The sound was minute, something that could almost be explained away as the wind, but the closer they listened, the louder it became, as if their attention itself magnified the volume of the words.

"*Little pig, little pig, let me in,*" came the voice, a disturbingly childlike singsong that sent chills down the spines of everyone with a pulse.

"*Little pig, little pig...*" came the voice again.

"Dude, that is seriously fucking creepy," Finn whispered. Rachel clutched his hand.

"Now might be a good time to get into position," Burt said, his voice low.

There was a protracted silence during which everyone shuffled nervously, spreading themselves through the house in pairs while a core group remained in the living room to face whomever was attached to the voice. Burt, Lauren, Angel, Puck, Rachel and Mercedes moved into a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder in the middle of the room, facing outward on all sides.

The silence finally ended with laughter. Laughter that was so childlike and pure, and edged with such malice, that it was nothing short of terrifying.

"Very well, then," the voice said, growing deeper and louder this time, seeming to fill the entire room. "I suppose I'll have to huff and puff..."

Despite the fact that nearly everyone in the house was a trained fighter, many with supernatural abilities, there were very few who did not scream when every single window in the house exploded into shards all at once, the front door flying clear off its hinges and smashing into splinters against the staircase.

"...and blow your house in," Tammy finished with a broad smile, walking through the doorway and brushing debris off the sleeve of her pale pink blazer.

~000~

Two hours after leaving the rest stop, Blaine was getting antsy. He was just about to suggest that they stop again when he felt the first raindrop land on his hand.

"How much longer?" he yelled to Kurt, wondering if they should pull over and seek shelter or just push through.

"Less than an hour," Kurt yelled back.

Blaine pondered their options as the rain began to fall in earnest. The road was uneven and winding, and the bike's headlight was the only point of light in the darkness around them. Adding reduced visibility and slick roads to the mix was not the safest of options.

But...*your body was **born** to ride this*, Kurt's voice echoed in Blaine's mind. And it was true. Even though Blaine knew intellectually that the conditions had made driving more difficult, his body seemed to know exactly what to do, and he truly didn't feel even the tiniest inkling of fear. If anything, the prospect of riding in a rainstorm struck him as an exciting challenge.

But Kurt, on the other hand, may find the idea less than thrilling.

"You want to pull over and wait out the storm, or push through?" he yelled, leaning back into the warmth of Kurt's body behind him.

"You OK to drive in this?" Kurt yelled back, and Blaine couldn't help but smile. "Hell, yeah!" he responded, and *gunned* it, smiling even broader at the way the increased speed made Kurt's grip tighten around him.

~000~

"Where is he?" Tammy asked, studying her nails. Behind her, on the front porch and in the yard, were several dozen vampires and demons, including Quinn and Tina. Sue was pacing with agitation and yelling at Jesse to stop being so incompetent and just *smash* the damn magical barrier that none but Tammy were able to cross.

No one in the living room moved a muscle.

Puck looked around him incredulously. "What the hell are we doing? She's *right there!*"

Rachel's eyes went wide. "Puck, no!" She hissed, but it was far too late.

As he lunged toward Tammy, she made a flicking motion, as if disposing of a piece of lint, and Puck promptly fell to the floor, gasping and clawing at his throat.

Rachel ran to him, staring up at Tammy in horror as Puck's face started to turn blue.

"You just made a very big mistake," Rachel said, her voice wavering as she walked closer.

"Did I?" Tammy sounded amused. "I prefer to think of it as God's work. Werewolves are an aberration, you know." She made a face. "I can smell canine blood in every corner of this house, and it's *disgusting.*"

"And demons *aren't* aberrations?" Came a voice to Rachel's right. Lauren broke off from the circle and strode around to face Tammy, looking utterly unconcerned by the woman's display. Lauren looked at Puck for no more than two seconds, her eyes flickering yellow, and he took a sudden, sharp inhalation of breath, coughing violently. His hands fell limply to the floor beside him as he gasped for air.

"Demons serve their purpose," Tammy replied, advancing on Lauren. Rachel knelt to help Puck, knowing that she was not needed in this confrontation. This was between Lauren and Tammy now.

"Earthly demons may be human hybrids, but they are not *animal* hybrids," Tammy clarified. "That sort of blasphemy is the work of the pagan gods of old." Both women continued walking toward each other until their noses were almost touching. "Demons deign to wander into this little world to purge it of such ancient evils, and all the ways in which evil has *infected* the world of the living. That includes the creation of werewolves." Her smile grew unpleasantly wide. "And, of course, Vampire Slayers."

"I'm sorry, did you say something?" Lauren asked, her voice dripping with feigned sweetness. "I couldn't hear you over all the *bullshit* that seems to have built up in my ears." She gave a smile to match Tammy's. No one made a sound.. The living room and foyer had become a vacuum of tension.

"So here's how this is going to work," Lauren continued, her voice both soft and needle-sharp. "He isn't here. He's somewhere safe and you're not going to find him. It's over. So let's just avoid some big scuffle that we both *know* is going to result in nothing more than an unpleasantly dusty yard, and settle this witch to witch."

"How quaint that you think this is *over*," Tammy said sweetly. "But don't worry about me – I'll find the boy. There are excellent ways to track someone down without the use of spellwork, you know. And the rest of you – well. I honestly can't even tell you how much I want to kill every single one of you. I can smell the sin crawling all over you."

"That's actually lotus oil with just a touch of citrus and cinnamon. It's sort of my signature scent. But I can understand the mistake – it does smell *sinful*, doesn't it?" Lauren asked with a lascivious grin.

Tammy made a noise that could only be properly described as a *hiss*, and raised her arms, bright green threads of energy crackling between her palms. Lauren's own gaze went steely, and her hands began glowing with silver light.

"And once again," Tammy said, her voice lowering and her eyes growing dark with rage. "I am *not* a *witch*."

~000~

"Blaine, what – what are those?"

"Um...birds? Large...oddly shaped birds? Large, oddly shaped, incredibly *fast* birds?"

"Those are not birds."

Blaine sighed. "Maybe if we just *pretend* they're birds, they will be?"

"So that's your plan? Denial?"

"My *plan* is to try not to crash the motorcycle while my brilliant and insightful Watcher tells me what our plan actually *is*. God, they're *really* fast. If I didn't know better, I would say those were flying monkeys."

Kurt sighed. "And if you *did* know better, if you had, for instance, actually *paid attention* when we covered this in our study session, you would know that that is precisely what they are. Well, simevolan demons to be precise, but close enough."

"So they're flying monkey *demons*? Why didn't I learn about them in school?"

"They're rare in this dimension. They have to be summoned. They're excellent trackers, though – their ability to scent prey is about forty times greater than that of a beagle. And their talons are so sharp they can slice through bone like it's made of soft butter."

"*Fuck.*"

"I...would recommend going as fast as possible, Blaine."

Blaine swallowed, evaluating the pelting rain that was soaking them through, the glistening wet and uneven pavement that unraveled before them, and the rapidly advancing figures in the sky.

"Hold on tight," he advised, and revvd the engine hard, the bike shooting like a bullet through the night.

"We're nearly there," Kurt breathed in his ear. "If you...if you can keep us from crashing or getting caught, we'll make it. Take that right just up ahead. It's easy to miss; see that yellow sign?"

Blaine made the turn, his heart surging with a spike of panic when the bike skidded a bit, but before he could properly worry, they were solid again, barreling down an incredibly dark and narrow road through a thickly wooded area.

A strange, repetitive sound came into focus, and for a moment Blaine thought it was the sound of heavy rain on leaves. And then it grew louder, and then louder still. It was definitely not the sound of rain on leaves.

It was the sound of rain on leathery, fiercely beating wings.

Kurt gripped Blaine so tightly he almost gasped as one of the creatures grew uncomfortably close, letting out a goosebumps-inducing shriek into the night.

Blaine leaned forward, squinted in concentration as if it could somehow make them go faster. The sound of wings grew louder and louder, and when Blaine glanced over his shoulder, he immediately wished that he hadn't. There was a veritable *cloud* of simevolan demons in their wake, the closest among them already starting to reach for the bike. Blaine was suddenly hit with the ice-cold realization that they would reach Kurt first, and there would be nothing Blaine could do about it. Blaine suddenly wished Kurt could be seated in front of him instead, cradled safely in his arms while Blaine drove them to safety.

"Left up here," came Kurt's voice again, breathless and tightly controlled. Blaine veered off the road at the indicated turn, and they found themselves on a bumpy dirt road. Blaine swore under his breath, trying desperately to make up for the speed they had lost in making the turn and navigating the rough rock-strewn path.

Blaine started when he felt movement at his stomach, and realized Kurt was working his shirt out of his belt, and burrowing his hands underneath.

"K-Kurt?"

"We're nearly there. I have to be touching you. Not your shirt, *you*. Skin to skin. Otherwise you won't get through."

"O-oh," Blaine choked out, surprised to find he could still feel such acute embarrassment, even in a situation like this one.

Kurt clutched him tightly, cold palms trailing up Blaine's warm skin until they came to rest firmly against his ribcage.

The wet flap of wings grew so close Blaine was afraid the demons were truly upon them, but Kurt's hands were still there. As long as Kurt's hands -

Kurt gasped suddenly, his hands going tight against Blaine's torso as if he were being pulled backward.

"Blaine, *drive!*" He screamed, more than a hint of hysteria in his voice as his hands scrambled for purchase, and fuck. Kurt definitely *was* being pulled backward.

Blaine chanced taking his left hand off the handle, and glanced over his shoulder, his body thankfully moving before his shock could set in. Because there was one of the demons. It wasn't slicing into Kurt – the talons Kurt had spoken of didn't even appear to be bared. Instead the creature had its small, shriveled hands wrapped around Kurt's sides and was pulling him backward, some hideous parody of a smile spread across its distorted face. The creature did look a lot like a monkey, except for its white-gray-twisted-pustule-covered-red-eyed-long-fanged face. It was the sort of face that inspired one to wake up screaming in the night. Blaine kept his bicep rigid and let his forearm snap back, his fist landing a solid blow to the creature's forehead. He tried not to shudder at the way the slimy, cold flesh felt against his knuckles.

The creature shrieked and seemed to lose its hold on Kurt, and Kurt took the opportunity to clutch Blaine as hard as he could. His fingernails were digging in almost hard enough to draw blood, but Blaine honestly didn't care. Not as long as Kurt was still there.

Blaine crouched a bit, his muscles screaming-stiff, his breath caught in his throat. There was an odd shimmer to the air in front of him, and Blaine knew, without asking, that this was their destination. Only a few hundred feet to go-

Kurt screamed, and his hands almost slid free of Blaine completely. Panicked, Blaine let go of both handlebars and *pulled* Kurt's arms back, aware of nothing but his need to protect Kurt, to keep him safe. The demon seemed to have an even better grip on Kurt this time, and just as Blaine thought they were finally there, finally about to cross into where they would be safe, the demon gave Kurt a sniff and then let go, lunging for Blaine instead.

