

A photograph of two women clinking wine glasses. The woman on the left has blonde hair and is wearing a red top with a floral pattern. The woman on the right has dark hair and is wearing a red top. They are both holding wine glasses filled with a golden liquid. The background is a textured, mottled green and yellow.

In any other world

*Fanfiction Compilation
Quinntana Week 2014*

*by
Kalexigron*

Introduction

Quinntana Week 2014 took place from April 28th, 2014 until May 4th, 2014. For seven days, fans across the world celebrated Quinn Fabray and Santana Lopez. Through stories, art and music, their relationship was explored in a variety of ways. In this collection, you can find all stories written during this week, according to seven themes.

THEMES

During Quinntana Week 2014, every day was dedicated to a theme. These themes were chosen in a poll, giving everyone the chance to state their preference. This was the result:

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AUTHORS

We would like to thank each of the 52 authors who wrote fan fictions for Quinntana Week 2014. This year's participants were, with in bold those who wrote six or seven stories and in italics those who write five stories:

27summer, 78Violetfan, annjul414, **Brittanyismyunicorn**, bloodyelectro, **buffy46143**, comfortablyobsessed (CorvusCorvidae), conceptoftwo, DefyingGravity1402, DreamsAreMyWords, *emilystark21barelylegal (breakingatthecracks)*, **empresskris**, fantasticbs, headcannonwip (headcannon), Holdontohope, ilse151, **ive-gotta-gay-go-go-ive-gotta-go (FabrayQS)**, **KatieMacLove**, Kenmura, kurttanacedes, **lacksubstance**, **LazyWriterGirl**, **lightblue-Nymphadora**, mulierositas, musicfreak810, Nayanna, Nayanna Rivergron, *noiseinallthequietspaces*, ofendlesswonder (ConflictedCalypso), Onceforthefun, PieAngel, PikiBear, quinnslopez, QuinntanaEndgame, **SCWritings**, **seemenopeu**, ShadowKira, skalice, snixty9, solvethetbomb, **TakeMyBreathAwayTwoTimes**, TamperedTemporaryBliss, **team-valkyrie**, **tehedward**, timbrenoir, vampyre in hiding, vodkaonmytongue, **wonderlandwaitforme (BlessYourSoul)**, **WordsHaveMelodies**, **WriteForYou**, xsummer-rainx and youaretheunicorn.

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Start of Something Beautiful, by 27summer

The blood rushed to Santana's head. She felt like she was going to explode. Even slapping Finn hadn't released the pressure. Everyone was staring at her, she couldn't take it. The judgment from Mr. Schue and Ms. Corcoran, the sympathy from Quinn and Brittany. God, the understanding on Kurt and Blaine's faces- that was the worst. She had to get away. Turning around, she ran off, ignoring the calls after her. She made it to her car and collapsed against it. She tried to calm down but she couldn't. It was too much. Her life was falling apart.

"Santana." Quinn pulled Santana into her arms, holding on as she started to cry. "Shh. It'll be all right. It's okay."

"It's not. Everyone's going to know. My parents will freak." Santana squeezed her eyes shut in an unsuccessful attempt to stop her tears.

"Okay, you're right, that was a stupid thing to say." Quinn rubbed circles on Santana's back. "But I'm here. Whatever happens, I'm here for you."

"Me, too." Brittany caught up to them, placing a hand on Santana's shoulder. "You've got us. Whatever you need."

Stepping back, Santana wiped at her eyes. "That doesn't help. What am I going to do? I have to tell my parents before the commercial airs. I- God, it's a mess."

"I'll go with you. This is my fault, too." Brittany shook her head. "I pushed you too much last year and now this happened."

"No. Finn's the one who shouted in the middle of the freaking hallway. There wasn't a commercial before that." Santana groaned. "He's such an ass."

"No kidding." Quinn shot a look over her shoulder. "It looks like the pity patrol is coming to talk to you. We should get out of here."

"Let me drive you." Brittany held out a hand to Santana for her keys.

"No. I need to do this myself." Santana tried to smile.

"Okay. Fine." Quinn kissed her cheek. "We won't push. But call me when it's done. Let me know you're safe."

"I will." Santana got into her car and waved before driving off. Quinn and Brittany watched as she left and exchanged worried glances. This wasn't going to end well. They both had the feeling it was going to be bad.

—

Quinn swore and tossed her phone on her night stand. Santana still hadn't called. She didn't want to bother her if she were in the middle of telling her parents but it had been hours since they talked. Quinn was worried. She needed to hear from Santana and make sure she was really okay. When her phone finally rang, she grabbed it, sighing in relief. "Santana? What happened?"

"I'm on your porch. Let me in."

"Okay." Quinn rushed downstairs, flinging the door open and gasping. "Oh my God."

"Don't. I can't take sympathy right now." Santana pushed her way into the house and sat on the couch. "I'm fine."

"You're not." Quinn knelt in front of her, placing a hand on her knee. "Santana, you're hurt. Please talk to me."

"It's nothing. A broken arm and a black eye. No concussion. My dad took me to the hospital and patched me up." Santana chuckled bitterly, slapping Quinn's hand away when she tried to touch her face.

"Talk to me. Tell me what happened." Quinn climbed onto the couch. "Who did this?"

"I told them and Mom freaked. We were arguing and she tried to walk away. I followed her and she shoved me. I fell down the stairs." Santana snorted. "Dad rushed me to the hospital. Bad enough Dr. Lopez's daughter's a lesbian, can't have a child abuse charge."

"Oh, Santana." Quinn softly poked around Santana's eye.

"No. No feeling sorry for me. I don't want that." Santana turned away.

"I know that and I don't feel sorry for you." Quinn forced Santana to look at her. "I care about you and you're hurting."

"It's not that bad. I've got pain medication. We could get into Judy's liquor stash and have some fun." Santana smirked at Quinn's scandalized expression. "Come on, it was a joke. Lighten up a little."

"I can't, Santana." Quinn stopped, choking on a sob.

"Please don't cry. I'm not good with tears." Santana bit her lip, trying to think of something to say. "I'm okay and I came to see you. You were