Blaine was wrenched upward, all physical contact lost for one terrifying moment. Kurt let out a shriek and wrapped his arms as tightly as possible around Blaine's waist as the surprisingly strong little demon attempted to pull him off the bike and into the air. Blaine was mostly airborne, only anchored by Kurt's

arms, and he couldn't seem to twist into a position that would let him pry the demon's hands loose. The bike was slowing down and wildly out of control, but the power lever was on the handlebar, and if Kurt loosened his grip on Blaine even slightly, Blaine would be gone. They did still have a fair bit of momentum going, however, and just as Blaine felt sure that he was going to slip completely out of Kurt's grasp, a ripple of tingling warmth washed through his body. The bike hit a patch of mud and skidded out of control entirely, throwing both Kurt and Blaine several feet through the air.

Blaine landed with a loud grunt, the wind knocked out of him, and he cried out in pain when the bike fell half on top of him. The engine was still running, the bike vibrating on its side and spraying mud everywhere, and a deafening screech pierced the night, loud and piercing enough to make Blaine wince and momentarily forget all physical discomfort outside of his ears.

He looked up, dazed, to see the road just twenty feet behind them littered with writhing balls of flame. A simevolan demon came hurtling toward them, scarlet eyes blazing and dark brown fangs dripping with thick saliva, and Blaine barely had time to tense before it too suddenly burst into flame, screaming as the invisible wall it had run into shimmered slightly before settling back into invisibility.

They lay there, watching demon after demon burst into flame, casting light across the forest and the dim shape of a cabin off to their left. The fire seemed untouched by the driving rain. The last conscious thought Blaine had was that it was strange that the fire was dimming so rapidly while still seeming to burn so bright.

And then he didn't think anything at all.

~000~

Lauren's magic twisted against Tammy's, the two women sweating with the exertion of keeping up the stalemate, of refusing to be the one to step down. While they remained occupied, the others in the living room and some of the others throughout the house took to the yard, armed with stakes and battle axes, cross-bows and wood-tipped daggers. If they didn't leave the safety of the house it would only be destroyed when the barrier protecting it inevitably faltered - that much was clear - and that simply couldn't happen.

Not because of what the house meant to everyone who stood ready to defend it, though that certainly mattered too, but because they had *found* something. In the attic, hidden by an even thicker layer of magic

than the rest of the house, Artie and Jeremiah slowly translated the text Lauren had found. It was a very difficult process, but if they could translate it properly, without misinterpreting a single step or ingredient, they had a shot.

A shot to tip the balance. To ensure that the Slayer line could never truly be threatened again. The process would have been much easier with Lauren – or even Burt – present, but Lauren and Burt had other roles to fill. They were warriors, and Artie and Jeremiah were not. Lauren and Burt's jobs were to keep as many of the good guys alive as possible. Artie and Jeremiah's job was to translate. From a demon language. A *dead* demon language. A dead demon language that hadn't been spoken on any known world in thousands upon thousands of years.

"I don't care what anyone else says," Artie told Jeremiah beneath the lamplight. "The smart guys *always* save the day in the end."

Jeremiah just smiled at him.

In the yard below, Finn, Puck and Mike fell to their knees, transforming into wolf form with practiced ease, and focusing on their prey (and no, the warm ones with the tender hearts were *not* prey, no matter how good the wolves knew their virtue would taste on their tongues).

Slayers staked and beheaded anything they could find without a pulse, demons writhed under Burt's magic, and Carole aimed a hose connected to a tank of holy water at those vampires stupid enough to think her weak. Angel and Spike moved through the crowd like cats, helping when necessary, killing when possible.

The battle hadn't even been raging for thirty minutes, and already the yard was covered in dust and blood.

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[A/N: Please read the author's note when you finish the chapter! There is a video to watch that creates important context and background for the following scene.]

As awareness seeped into the crevices of Blaine's mind, it started with the most basic things: warmth. Comfort. Dry feet and damp curls. The sounds of crackling and the smell of woodsmoke. The sound of whisper-soft sobbing beside him.

Blaine opened his eyes slowly, taking a moment to remember where he was and what was going on. Nothing seemed to match up and make sense, but he could tell that he had been hurt and that his body had already healed quite a bit. Being a Slayer could come in extremely handy sometimes.

He was lying on what appeared to be a fold-out futon with a pleasingly thick mattress. He smelled cedar in the blanket that covered him and he closed his eyes again and breathed deep, wondering why it reminded him so much of Kurt.

Kurt.

Kurt.

Blaine sat up quickly and looked around, remembering his last sight of Kurt, landing in a heap several feet away from him while the monkey demons burned. He breathed a sigh of relief when he realized that Kurt was beside him, but frowned when he made the connection between Kurt's presence and the soft sobs he had woken up to.

Kurt was still in his wet clothes, his hair dripping and sticking up in every direction, covered in mud. He had his knees drawn to his chest and he was crying quietly while he shivered.

"Kurt?" Blaine asked tentatively.

Kurt lifted his head and stared at him. "*Blaine.*" His voice was hoarse and barely a whisper.

"You're shaking like a leaf," Blaine said, rubbing Kurt's arms. They felt like ice.

"I'm...um...cold," Kurt managed weakly.

"Why aren't you – wait, you put *me* in dry clothes, but-"

"I didn't look," Kurt said quickly. "Or, well, as little as possible. But I had to..." he trailed off, looking miserable.

Blaine touched his arm again. "Kurt, it's fine. I don't...I don't care about that, I just don't want you catching pneumonia or something. Let me get you something. Do you...are there more clothes and blankets, and...?"

Kurt looked almost confused for a moment. "Yeah. Yes. There's a cedar closet, let me just..."

"Kurt," Blaine said gently. "Just point me in the right direction. While I go do that why don't you warm up in front of the fire?"

"No – you're hurt, Blaine, I'm fine, I-"

"I'm actually kind of OK, Kurt. I think I'm doing better than you at the moment, so...just...let me?" Blaine tilted his head hopefully.

Kurt gave him a weak smile and gestured to a door in the corner of the room. "Over there. It's the closet in that bedroom that *doesn't* have a sliding door. It – I should probably-

"*Sit*," Blaine said firmly. Kurt gave him what was far too weak to truly be a haughty look, but it warmed Blaine's heart nonetheless.

The main room of the cabin (and it was clearly a cabin) was simple and pleasant, most of the furnishings of sanded but unvarnished wood, the general color scheme burgundy and navy blue and hunter green. Blaine surmised from the photographs on the walls that this was some sort of vacation home that Kurt and Burt had been visiting since Kurt was very small. There were even photographs of Kurt with a woman who had to be his mother. Blaine smiled when he saw them, and would have stopped to look closer if Kurt hadn't been shivering and crying by the fire.

There were things Blaine was sure Burt insisted on keeping much to Kurt's chagrin – like the mallard-shaped lamp and the brightly painted piece of driftwood with "Gone Fishin'!" Written prominently in violent orange across it. For the most part, though, the cabin was simple and rustic and clean and smelled amazing. Blaine went into the bedroom Kurt had specified, refusing to let himself pause to drink it in even though this was clearly Kurt's room – yellowed clippings of vintage fashions were neatly pinned to the wall near the bed, and a few scarves were strategically draped over otherwise bland pieces of furniture.

In the cedar closet (which smelled so heavenly Blaine kind of wanted to live there), he found blankets and towels and thick socks and sweat pants and a flannel shirt – much like the one he himself was wearing – for Kurt. He did the best he could to pick things that sort of matched, and then quickly made his way back to the main room.

Kurt hadn't moved.

"Here," Blaine said. As you know, it's not exactly couture, but it is warm and dry."

"Thank you," Kurt said softly. Blaine furrowed his brow. He stared at Kurt for a moment, trying to figure out how to read his behavior, when he realized Kurt was picking at the clothes nervously.

"Oh. Um...just...sorry. I'll just...turn around. Yeah." Blaine turned his back to Kurt, trying not to think about how close and near and naked Kurt was. Trying not to think about how much he wanted to hold him and never let him go.

At a sharp hiss behind him, Blaine nearly turned around, but stopped himself at the last minute.

"What is it?" He asked instead.

"It's nothing," Kurt murmured. "Just a...a cut or something..."

"Can I...let me see?"

Kurt didn't answer for a long moment, and just when Blaine was about to ask again, he heard a whisper:

"OK."

Kurt had put the sweatpants on, but he was naked from the waist up, clutching the plaid shirt to his chest to create a semblance of modesty. On his shoulder was a long red gash.

Blaine sat down beside Kurt and touched the tips of his fingers to the unblemished skin surrounding the cut.

"I think it's all right," Blaine said carefully, examining the wound as gently as he could. "Just a surface scratch. Do you...want me to get something to put on it?"

Kurt shook his head and closed his eyes, and to Blaine's surprise, leaned back into him, nestling his damp head into Blaine's warm neck. Blaine shivered – not at all unpleasantly – from the contact. Without thinking of anything other than making Kurt warm, he wrapped his arms around him. And when he realized what he'd done a split second later, he didn't pull away. Because Kurt hadn't gone stiff in his arms as Blaine might have expected. Instead he seemed to all but *melt* into him.

"You...you almost went away tonight," Kurt said, his voice small and raw. Blaine's heart surged in a way that nearly choked him, and he pulled Kurt closer.

"We both did," Blaine whispered in response, his chest tightening at the memory of Kurt getting pulled away from him, his wet hands losing their grip no matter how hard he tried to hold on.

"Blaine, I feel like if I lost you..." Kurt's breath hitched on a sob. "I know I haven't...I should have...I just...I'm so *scared*..."

Kurt trailed off with a hard, shaking breath.

Blaine felt the knot in his chest pressing at his rib cage, screaming for release. He opened his mouth to speak, but couldn't manage it. Kurt looked up at him, eyes so huge and blue and tender and tough. The knot clawed its way to the surface.

"I..." Blaine started, and then stopped because he couldn't face Kurt's rejection again. Not now.

Kurt turned to face him properly, pinning Blaine in place with those eyes.

"You what?" Kurt asked, staring right down to Blaine's core.

"I love you," Blaine said. He allowed himself to float on the simple, unadorned truth of it, the blissful freedom in finally saying the one true thing that he knew.

Kurt's eyes grew impossibly wide, and his gasp was audible. He looked like he had been told that the world had finally and completely been purged of evil, and it was so pure and beautiful and terrifying to behold that Blaine couldn't stop his own tears. By the time he was able to speak again, he was already crying in earnest.

"I know...I know I'm not supposed to," he admitted softly, "but I can't stop."

Kurt brought a now-warm hand to Blaine's face, rested it so gently against his cheek that it almost broke Blaine's heart. "Me...me too," Kurt whispered. "I can't stop either. I just didn't think you..."

"I do."

Kurt barely had to move at all to kiss Blaine. Their faces were so close already, their warmth a shared commodity. He pressed his hand gently against Blaine's cheek, and Blaine allowed Kurt to tilt his head, their lips touching so softly they could barely feel it, while simultaneously feeling it more vividly than anything either of them could remember. Kurt moved his head back slightly, his eyes searching Blaine's face before moving in again, and Blaine's hand moved to cup Kurt's cheek, mirroring Kurt's hand on his. The fingers of their free hands laced together as if it were the most natural thing to do in the world.

Because it *was*.

Their kisses were soft and small, too full of feeling to truly be chaste, too natural to be tentative. Their lips were dry and warm and soft against one another, and though neither man was a virgin, neither man had ever felt this close to another person before.

Kurt's hand slid to the back of Blaine's head, working its way into his still-damp curls as he deepened their kisses, and Blaine followed Kurt's lead. Followed him because there was still one tiny part of himself that was unsure about this, that was waiting for Kurt to tell him it was a mistake.

Blaine pulled back far enough to look Kurt in the eye, searching for signs of hesitation. "Kurt," he said quietly, "are you sure? Maybe we shouldn't..."

"Don't." Kurt's voice was almost shocking in its ferocity, a ferocity that was only punctuated when he whispered, desperate and sure, "just kiss me."

And who was Blaine to disobey his Watcher? He was far too disciplined for that.

They sank down onto the mattress, their kisses growing bolder and spilling over with yearning. As Blaine ran his hand down Kurt's side, he realized that Kurt had dropped the shirt he'd been holding against his chest somewhere along the way, and his bare skin was even smoother and softer than Blaine had imagined.

"Is this...okay?" Blaine whispered, slowly sliding his hand to Kurt's chest.

"Yes," Kurt gasped. "God, Blaine, I want you, I want you so much..."

Kurt couldn't hide his shiver as Blaine pulled back enough to look at him properly, the cool air raising goosebumps on his perfect skin. Blaine smiled and wrapped a blanket around Kurt's shoulders.

"Hold on just a minute, okay?" Blaine asked, kissing Kurt softly and then getting up from the futon. He gathered the other blankets he had brought from the cedar chest, laying them in front of the fire, as close to it as reasonably possible. He knelt on the blankets and reached for Kurt. Kurt took his hand and gracefully climbed down beside him.

It was so warm this close to the fire, and the heat seemed to make everything more precious and intimate.

Kurt lay back on the nest of blankets, the firelight playing across his flawless skin. His eyes were dark and hazy, and his smile nearly made Blaine's heart stop.

"Kurt, can I...can I see you?" Blaine asked nervously. "It's fine if you don't want to, and I might be going too fast here, and I won't be comfortable unless *you're* comfortable, so I really don't want you feeling pressured at all to-

"Blaine?"

"Yeah?"

Kurt smirked. "Shut up."

Blaine bit his lip and smiled.

Kurt sat up just enough to kiss Blaine before settling back onto his back. "I want to see you too," he said, his fingers trailing under the hem of Blaine's shirt and ghosting along the soft, lightly furred skin of his stomach. Blaine felt his muscles twitch in response to the touch.

They undressed one another slowly, savoring each newly revealed expanse of skin, each nearly speechless at the beauty of the other.

Kurt's body was far more incredible naked than it was in even his tightest spandex training clothes. He was long, lean, and perfectly sculpted. So perfectly sculpted, in fact, that it looked as if he were carved from marble, and with every touch Blaine was freshly amazed that Kurt was actually warm and alive and *real*. His cock was thick and rose-colored, and Blaine couldn't help but marvel at the fact that he'd never realized a penis could be so *pretty* before.

He couldn't help but worry that his body couldn't possibly measure up. But Kurt's eyes as more and more of Blaine's skin came into view told such an intensely different story that he found himself believing it. Believing that Kurt found him beautiful. Believing that Kurt might just *want* him every bit as much as Blaine wanted Kurt. Believing Kurt when he stared at Blaine and said, "You take my breath away."

They lay on their sides, noses nuzzled together, smiles absurd but neither of them terribly concerned. They lay like that, close and warm, hands lazily exploring one another while they kissed, interspersed with small gasps and moans. They were both hard, but beyond lightly rubbing together and caressing the shape of one another with their fingers, they didn't seek release. Not yet. Not when they finally had *this*. They didn't want even their own lust to destroy the delicate intimacy they were creating.

"Blaine," Kurt finally whispered, "I want *everything*. With you."

"Yes," Blaine whispered back, pressing his lips gently against Kurt's for one sweet moment.

"I...I haven't...it's been a long time."

"It's been a long time for me too."

"I'm nervous."

"I'm terrified."

Kurt laughed softly, rubbing his nose against Blaine's and stroking his hip. "We can just do this if you like. This is nice."

"This is perfect," Blaine agreed. "But I've always thought the best way to deal with fear was to confront it head-on."

Kurt laughed, louder this time. "Spoken like a true Vampire Slayer." He kissed Blaine, and then shifted, rolling Blaine onto his back and hovering above him.

Blaine smiled up at him, gasping softly when Kurt's mouth latched onto his throat. "W-what are you doing?" He asked, as Kurt began kissing his way down Blaine's body.

The smile he got in response was nothing short of *sinful*. "Confronting our fears *head-on*, Blaine, what did you think?" he asked, and continued on his path.

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"I can't believe you convinced me to go back there," Santana grumbled.

"They need us," Brittany said, pulling a still reluctant Santana behind her.

"They need *you*, maybe. They made their thoughts on my presence perfectly clear."

Brittany sighed. "They're not going to see how much they need you unless you're *there*, San. Just-"

Brittany stopped cold, and before Santana could open her mouth to say what was wrong, she found herself grasping at thin air, as Brittany's hand was wrenched from hers. Brittany fell to the ground hard like a stone, her eyes going wide, her entire body twitching. Santana was worried before the string of gibberish began – or the stream of some language Santana couldn't possibly decipher anyway – but the worry grew into actual fear when the words began spilling out. It didn't look like a possession, but that didn't give Santana any real comfort, especially when she began hearing one word that she did recognize peppered through Brittany's mutterings.

"Angelus. Angelus. *Angelus*."

Santana picked up the still-writhing girl and ran toward those who had so recently rejected everything she had to offer. Because they were also the only people she knew that could help her.

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Blaine gasped and writhed beneath Kurt, and it was delicious. *Blaine* was delicious.

Kurt couldn't believe he had denied himself this pleasure for so long, had denied himself this trust, this *love*. Some part of him had known from the moment he met Blaine that this was the natural state of things between them, but he had fought against it so *hard*.

Surrender had never, ever tasted quite this sweet.

Blaine was beautiful, all golden skin and dark hair, molten eyes and sweet red lips. His cock was gorgeous; flushed a deep reddish pink and jutting from a nest of neat dark curls, just waiting to be tasted. It was also perfectly-sized in Kurt's opinion, and he had *very* discerning taste.

Kurt gave the head a firm lick, causing to Blaine emit a sharp cry, and Blaine tasted briny and sweet and familiar but unique. He tasted like sex. He tasted like *Blaine*.

Kurt groaned, his nipples and cock hardening even more, before he sunk his mouth down and drowned in the pretty sounds Blaine made.

Kurt used one hand to extend his reach – he was far too out of practice for deep-throating to be a viable option – and lay the other firmly across Blaine's hips.

He began moving his lips and fist up and down Blaine's length slowly, grip loose, while he drew lazy patterns lightly with his tongue.

"Please, Kurt," Blaine whimpered through gritted teeth. Kurt smiled around Blaine's cock and then tightened his grip on Blaine, clamping his lips and sucking hard as he dragged up, still just as slow.

"Oh, *god!*" Blaine screamed, bucking his hips up hard.

Kurt nearly choked on Blaine's cock before he was flung backward, landing sprawled on his back and gasping for air, his throat screaming with pain. He was too dazed to properly register what had happened at first, until it became so obvious he couldn't believe his own idiocy.

He had laid a single arm across the hips of a Vampire Slayer, thinking it would be enough to hold him in place.

In all fairness, this particular scenario had never been addressed in his Watcher training, but still. Blaine wasn't just a beautiful soul in a gorgeous body. Blaine was quite possibly the strongest mortal man on earth. And in the heat of passion, Kurt seemed to have forgotten that fact entirely.

As Kurt's coughs began to subside, he became aware of Blaine kneeling beside him, babbling apologies. He must have gone to get Kurt a glass of water at some point, because he was holding the glass out to Kurt and asking if the tap water was okay, and *holy shit, Kurt, I'm so sorry, I can't believe I did that, I swear I didn't mean to, I'm so sorry, I'm so **sorry**.*

Kurt held his hand out, nodding his head and waving his hand and finding himself entirely unsuccessful in his attempt to convey his meaning to Blaine without words. Kurt took a deep breath and a long drink of water, and then gently placed a hand on Blaine's knee.

"Blaine."

Blaine winced at the hoarseness in Kurt's voice, but closed his mouth and gave Kurt his full attention.

"It's okay. I should have thought of that. It isn't anyone's fault, and I'm all right. Really."

"I didn't mean to," Blaine blurted. "It's just been so long and it felt so good, and I know that's no excuse, god, I-"

"Blaine."

Blaine closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "I'm sorry," he whispered. "I didn't mean to ruin everything."

Kurt drew himself up onto his knees and leaned in swiftly to kiss Blaine's lips. Blaine's eyes opened in surprise.

"Blaine, you didn't ruin anything. In fact," Kurt mused, smile widening and eyes growing dark, "you just gave me a fantastic idea."

~000~

Sweat was rolling down the two womens' faces, the apparent stalemate in their powers beginning to falter.

Lauren was losing. That much was obvious.

Tammy's smile reappeared, vicious and sadistic, and yes – it absolutely did reach her eyes.

"This has been fun, but now I'm bored," she said, failing to suppress the strain in her voice as she drew her hands back.

Lauren attempted a defense, but the green energy that shot forth from Tammy's palms cut through Lauren's own magical defense like a knife. Lauren's eyes went wide and her scream ran through the house as she fell, collapsing into a heap on the ground, completely still.

The magical barrier that had surrounded the house shattered like glass, those demons that were able to enter roaring in triumph as they began streaming inside.

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Kurt and Jeremiah had tried this a handful of times and could never keep it going for more than a few minutes, but this position was actually the most glorious position in the world, Kurt decided, if the man fucking you happened to be a Vampire Slayer.

Blaine held him up like he weighed absolutely nothing at all, and Kurt was not even going to *pretend* that wasn't hot. He held the backs of Kurt's thighs spread wide while he fucked into him fast, his cock *pressing* into Kurt's prostate over and over and *over* again with each hard slide into his body, and Kurt could only writhe and scream, hands clawing desperately against the smooth stone wall behind him. Blaine kissed him deep while he fucked him, his body in complete control, and Kurt felt like he was in a pleasure-induced trance.

Blaine was warm against him, groaning into Kurt's mouth that Kurt was so *hot* and so *tight* and so *gorgeous* and "*Fuck, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you.*" It was primal and intimate and when the pleasure grew too thick for even kissing, they panted into one another's mouths and groaned. Blaine lifted Kurt's thighs a bit higher, tilting his ass up a bit more, and spread Kurt's legs even wider. As he plunged deep into Kurt's body, Blaine managed a breathless chuckle into his mouth, and a single word: "*Flexible.*"

Kurt went cross-eyed at the intense shock of pleasure that this new angle sent thumping through his body. Blaine's arms were steady and firm. "*Strong,*" he managed to reply shakily, and then groaned as he allowed Blaine to spread his thighs just a little bit more.

It was insanely fucking good, better than the best sex Kurt had ever imagined, and Kurt was stunned that he hadn't come already, with or without the assistance of his hand.

"Blaine," he moaned, his hands flying from the wall to Blaine's shoulders, sliding to his back and wrapping around Blaine's shoulder blades, squeezing tight and holding on, his eyes locked on Blaine's as if by some physical force. He wanted to say more, to whisper sweet and filthy things and tell Blaine how much he loved him, but all that came out was moan after moan after moan.

There had been a little metal box containing condoms and lube hidden under a floorboard in Kurt's bedroom at the cabin. He hadn't brought Jeremiah here – bringing an outsider to this ancestral retreat was an enormously significant act, and they hadn't quite gotten there yet – but he had decided to prepare, so that he wouldn't have to think about practicalities when the time finally came.

That time never did come. Not with Jeremiah, anyway.

Blaine had been overwhelmed when Kurt told him what he wanted. Awe and arousal and fear and doubt played over his face when Kurt had asked for it, and he had had to run his own hands over the smooth polished stones of the wall surrounding the fireplace before he was satisfied that Kurt wouldn't get hurt.

They had started out gentle, of course, and slow – Blaine had stretched him like it was a sacred ritual, like he had never been trusted with something so important before in his life. It made Kurt feel treasured in a way he had never imagined possible.

And now, as Blaine gasped into his mouth and quickened his hips, Kurt *knew*. He just knew. It was Blaine. It had always been Blaine. He had just been waiting to find him.

Blaine made a strangled sound that was probably an attempt at Kurt's name, and Kurt could tell he was close, so close, and holding back for Kurt. Kurt groaned and leaned his head back, baring his throat and gasping with pleasure when Blaine took the unspoken invitation and pressed his hot, wet mouth to the tender skin, sucking desperately.

Kurt cried out as Blaine gave a particularly hard suck to his sensitive throat and a particularly hard thrust into Kurt's prostate at the *exact same time*. It was too much. His thighs burned and his skin buzzed and his cock strained and it was too fucking *much*, and all Kurt could do was gasp out the very beginning of Blaine's name before he was coming so hard he nearly blacked out, screaming as Blaine fucked him through it, hard and perfect.

It was seconds before Blaine came as well, thrusting into Kurt so hard he he probably would have hit the ceiling if Blaine's hands hadn't been holding him firmly in place, and Kurt jolted at the surprisingly pleasurable oversensitivity as Blaine plunged impossibly deeper into his body again and again until he was utterly spent.

They stayed there for what could have been moments or hours, Blaine still inside him, the crackling of the fire coming back into focus as they kissed softly.

"That was-" Blaine began, but Kurt had begun to speak as well.

"I love you," he sighed, eyelids heavy, smiling at Blaine when he pulled his face back far enough to look Kurt properly in the eye.

"You...you do," Blaine responded. It wasn't a question, but it was spoken with incredulity.

"Of course I do," Kurt murmured. "I already told you-"

"You didn't."

Kurt furrowed his eyebrows, trying to make sense of that through a thick blanket of satiety and afterglow.

"Well, you – you told me you felt the same way, but you didn't *say* it, and I..."

Blaine suddenly looked shy, and Kurt managed not to laugh at how absurd the expression was, given the fact that Blaine was still *inside* of him.

"I like hearing it," Blaine admitted quietly. Kurt smiled.

"I love you," he murmured, kissing Blaine's cheek. "I love you," he said again, kissing Blaine's nose.

"I love you," Blaine chimed in when Kurt said it a third time, before their lips met once again.

~000~

Artie looked up in shock from the scroll in front of him as a heavy object slammed against the attic door.

"How are you guys doing in there?" he heard Rachel call breathlessly, followed by some more banging and the distinctive sounds of breaking glass.

"I think we've got something, actually – can you get Lauren?"

There was a long silence. Too long. Artie didn't want to think about what it might mean.

"Or – Angel?" he added.

"I – I can try," came Rachel's reply, followed by the sound of retreating footsteps.

"So...we've actually got something?" Jeremiah ventured.

"We can't get our hopes up, but this could be *it*. The only problem is that Blaine isn't here, so – Jerry?"

Artie paused at the look in Jeremiah's eyes. It wasn't the expression, because there was no actual expression to speak of. It was the fact that something was undeniably *off* in them. They seemed clouded and unnaturally bright. A sense of unease began to unfurl in Artie's stomach.

"Finish what you were saying," Jeremiah said, his voice cold and flat as he stood up.

Artie swallowed and carefully rolled up the scroll he had been working on, clutching it tightly as he watched Jeremiah circle the attic like a trapped cat.

"Jerry, I think-" but Jeremiah had located the golf clubs being stored with other sports equipment near where they sat. He lifted the driver from the set, examining it.

"What *I* think, Artie, is that you should give me that scroll," Jeremiah said evenly, striding toward Artie with the club raised to strike.

~000~

The fire had been reduced to glowing embers, but they were perfectly warm bundled in both the blankets and one another. Kurt and Blaine had chosen not to sleep in Kurt's cold and unmade bedroom, instead eating hot soup and sweet brown bread from cans in front of the fire and then crawling onto the futon together, too exhausted and satisfied to do anything but sleep.

When Blaine awoke, he was lying on his back, Kurt's head nestled against his chest, his arm wrapped firmly around Blaine's waist. Blaine's arms were around Kurt, the one underneath Kurt's body mostly asleep.

If things had been right, Blaine would have stared at Kurt's beautiful face, softened by sleep, until he once again drifted off. If things had been right, Blaine might have stroked Kurt's bare shoulder and maybe even shed a tear or two because this brave, strong, brilliant, gorgeous man was finally his.

But things weren't right. Things weren't right at all.

It felt like something was fighting to claw its way out from beneath Blaine's skin, like each breath was liquid fire bursting forth from his chest. As delicately as possible, Blaine disentangled himself from Kurt, too overwhelmed with the need to *move*, to get *away* from the feeling that he couldn't possibly keep still.

Kurt didn't stir.

~000~

Santana spotted Angel just as he hit the ground, a triumphant-looking grappler demon descending upon him. Tightening her grip on a still-thrashing Brittany, Santana ran toward him, almost stopping short when he saw that he was curled in a tight ball, as if defending against some sort of overwhelming pain.

Before the demon could get to Angel, Spike appeared behind it, driving a sword into its heart so hard the end of the blade emerged from the creature's chest.

"Oh, thank fuck," Santana muttered, reaching Spike on the edge of the yard as the slain demon slumped to the ground, barely taking notice of the battle raging around them.

"Spike," she gasped. "It's Britt. There's something wrong with-"

Angel let out a blood-curdling scream, and then began whimpering "no, no, no, *please* no..."

Brittany dislodged herself from Santana's arms, suddenly perfectly in control of her movements.

Her eyes were huge and black.

She knelt beside Angel and touched him, causing a shudder to course through his body before he rolled onto his back, gasping, and stared up at her. He clutched her arm tightly.

"Please don't let it happen," he whispered, and Santana went completely still at the unnerving look of fear and vulnerability on his face.

When Brittany answered him, it was in a strange, deep voice that wasn't her own.

"It is done," she said.

~000~

The air in the cabin was far too hot, and Blaine could only manage to pull his sweatpants on before he couldn't stand to be there another second. He stumbled toward the door, gasping for breath, wondering if this was it, if he was dying.

The cold air and colder rain against his bare chest only seemed to make the burning hotter, the itching and ripping beneath his skin more unbearable. He stumbled down the front steps to the cabin and fell to his knees in the mud. He was barely even aware of his own moans of pain, and all he knew, suddenly and completely, was that something was happening to him. Something was *changing* in him. And god, what if he turned into something – something that might hurt Kurt?

He leaned back, knees pressed into the mud and face contorted against the cold night sky.

"Kurt," he gasped, and then louder, as loud as he could, hoping – not even understanding what he could possibly be hoping, only that he didn't know what was happening and only one thing mattered in the entire world.

"KURT!" he screamed into the night.

Kurt didn't stir.

So there are two scenes that I really must insist you watch unless you are VERY familiar with Buffy – without them you will not fully understand what is happening in both this chapter and the next.

A/N: I have posted links to the relevant episodes below (I couldn't find the individual scenes anywhere online, sorry).

Season 2, Episode 13 Link. Start watching at 40:01, and stop at the end of the episode, which is at 44:24.

Season 2, Episode 14 Link. Start watching at 00:51 and stop at 02:28.

If you have not seen Buffy, please also see my Buffy Info page [HERE](#) for further clarification.

Chapter Seventeen

When Kurt awoke he was alone.

"Blaine?" he called.

There was no answer.

"Blaine!" He felt his voice rising in panic, which he knew was ridiculous, because Blaine was probably just in the bathroom or something.

Kurt climbed out of bed, shivering in the cold night air, the fire in the hearth long since burned to ashes.

He winced at the flare of pain in several muscles at once as he stood up, and then smiled when he remembered why he was so sore. He didn't care if it hurt. It had been so worth it.

Kurt clicked on the floor lamp closest to the futon, squinting against the too-bright flood of light it produced. He pulled on the sweat pants and button-down flannel shirt that had been discarded on the floor, as well as the thick wool socks he had never gotten around to putting on the night before.

"Blaine?" Kurt called softly, heading toward the bathroom. The door was slightly open and the room was dark and silent. There was no light coming from the kitchen or any of the bedrooms either.

Kurt frowned. It was still pouring outside. Surely Blaine hadn't -

Kurt didn't bother to think too hard on why Blaine going outside in the middle of the night made no sense at all. He just found his boots, cringing when he realized how wet they still were, and pulled them on.

Kurt grabbed a flashlight from a cabinet drawer just inside the door, and flicked it on. He opened the door and stared out into the night.

"Blaine?" Kurt called loudly over the pouring rain.

Kurt was about to go back inside and undergo a more thorough search – surely Blaine had just fallen asleep somewhere else in the cabin for some reason and was sleeping soundly. Surely-

Kurt gasped when his flashlight beam illuminated a familiar crumpled figure on the ground in front of the cabin.

"BLAINE!" He screamed, and ran down the steps and into the storm.

~000~

Angel had gone completely still. Santana watched him warily, trying to keep Brittany in her line of vision as well. She had no idea which one of them might become dangerous first, but she didn't want to take any chances.

"It is done," Brittany said again, and this time she was looking right at Santana. Santana raised an eyebrow at her.

"Yeah, I kind of heard you the first twelve times you said that, Brit. But unless you want to explain what is done, exactly, you may as well go back to speaking in tongues, because-"

"The curse. It has run its course. The rift has been healed. The offense is forgiven."

"The...curse?" Santana asked nervously. She glanced over at Spike, who looked no more comforted by this news than she was. "The curse that gave Angel a soul? That curse?"

Brittany stared at Santana for a long moment. "All curses may be forgiven," she finally said, still in that strange, low voice that did not belong to her. "If it is earned."

And then Brittany promptly collapsed into a heap in the grass.

Angel moaned quietly and began to move.

"Angel?" Spike asked, pulling a stake out of his belt and throwing Santana a meaningful look. "You 'right? Need any help, mate?"

Angel pulled himself up onto his knees, his back to the other two vampires. "No," he answered, his tone unreadable. "The pain is gone."

"You sure?" Santana asked, wrenching Spike's sword from the body of the fallen grappler demon.

"Yeah" Angel replied, and turned to face her. "I feel...The curse."

Spike and Santana tightened their grips on their weapons.

Angel stared between them both, looking a bit dazed and apparently unaware that they looked ready to strike. "The curse is gone," he said.

Santana looked dubious. "Does that mean you're Angelus at the moment? Because frankly, I'm kind of disapp-"

"No," Angel answered, shaking his head and seeming to snap into some sort of awareness, as if finally waking up fully from a heavy sleep. "No, there is no more Angelus. He's gone. It's all..." he turned to face her completely, his face a mask of shock. "I think I'm allowed to be happy now."

~000~

"Blaine," Kurt pleaded as he approached Blaine's immobile body on the ground before him. It was too soon for this, it had only been a handful of hours since the first time he had seen Blaine lying unconscious in the rain. Kurt suddenly had a cold, horrible moment in which he wondered if he had imagined his night in the cabin with Blaine. Maybe he had had some sort of grief-induced break from reality. Maybe Blaine hadn't made it after all. Maybe-

"Blaine, please!" Kurt cried, hot tears mixing with cold rain on his cheeks. He flung himself onto the ground beside Blaine and threw his arms around him.

Blaine groaned softly. "Kurt?"

Kurt laughed, maybe a little maniacally, with relief.

Blaine opened his eyes and slowly sat up, blinking into Kurt's eyes through the darkness.

"Something happened," he said. "I don't...I'm not sure..."

Kurt didn't care what had happened. He pulled Blaine to him as tightly as possible and breathed a deep, clean sigh of relief.

"Can we talk about it inside?" He asked. "At this rate we're going to dirty everything in the cedar closet in one night."

Blaine laughed weakly and nodded, and they climbed to their feet and made their way back into the cabin.

~000~

One must be very careful when dealing in curses.

Once upon a time, a particularly cruel and sadistic vampire was cursed with a soul, so that he might suffer with the knowledge of all the horrors he had committed. And if his suffering should ever truly diminish – the curse decreed – if he were ever to experience true happiness, even for a single moment, his soul would be lost again.

The curse itself was nothing out of the ordinary, as far as curses go. But curses are simple things. They do not fare well when faced with complexities and paradoxes.

After many years, the vampire did more than merely suffer. After many years, the vampire began to redeem himself. Without expecting any sort of reward or absolution, he became committed to the fight against evil in all its forms.

Over time, he became a champion.

To deny true happiness to a champion amongst women and men, to curse one who will die to save an innocent creature or the world itself – such magic becomes dangerous and unstable. Such magic will infect not only its intended target, but the very world in which he lives.

This is why one must be very careful when dealing in curses.

The infection began as a small current, almost unnoticeable, almost too small to affect a single blade of grass.

But as the effect of the curse grew, so did the infection grow. For the curse was broken and restored, manipulated and changed, and its existence broke not only the heart of the vampire champion, but the heart of a girl. A girl who was also a champion.

And the curse was not intended to shatter the hearts of champions.

The scales tipped out of alignment, and the world descended slowly into darkness. The girl died, and the vampire champion remained alone. Perhaps forever alone.

But the story does not end there.

Because once upon a time, two champions – two soulmates – were given the chance at love that their ancestors were denied.

And once upon a time, and many times before and after that, it was love that fixed what was broken in the world.

~000~

When Brittany awoke, she was herself again, though a bit wiser. She knew the entire of the prophecy by heart ("I don't know how, I just do"), and when she recited it, Angel couldn't help but smile.

"A witch's curse that blends dark with light, demon with champion, shall decide the fate of the world. The final rift is healed from the blood of two vampires, wombs of three Slayers, the power of the first demons to roam the Earth. A man amongst women. Innocent. As death begins the curse, a fertile love ends it. As she who could not hold his love is vindicated, a soul is awarded, and justice will bloom anew."

"This prophet sounds like he might have gotten into the sauce before he came up with that – is it supposed to make any kind of sense?" Spike asked, still eyeing Angel suspiciously.

"Oh, it makes sense," Santana said with a lascivious grin. "It means that those two pretty ponies went and fucked the curse right out of you, didn't they, Angel?"

Angel looked thoroughly unimpressed. "There's no need to be so crass. This isn't about sex, it's about love."

"It's about sex too," Brittany pointed out. "'Cause that's how you broke the curse that one time."

"That wasn't about sex either!" Angel snapped. "Well, I guess it kind of was. But not just...not just sex. It was about the connection."

"Gross," said Santana, sounding slightly bored. "Look, this is a beautiful moment and all, but we should probably go help out those guys," she added, motioning toward the still-raging battle in front of them.

"Yeah," Brittany agreed with a broad smile. "because now we're actually going to win."

~000~

As with most changes the world, it really wasn't one big thing at all. It was thousands of little ones.

In a cabin in the woods on a rainy night, two boys make love and share the kind of happiness that their ancestors were cursed never to have.

In a field on the edge of a battle, a champion finally earns his soul, with absolutely no strings attached.

In expensive houses behind locked gates sprinkled throughout the Mid States, several lawmakers awaken in the night, wondering why the ethics committee to investigate the methods of one Tammy Jean Albertson was unceremoniously disbanded all those months ago without protest.

In London, England the Watchers' Council arrests ten spies that have been working to destroy the Council from within.

And all ten begin naming names.

At the Sylvester School in Pennsylvania, a group of teenaged girls fells the last of their jailers and escapes into the night, their victory cries ringing out around them.

And in that cabin in the woods, the two boys take a hot shower together and build another fire, nestle their naked bodies close beneath a mountain of blankets and melt into one another, knowing – knowing – that they aren't going to lose each other anytime soon.

"I don't know what it is," Blaine said, "But I think we can go back soon. I think...I think it might be safe."

"Mmmm," Kurt agreed, already on the edge of sleep once again. "But we should sleep first. And Blaine?"

"Hmmm?"

"I don't want to wake up alone again."

Blaine lifted Kurt's head from his shoulder with gentle hands and kissed him again and again and again.

"You never have to wake up alone anymore," Blaine whispered.

~000~

Jeremiah blinked, dropping the golf club before jerking sharply.

"Stop me," he said urgently. Artie didn't need to be told twice. He was already halfway through an incantation, and it was mere seconds before a nearly invisible wall surrounded Jeremiah on all sides. He sighed in relief and sank to the ground. "Thanks. Jesse – he – he got inside my head, and he seems to still have a foothold."

"What the hell did that mofo do to you, anyway? Bind you to his will?"

Jeremiah sighed. "I think so."

"Yeah, well I hope Angel gets here soon, because your ass is not coming out of that cage."

~000~

Angel felt utterly invincible. It was as if his movements were even smoother and faster before, like the rest of the world had slowed down slightly and he could anticipate every move each opponent could possibly make. He killed his way across the yard, staking and beheading and snapping necks.

He imagined that this must be how Spike felt. He wasn't just one of the demons anymore, and he was more than an invited guest amongst the living. Because now he was allowed to seek happiness just like the rest of them.

Now he was allowed to truly live.

"Angel!" Rachel was breathless when she ran onto the porch and spotted him. "Artie and Jerry need you now. They think they might have something!"

"Where's Lauren?" he asked immediately as he moved toward the house.

"She's...um..." Rachel's face was crestfallen.

"She's feeling like shit and she probably won't be able to cast a decent spell for weeks, but she could be a hell of a lot worse," came a voice behind Rachel. Rachel whipped around to see Lauren, looking pale and tired but most definitely alive.

"Lauren! Oh my god, you're alive! I can't – that's so – I'm going to hug you now, okay?"

"Try it and I'll burn your hair off," Lauren snapped.

Rachel looked unamused. "I thought your powers were depleted."

"I have matches."

"Uh...hey...attic?" Angel reminded them.

"Come on," Rachel said, enthusiasm returning. She grabbed Lauren's hand and tugged her along, ignoring the exasperation in the other woman's eyes at the gesture. "Artie thinks they might have found something!"

~000~

Santana was having a bit of trouble concentrating on the fight. Brittany was beautiful, unusual, creative and wise, though few would ever really understand, let alone appreciate it. So of course she and Santana would fight like a well-oiled machine, anticipating one another's every move as if they had spent months choreographing their movements.

It was too much. Too perfect. It brought Santana dangerously close to thinking about a future with Brittany, and that was something she knew she couldn't have.

In fact, it was something she really needed to nip in the bud.

"I..." Santana swallowed. "We should probably split up. See who needs backup."

Brittany looked at Santana thoughtfully, casually staking a vampire to her left as he charged. "Well, we are a pretty killer ladyfighting team, but I guess you're right. Most people here aren't as awesome as us."

Santana bit back a smile and took off toward the house before Brittany could hug her or – even worse – kiss her again.

On the roof she spotted two figures locked in fierce battle, one of them getting backed further and further toward the edge.

Redemption.

Santana ran faster.

~000~

Lauren sighed heavily at the text Artie had handed her. "How the hell did we miss this before?" She asked, sounding both frustrated and resigned.

"It's a little outside the box," Artie pointed out. "It might not even work."

"It would work," Lauren responded grimly. "Damn it."

Angel glanced over toward the door to the attic. Rachel was stationed on the other side, fending off attackers. "What's the problem?" he asked.

"We need Blaine, is the problem," Artie explained. "The spell would alter the Lebane bloodline just enough to make it useless in the ritual Albertson has planned, or any other ritual like it. It would completely preserve The Change."

"Didn't Blaine say he had family nearby?" Lauren asked, looking thoughtful. "I'm surprised Sylvester and Albertson haven't thought of that, actually."

"He's adopted," Angel replied. "And that's something Sue would probably know from his enrollment records." Angel's eyes drifted back toward the door.

"Well, fuck." Artie took his glasses off and rubbed his eyes.

Angel sighed. "Rachel's blood would work," he offered after a moment.

"It's a nice thought, but we can't just use any Slayer's bl-" Lauren began. Angel shook his head.

"I know. But Rachel's will. Can you just...trust me on this one?"

Lauren crossed her arms over her chest and raised an eyebrow. "That's kind of a tall order given the circumstances," she replied.

"I know. But it really isn't my secret to tell, and we're wasting time."

"All right, what he hell. I'll try anything at this point," Lauren conceded, throwing her hands up. "But," she added, looking squarely at Jeremiah, "first things first."

~000~

Burt had managed to maneuver Tammy away from the attic window, but she had in turn managed to maneuver him far too close to the edge of the roof.

He barely even remembered making his way up there. He frankly couldn't believe that he was still alive. And if Tammy hadn't used so much magic up fighting Lauren, he almost definitely wouldn't be.

For an old guy with a bad heart, he could still hold his own in a hand-to-hand fight. Well, up to a point.

The truth was, Burt never expected to survive this battle. But this woman, or whatever she was, had tortured his son. Had planned to bleed him dry in order to make the world suffer. This woman was part of the political machine that kept his son vulnerable even outside the fold, a second-class citizen in society at large.

And Burt would be damned if she was going to be the one to kill him.

"You think you can stop this?" she hissed as Burt ducked a jab and managed to kick the small dagger she held out of her hand. "You think your ridiculous little band of misfits can even make a dent?"

"Yeah," Burt answered, dodging a stiletto to the eye. "You may have the government and half the council and god knows how many demon overlords in your back pocket, but we've got something you'll never have." He managed to kick Tammy in the knee, causing her to stumble backward slightly.

"What? Love?" Tammy sneered.

Burt gave her a bitter smile. "Truth," he replied. "The truth will always be on our side."

Tammy smiled back. "You want some truth?" she asked. "The truth is, you've got less than a minute to live."

Burt's eyes went wide as Tammy's hands glowed green, her fingernails extending and thickening into bright pink claws with needle-sharp tips. He took a step back, bringing him even closer to the edge of the roof.

"I believe the man just told you," came a voice from behind Tammy, "That the truth is on our side." Tammy whipped around just in time to see Santana's fist moving swiftly toward her, far too fast to avoid.

~000~

Brittany thrust her stake firmly into the heart of the vamp in front of her. He had been both broad and tall, which explained why she hadn't noticed Sue Sylvester standing directly behind him.

"Well, well," Sue said with a hard smile. "If it isn't the worst Slayer I have ever had the displeasure to try and educate in my twenty-nine years of life."

"Are you counting in dog years or something?" Brittany asked, cocking her head to the side. "Because I don't think you're doing it right."

"You know, I almost decided that I wasn't going to kill you. It would be kind of embarrassing, really, like killing a crippled child. But then I –excuse me," Sue snapped indignantly as Brittany aimed a kick at her midsection mid-insult. "I wasn't done!"

Brittany shrugged, dodging an uppercut. "You're mean and boring and I wanted to kick you."

Sue sighed. "Impulsivity always was one of your shortcomings, Miss Pierce. If I have taught you nothing else-"

"You taught me a lot, actually," Brittany said, her face growing serious. "You taught me to think about things that make me angry when I fight. You taught me to pretend the things I was killing were the people that have been mean to me. But with you, I don't have to pretend."

Sue moved quickly, but Brittany caught her fist before it could connect, and squeezed it hard. Sue's eyes widened with shock at the true extent of Brittany's strength.

"This," Brittany said, kneeing Sue hard enough in the stomach to momentarily knock the wind out of her, "is for making me brush the toilet with my tooth brush. And this-" Brittany took advantage of Sue's weakened state to flip the older woman over her shoulder and slam her to the ground "-is for making me sand down your plantar warts. And this-" Brittany drew her stake out of her belt and advanced on Sue. But as she moved to plunge the stake into Sue's heart, Sue's arm shot up to grab Brittany by the wrist. She pushed Brittany hard, sending her tumbling to the ground.

Both women leapt to their feet and began circling one another. "Blame me all you want, Goldilocks, but you really have nothing to blame but your own stupidity. If you'd been worth any Watcher's time-"

"I'm not stupid!" Brittany very nearly screamed. "I'm just different!" She lunged at Sue, her rage seeming to make her movements more crisp and precise rather than less, and she managed to strike several blows in a row while blocking each of Sue's.

Panting, Sue glared down at her. "It doesn't change the fact that no one wants you. Except the Council, that is, and they can't wait to lock you up."

"I want me," Brittany said simply, bringing her arm back and plunging the stake into Sue's heart so fast the movement was barely perceptible to the naked eye.

Sue froze, staring at Brittany as if seeing her for the first time before the light went out of her eyes completely. She didn't crumble to ashes – she wasn't a vampire, after all – but Brittany hadn't expected what did happen either.

Rather than simply falling to the ground, she seemed to almost melt, her skin sliding from her body, revealing organs, muscles and bones that almost glowed with how bright green they were. As her skin slid

to the ground, the sound of sizzling grew louder and louder. Her bright green innards lost their shape and form, becoming a dark, sickly green and turning to jelly as they sunk down onto the pile of discarded clothing and flesh on the ground. The smell of decay grew so strong that Brittany very nearly gagged.

Brittany stared at the remnants of her former headmistress and wondered why she wasn't more surprised.

Behind Brittany, two vampires stopped in their tracks as they watched their former boss melt into a pile of rotting ooze before their eyes. Unlike Brittany, they were surprised.

They were still frozen in place when Brittany turned around. "Hey," she said with a smile, raising her stake. "I remember you guys!"

Tina and Quinn exchanged a meaningful glance and then turned and ran.

They didn't stop running until they reached the Lima city limits.

~000~

Rachel shook her head and rolled her eyes. "I can't believe that all you needed to prevent this whole mess was Slayer blood all along," she said, but held her arm out obediently so that Artie could sterilize her skin as Lauren prepared a syringe. "You...you are qualified to do this, right?"

"Qualified enough," Lauren said with a shrug, and smoothly inserted the needle into the crook of Rachel's elbow.

Rachel winced slightly but didn't flinch as Lauren drew the blood, moving to stand next to Angel once the syringe was full so that she could watch the others work.

"Really, though," Rachel stage-whispered to Angel (it seemed to be the only kind of whispering she was capable of) as she pressed a cotton ball to the wound. "I thought Lauren was supposed to be the best Witch in this part of the country. If all they needed was Slayer blood-"

"It's a very old text," Angel answered, ignoring Lauren's glare. "Very obscure. One of the volumes that was thought to be lost when the council was bombed before The Change. It's almost blind luck that Artie found it at all."

"Well, I certainly hope it works," Rachel replied, inspecting the inside of her elbow, where the wound was already mostly healed.

"You and me both," Lauren muttered, ignoring Angel's frown.

The spell itself took less time than anyone expected. Lauren's powers were still quite depleted, but she had successfully helped Jeremiah to sever Jesse's access to his mind, and with that problem resolved, he and Artie were able to provide the actual power for the spell while Lauren guided them.

"All right, now that part should be recited in Latin, and this clause should be in the tongue of the Last Lone Slayer. Which, luckily for us, is modern English. That should close the loophole you were concerned about, Artie."

Rachel and Angel looked on in fascination as a soft indigo light began to settle around Lauren and the two Warlocks, their chanted words soft, almost murmurs, until the last words rang louder and louder as they were repeated, the light around them growing darker and denser, making the air in the attic seem to crackle and spark with life.

"The blood of the last lone slayer now rests with her soul. The circle is closed. The blood of the last lone slayer now rests with her soul. The circle is closed. The circle is closed. The circle is closed."

A strong wind rushed through the attic, sending papers flying. The three inside the ring of indigo light began repeating the last phrase louder and louder, rising above the howling of the wind and the shaking of the floorboards until with one final cry of The circle is closed, the light exploded around them, filling the attic and shooting out into the night, shattering the one small window in the attic and shaking dust free from the wooden beams above them.

And just as quickly as it had happened, it was over. Lauren looked up from the text in front of her, breathing hard. "It worked," she said, giving Angel an incredulous look.

"Hells yes!" Artie cried out, fist-bumping a shocked Jeremiah.

~000~

Burt scrambled out of the way when Santana's blow sent Tammy stumbling backward toward him. Tammy made a noise that sounded far too much like an actual hiss for Burt's comfort, and she lunged at Santana, swiping at her face with freshly-sprouted claws.

Santana managed to dodge the claws and slam Tammy down, but stopped short with a scream of pain as Tammy dug the talons into the flesh of Santana's calf. Taking advantage of her position, Tammy kicked Santana hard in the ribs and slashed across her collarbones, blood flowing freely down her chest. Tammy leapt to her feet with unnatural grace, and Santana managed to shove her away roughly before she could get another swipe in. Tammy stumbled and then lunged, and Santana managed a high kick to her throat followed by a skillful dodge that probably kept her from getting her eyes clawed out.

Burt watched the two women with wide eyes. Santana wasn't letting Tammy hold still long enough to summon her magics, which was smart thinking – they were pretty evenly matched without it, given the claws, but if Santana let Tammy bring her powers into the mix, things would be ending pretty fast.

Tammy was about to land another bloody blow when a flash of indigo light erupted from the attic below them, audibly shattering the pretty stained glass attic window.

Burt couldn't help but grimace. Kurt loved that damn window.

Tammy's eyes went wide at the flash of light and she screamed with rage, her eyes flashing indigo and green, her body jerking as if experiencing some internal conflict.

"NO!" She screamed, clutching her head and apparently in pain. "No, no, no, no, no!"

Santana immediately lunged toward her, forcing Tammy to block a series of blows as Santana maneuvered the woman toward the edge of the roof.

"Why are you helping them?" Tammy demanded desperately once Santana had backed her to the very edge. "God did not create vampires to help sinners. You are here to cleanse the world of sin!"

"Well, if that is why I'm here, I guess I shouldn't feel bad about doing this," Santana replied, pulling Tammy's own discarded dagger from her belt and plunging it into the woman's heart before giving Tammy a firm push off the edge of the roof.

Tammy fell with a scream, catching two of her claws on the edge of Burt's pant leg on her way down.

Santana's eyes went wide as both Burt and Tammy tumbled over the edge. She ran to the edge of the roof, relief flooding her veins when she spotted Burt's fingers curled over the edge of the gutter that sat just under the roof.

Tammy lay crumpled on the ground far below.

"Itzamna, Burt, you scared the shit out of me," Santana said, reaching down to take Burt's hand and pull him to safety.

Burt looked up at her through unsoftened eyes, tightening his grip on the gutter. "What are you doing?"

"I'm – just take my hand, okay?"

"Like hell am I going to accept any help from you." How Burt was managing to look that proud and stubborn, even as his grip began to slip ever so slightly, Santana couldn't even begin to understand.

"Damn it, Kalderash, falling to your death will prove nothing, not to me or anyone else. What do you think Kurt would want you to do? What-" Santana paused, willing her voice not to shake. "What would Elizabeth want you to do?"

Burt glared up at her for a long moment before finally prying one hand from the edge of the gutter and allowing Santana to pull him to safety.

Once back on his feet, Burt took a deep breath and looked Santana squarely in the eye.

"I know you don't forgive me," she said softly before Burt could open his mouth. "And I know you probably never will. I'm not asking you to. But...I owe you and Kurt, and I'm done running away from you just because of how much it hurts to think about what I did. I killed your wife, I killed your son's mother, and nothing I will ever do can make that okay. But...saving your life was a start. It's the least I can do. And I am...I know it doesn't mean anything, but I am sorry."

Burt studied her thoughtfully. "You know, that's the first time you've ever admitted to being the one that killed Lizzie."

Santana nodded, unable to meet Burt's eyes any longer. "I know."

"You're right about the forgiveness part. I don't know that I'll ever be able to get there. But...thank you, Santana."

Santana bit her lip and tried not to let him see how much his words affected her. That simple thank you had felt better than anything she had experienced in a good many years.

~000~

Jesse St. James watched Tammy Jean Albertson's body land on the ground with a sharp thud. He poked his head out from behind the bushes where he had been hiding and glanced around nervously.

Things weren't looking good.

He hadn't counted on the skill level of those they were fighting, especially without the boy Slayer and his Watcher to contend with. No one was giving up any information that might help them find the boy, and the bodies that littered the ground were more demon than human. The lawn was also getting quite dusty.

On top of all that, there had been some discussion of Rachel in the attic, that her blood might be used to block the possibility of the ritual. But then Jeremiah had (probably with Lauren's assistance) managed to sever Jesse's connection before he could figure out how on earth that was going to work.

And now Jesse had a massive headache, and his one ticket out of this life of subservience and mediocrity was lying motionless in the grass.

Jesse gave another quick look around before running over to Tammy to see if she was actually as bad off as she looked. He couldn't help but wince as he approached her; her blouse was soaked with blood, a dagger buried in her heart. Not only that, but her head was lying at a disturbing angle, her neck quite clearly broken. With a heavy sigh, Jesse knelt in front of her, leaning closer to inspect the damage. Maybe if he-

Tammy opened her eyes.

~000~

When the group convened in the tattered remains of the Hummel-Hudson living room, it was with hearts too heavy to truly appreciate their victory.

How could they celebrate, after all, when they hadn't even gotten the chance to bury their dead?

The death count for their side was small but profound. Emma was absolutely inconsolable over the death of Will, while Rachel appeared to simply be in shock, as if the fact that her Watcher truly had been a mortal man was simply too much for her to process. The pack had also sustained a few losses, Mike Chang among them.

Santana had disappeared soon after the fight ended. She knew she wouldn't be invited inside.

Grief can cloud the vision of even the most astute warriors. As they sat together, somberly discussing what needed to happen next, no one at all seemed to notice that Tammy Albertson's body was nowhere to be found.

~000~

Kurt groaned, burrowing into the warmth of Blaine's neck as the morning sun hit his eyes.

Blaine hummed sleepily, moving his hand to lightly run his fingers through Kurt's hair. Or at least that was the plan.

"Hey!" Came Kurt's muffled cry of protest when Blaine accidentally smacked him in the face instead.

"Sorry," Blaine muttered sleepily, prying his eyes open and looking around him.

Kurt laughed softly, shifting back so that he could see Blaine properly from where he lay. "S'okay. I had the strangest dream."

Blaine made a questioning noise, moving onto his side to properly face Kurt.

"Yeah, it's...I don't even know how to explain it. It was so strange and, you know, dream-y. But I think – I think it was about Angel's curse. And you. And the prophecy."

"Mmmm," Blaine replied, stretching. "A witch's curse that blends dark with light, demon with champion, shall decide the fate of the world."

Kurt's eyes widened and he spoke the remainder of the prophecy along with Blaine: "The final rift is healed from the blood of two vampires, wombs of three Slayers, the power of the first demons to roam the Earth. A man amongst women. Innocent. As death begins the curse, a fertile love ends it. As she who could not hold his love is vindicated, a soul is awarded, and justice will bloom anew."

"The prophecy," Kurt said softly.

"The prophecy," Blaine agreed. "I don't exactly know what it means, but I can't help but feel like it's a good thing."

Kurt nodded. "It felt...it was like I could feel the whole world shifting. Like the whole world was shifting because of us."

Blaine grinned. "See? I told you we should have gotten together sooner."

Kurt rolled his eyes and smacked Blaine gently on the chest.

"Hey," Blaine said, catching Kurt's hand between their bodies and lacing their fingers together. He kissed Kurt's knuckles and smiled at him. "I love you."

Kurt's smile in return was nothing short of brilliant. "I love you too. But do you love me enough to kiss me even though I've got horrible morning breath?"

"Absolutely," Blaine confirmed, grinning into a lingering kiss, their bodies slotting together instinctively.

They broke apart when a soft breeze began ruffling their hair, and Blaine looked up in wonder as a swirl of translucent butterflies fluttered around them. Kurt laughed softly.

"That's a signal from my father. It's the all-clear signal. "

"So it's safe to go back?"

"Yeah," Kurt said, running his hand up Blaine's chest. "But I'm not in any hurry."

"Me neither," Blaine agreed, pulling Kurt even closer. Because the rest of the world could definitely wait.

Epilogue

Five Months Later:

There was a time when Blaine Anderson thought he would never feel normal again.

That time had undeniably passed.

Because what could possibly be abnormal, could possibly be *wrong* with the life he had found?

He closed his hands around Kurt's wrists, pinning him down, bending over to brush his lips against the shell of Kurt's ear.

"Got you."

Kurt blinked his eyes open and rolled them sleepily at Blaine.

"The game's over, dumbass," he murmured. "Better luck next time."

Blaine smirked down at him from where he sat, straddling Kurt's lap. Kurt was wearing nothing but a tight pair of pale green boxer briefs that brought out the green in his eyes, eyes that shone bright in the late-morning sun, brown hair thoroughly tousled and pink cheeks lightly shadowed with stubble, and really, Blaine was only *so* strong.

"See, that's where we seem to be having a disagreement. Because *I* think you two used unfair and frankly less than ethical tactics against us, and I think it's only fair that I get a rematch. So. *Got you*. I win." Blaine grinned proudly.

Kurt couldn't help but smile as he squirmed under Blaine, clearly seeking out friction for the bulge in his underwear.

"And you think it's ethical for you to pounce on me in my sleep?"

"About as ethical as distracting me with *those pants* while Brittany-"

"Did her job without letting herself get distracted? You are responsible for your own distraction, Blaine, so don't you dare blame that on me. What kind of watcher would I be if I- *ohhhhh!*"

Kurt gasped as Blaine pressed their cocks together and rocked his hips gently.

"If you what? Didn't try to drive all the Slayers in the house *crazy* with that ass of yours?"

"I think I only have one Slayer to worry about when it comes to *that*," Kurt managed, digging his heels into the mattress and bucking up against Blaine. "And besides, I could say the same-"

Blaine groaned and released Kurt's wrists in order to shove his own briefs down his thighs. Kurt took the opportunity to shuck his underwear as well, and then pulled Blaine back down on top of him, bare bodies pressed tightly together.

"Mmmm. I thought we agreed you had the better ass," Blaine murmured against Kurt's lips, hips working lazily. Kurt laughed and wrapped his arms around Blaine's waist, squeezing briefly before sliding his hands down to cup Blaine's ass.

"I would *never* agree to that, Blaine. While I certainly wouldn't discount my own...*charms*," Blaine snorted at that, "You, sir, possess the Platonic ideal of Perfect Ass. *Better* is simply not a possibility in the physical world."

"I get the feeling you're trying to hint at something here," Blaine mumbled against Kurt's neck as he sucked softly.

Kurt pulled Blaine's cheeks apart and dipped his thumbs into the cleft. Blaine shivered as Kurt's dry thumbs brushed across his hole. "Your feeling is correct as usual, Mr. Anderson."

"Yeah," Blaine groaned, arching up into the touch. "*God*, yes, Kurt."

Blaine sat up and leaned over to the bedside table, gathering supplies from the drawer while Kurt ran his hands in reverent circles across Blaine's thighs. When he looked back at Kurt, he was simply gazing at Blaine with a lovesick grin on his face.

"Come here," Kurt said softly, taking the lube and condoms from Blaine's hands and placing them neatly on the bedside table.

"I am h-"

"No, come *here*." Kurt shifted and pulled Blaine down beside him, kissing him softly before gently pushing him flat on his back.

Blaine cocked an eyebrow. "This isn't how you play Catch The Watcher."

"No, you lost Catch The Watcher. Next time spend less time staring at my ass and more time watching your back, and maybe you'll win."

Blaine scowled up at him, but dropped his legs open immediately when Kurt gently nudged his thighs apart.

"I still say you guys cheated," Blaine muttered, but it was half-hearted at best, because Kurt was entirely right. It was worth the extra chores until the next game, though, because of those *damn pants*. Kurt had had intentionally worn them for the first time to the game that night, hadn't even bothered to deny it.

Kurt chuckled softly as he warmed the cool lube between his fingers. "All's fair in Slayer training, Blaine."

Blaine frowned. "I really don't think that's how the saying g- *ohhhhh*..." He lifted his hips and let his eyes drift closed blissfully as Kurt eased a finger into Blaine's hole.

"Feels good," Blaine murmured, as Kurt slowly worked him open.

"*Kurt!*"

Kurt sighed, stilling his fingers but leaving them inside of Blaine.

"Yes, Rachel?" Kurt snipped at the (thankfully) locked bedroom door.

"I have demanded a rematch to last night's *joke* of a game, but Shannon is trying to tell me I have no grounds, and Burt said if you-"

"Rachel, go away. I am not playing another round of Catch the Watcher at nine o'clock in the morning. I still have bruises from last night, thank you."

"You still have bruises?" Blaine whispered, forehead creased with worry. Kurt shrugged and crooked his fingers, making Blaine gasp.

"Nothing you can't kiss better," he whispered back.

"Kurt and Blaine! Stop having sex and come out here right this minute!" Rachel demanded.

"Rachel. Blaine and I have *the morning off*. Shannon is right. Now *go away*."

"Blaine! Surely you can talk some sense into-"

"Kinda not thinking about Catch the Watcher right now, Rachel," Blaine managed, as Kurt moved his fingers inside of Blaine with an impish grin. It wasn't that they'd started off comfortable with blatantly having sex like this in the room they shared, but when you're living with *this* many people...

"Damn it, Rachel, leave them alone. We all have the morning off!"

Kurt and Blaine exchanged relieved smiles at the sound of Mercedes' voice.

"But Brittany-"

"So beat her next time!" That is, if you can get past me, which I doubt."

"I'm at an unfair disadvantage, Mercedes, and you know it! Emma has only been an active watcher for two months."

"Emma is a *Slayer*."

"So is Shannon!"

"And Brittany's Watcher, as I can attest through first-hand experience, is *not* a Slayer," Kurt interrupted loudly. "So unless either of you are suggesting we offer both she and Blaine handicaps in future games, ladies, I propose that you take this conversation elsewhere. Blaine and I have the morning *off*."

There was a moment of silence, followed by Mercedes muttering "sorry, guys."

"Thank you, Mercedes!" Blaine called to the receding footsteps.

Their bickering voices picked up again down the hall, and Kurt couldn't help but let his head fall against Blaine's neck, laughing.

"All that and you're still half hard," Blaine murmured against him, smiling. "Impressive."

"You're still all the way hard."

"You are aware that you've been stroking my prostate pretty much this whole time, right?"

Kurt lifted his head from Blaine's neck and kissed his lips.

"Of course I am. Why do you think I'm still half hard?"

Kurt pulled his fingers out of Blaine, kissing away his soft noise of protest as he rolled off of him. Kurt nudged Blaine's side until he turned over, moving behind him and letting his hands run over the curves of Blaine's ass.

"*Please,*" Blaine panted softly, as Kurt pulled his cheeks apart and let the very tip of his tongue circle lazily around Blaine's stretched rim.

"*Kurt!*" Blaine let the name slip out on a hard moan, pushing against Kurt so that his face was buried between Blaine's plump cheeks. Blaine wailed as Kurt began licking into him in earnest.

"Oh god, oh fuck, I can't, I just, don't stop, don't stop, holy fucking oh my Kurt I fuck fuck fuck *fuck-*"

Kurt just licked harder, lapping at Blaine's entrance with quick, fluttering movements. Blaine squirmed, rubbing his painfully hard cock against the soft sheets as he moaned and muttered strings of nonsense.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

"God *damn* it!" Kurt hissed, sitting up and wiping his slick mouth off with the back of his arm.

"Kurt? Blaine?"

Blaine grabbed at his own hair in frustration. "Yes, Brittany?" he asked, sounding as calm as he could manage, face muffled by the pillow. It was probably best that he handle this one, seeing as how Kurt looked nearly homicidal with frustration.

"Everyone's mad at me and it's kind of making me want to break things."

"So go break things!" Blaine snapped, exasperated.

"Okay!" Her voice was far too cheerful. Kurt's eyes widened in horror.

"Brittany Pierce, don't you *dare*-" Kurt called, but Brittany was already stomping down the stairs.

"Shit," Kurt muttered, moving as if to get up. Blaine rolled over, grabbing Kurt around the waist and holding him tight.

"No. It's fine. She...I'm sure someone will stop her from causing any real damage. Come on, Kurt. It's our morning off, and it's been almost a week since we've had the time, let alone the energy to have *any* kind of sex, and Brittany can break whatever she wants if it means that she'll leave us alone and distract the rest of the house from bothering us."

Kurt smiled and bit his lip. "Okay, okay. You're right. Besides, how much trouble could she really cause?"

Blaine didn't have time to answer (the answer, of course, being *lots*) before he had rolled onto his back, pulling Kurt down on top of him.

Their eyes met, both faces breaking into soft smiles. Blaine rolled the condom onto Kurt and lubed him up, pulling him in for a kiss as Kurt began to push inside.

Blaine clutched at Kurt's ass, squeezing his cheeks and urging him in deeper.

"I love you," Blaine whispered against his lips.

"I love you too," Kurt replied automatically, kissing him again.

"Alright, boys, you want to tell me what the *hell* you two just told Brittany?"

Kurt glared at the door, his jaw set in annoyance. Blaine wrapped his legs around Kurt's waist to keep him firmly inside.

"Dad, it is our *morning off*."

"You boys think I came out of retirement for this crap? Kurt, she is *your* Slayer. You know how literal that girl can be, what did you tell her?"

"She said she was going to break things. It was her own idea and decision," Kurt said calmly, pressing a finger to Blaine's lips to silence him, sounding completely calm and collected and not at all like his cock was currently buried balls-deep in Blaine's ass. "What did she do, break one of Puckerman's stupid games or-"

"She broke the oven. And the refrigerator."

"*What?*" Blaine squeaked.

"Ah, so my Slayer *is* in there with you."

"Yes. He is. And it is his day off. I'll look at the appliances later, Dad, but this is *not a good time*."

After a beat, Burt sighed. "Yeah, fine, I'd rather not know. But you're paying for the damn things if we need to call a repairman. She's-"

"*My* Slayer, I know. Got it."

Kurt sighed as they heard Burt leave, looking down at Blaine with something dangerously close to defeat in his eyes.

"No," Blaine said firmly. Kurt raised an eyebrow.

"No?"

"No. We are not stopping. I don't care how many times we're interrupted, I *want* you. Please, Kurt."

"You don't need to convince me," Kurt said softly, clearly putting his father out of his mind as he rocked gently into Blaine. Blaine gasped, arching his back.

"Oh, there, you almost-"

Blaine keened loudly when Kurt thrust again, changing his angle slightly and absolutely *nailing* Blaine's prostate. Blaine squeezed against Kurt with his thighs, drawing him deeper into his body.

"*God*," Kurt groaned as Blaine clenched around him, thighs clamped around Kurt's hips as they moved together fast and slick.

"Feels so good, Blaine," Kurt moaned, lips pressed to Blaine's neck, his words vibrating up through Blaine's throat and giving him goosebumps, nipples growing harder under glistening sweat.

"Hold me open," Blaine whimpered, throwing his head back with a silent scream when Kurt complied, holding Blaine's thighs tightly in his hands and spreading them wide until Blaine's muscles burned with the delicious stretch. Kurt pumped into him hard and fast and *deep*, relentless and ruthless but still edged with such sweetness that it nearly broke Blaine's heart.

Bottoming was intense for Blaine, and when he did it he liked to do it all the way.

"I love you," Kurt managed through gritted teeth, eyes clamped shut in the face of too much pleasure. Blaine grabbed Kurt's ass, squeezing his cheeks hard and encouraging him to move even faster, fuck Blaine even harder.

"L-love you too, god, love you, Kurt, *love you*-"

Kurt was lost, head thrown back and sweat gleaming along the column of his lovely throat. Blaine couldn't do anything but watch him, watch his muscles shift and ripple and his face screw up in ecstasy until Blaine became lost himself, the delicious pleasure-pain of his straining muscles making every touch and movement spark through him like an electric current.

"Close," Blaine managed, tugging roughly at his own cock.

"Me too," Kurt gasped. "God, Blaine-"

"Let go," Blaine groaned, dipping a finger between Kurt's cheeks to brush over his hole.

Kurt nearly screamed, bucking into Blaine wildly, skin slapping so loudly it filled the room as Blaine continued to rub him there.

Kurt came first, grinding into Blaine hard and deep as he whimpered into his neck, Blaine kissing at his sweaty brow as he continued to pump himself furiously, desperate to come while Kurt was still inside.

"Don't pull out," he begged.

Kurt chuckled, moving his fist to replace Blaine's and bringing him to the brink so quickly it made Blaine's head spin. "I won't," Kurt whispered. "Love watching you like this."

Blaine threw his head back, let Kurt's hand and Kurt's cock and Kurt's clean, sweaty scent and light, strong voice consume him completely and push him over the edge, crying out Kurt's name as he shuddered through the layers of intensity.

They moved without thought into their preferred cuddle position after Blaine had given himself a quick swipe with a tissue from the bedside table, Kurt's head on Blaine's heaving chest, Blaine's hand stroking mindless patterns across Kurt's sweat-damp back.

"You're amazing," Kurt murmured. "I wish we could just lie like this for hours-"

"Don't you dare say the word *but*."

"But. We have a bit of a mess to sort out in the rest of the house, it seems."

"No." Blaine wrapped Kurt firmly in his arms.

Kurt laughed. "That's it? Just *no*? You seem to be enjoying the use of that word quite a bit this morning, I must say."

"Just no. It's our day off, I *did* catch the Watcher this time around, and I *don't* do catch-and-release."

Kurt settled into Blaine's embrace, pressing a sweet kiss to his throat. "Well, it's a good thing that I don't want to be released, then, isn't it?"

"Yes," Blaine agreed with a grin, burying his nose in Kurt's hair, his heart full enough to burst. "Yes, it most certainly is."

~000~

Tina sighed loudly and rubbed her temples, falling back onto the couch behind her dramatically.

"Please. I know full well that you haven't had an actual headache since the 17th century," Quinn murmured, not taking her eyes off the chart in front of her.

"Well, you seem to have awakened long-dead nerve endings in my skull with this. Did you seriously drag this thing out again?"

Quinn turned around and gave Tina a level look. "I need to know how they did it. The Summers boy wasn't even there. It just doesn't add up."

"We have been over this a *thousand* times, Lucy. They must have had a vial of his blood or-"

"You clearly never listen to me, so I don't know why I bother to explain anything," Quinn muttered. "They did not have his blood, Tina, we *know* that, unless you're suggesting we shouldn't trust the mutt..."

"Don't call him that," Tina all but snarled, sitting up ramrod-straight on the sofa.

"Then stop calling me Lucy."

"Look, I know what he said, but he didn't spend that much time around the warlocks. And why are you still obsessing over this anyway? It's over. The battle happened, we lost, next time we won't. There's more than one way to skin a Slayer." Tina shrugged.

"We've dedicated the last twenty years of our lives to that ritual, Tina, " Quinn reminded her gravely. "And Santana-"

Tina's lips crept into a smug smile.

"Don't," Quinn warned, voice quiet and dangerous.

"Then at least stop pretending that this isn't really all about *her*. I don't like the fact that the planet is still crawling with Slayers any more than you do, but - you still want revenge."

"Like you don't?"

Tina softened slightly. "Of course I do. But...can't we just take a break? A *real* break, that doesn't involve slumming in Ohio? We could go somewhere fun, eat some pretty people, forget about this whole mess for a while..."

"Mmmmm. That sounds nice." Tina's face lit up as Quinn rolled her eyes and turned back to her chart, ignoring the owner of the voice as he strode into the room.

"So," Mike said, leaning down to meet Tina in a long, filthy kiss. "Fun place, pretty people, huh? When do we ship out?"

"Just as soon as Quinn gets laid, apparently," Tina muttered.

"Yeah?" Mike asked, hopping over the back of the sofa to settle in next to Tina. "Well if that's the case, I think I have an idea that might make you *both* happy."

Quinn turned to look at him. "Oh? Well, don't keep this brilliant idea to yourself, Milkbone."

Mike's lips curled into a dark smile. "Okay. So exactly *how* familiar are you two with the particulars of the curse of Angelus?"

~000~

"Dig faster," Tammy ordered, frowning at a chip in her nail polish.

"I still don't see why *I* have to be the one to-"

"Dig."

Jesse stood up straight, wiping the sweat from his brow with the back of a dirt-smudged arm. "But manual labor doesn't agree with me, and you have all those henchmen-"

Tammy sighed. "Mr. St. James, kindly remind me of the promise I made to you when we forged this alliance."

Jesse swallowed and reached for his shovel. "I-I'm sorry, I won't question you anymore," he muttered nervously.

"What did I promise you?"

Jesse paused in his shoveling again, wide eyes fluttering up to meet Tammy's. "Immortality," he whispered. "the power of the vampire without any of the weaknesses. Please...don't take it back, I'll dig."

"I'm not going to take it back. If you manage to unearth my treasure, it is the very object that will give you your immortality. The sooner we find it, the sooner I can fulfill my promise."

Jesse simply stared at her for a moment, eyes as wide as dinner plates, before diving back into the task with renewed vigor. Tammy chuckled to herself and sat back.

The spot was much more conveniently located than she had originally feared, though it had truly been a bitch to find it. Deep inside a hidden cave that still hadn't been upset or disrupted by human civilization, it was truly amazing to find it in such pristine condition. Then again, places like this were protected by their own power.

She closed her eyes and inhaled deeply. This should have been her strategy from the very beginning. She should not have counted on cowardly vampires, bumbling humans and lower demons to do her dirty work for her. She needed stronger forces than that by far.

Tammy's eyes popped open at the clang of metal against metal.

"I think I found it!" Jesse gasped out, scrambling down to his knees to wipe the last of the dirt away from the face of the seal, heedless of the mess he was making of himself. "This is it, isn't it?" he asked, looking up at Tammy with unbridled excitement. She stood up and brushed herself off before making her way down to join him.

The face on the seal was that of the old master, the words etched there in the old language. It made Tammy ache for home so badly that she couldn't stop a tear from trickling down her cheek.

"Yes," she whispered. "Yes, that's it."

"So, how do I-"

Tammy smiled. "I can't tell you how much I appreciate all that you've done for me," she said.

She cupped Jesse's chin in her hand delicately, and slit his neck open with a razor-sharp (if slightly chipped) fingernail.

Jesse struggled for words, for breath, for any kind of reassurance at all as Tammy stepped back from him, allowing his body to crumple and fall, splayed, across the seal.

"And now you'll live forever in our hearts," Tammy concluded, sucking blood off her fingertip as she moved to stand next to the seal. "See? I keep my promises."

Jesse's body spasmed, what little was left of his voice coming out in staccato gurgles as his blood slowly begin to fill the valleys in the seal's surface.

Tammy didn't bother to watch him die. She was too busy watching the seal.

As Jesse continued to bleed, the seal began to move. The points of the pentacle lifted slowly, the edges of the metal shifting to create a distinct inner and outer ring. Moving Jesse's body was almost an afterthought, and Tammy all but pulled his legs out of their sockets as she wrenched him away.

The inner ring of the seal lifted and then slid to the side like a manhole-cover. And even though Tammy knew exactly who would be there, she still gave an unbridled shriek of excitement when the figure began to rise from the newly awoken hell mouth before her.

"Darling," she whispered, "I've missed you so much."

"So have I," came the reply. "But I'm here now, mother, and I'm not going *anywhere*."

THE END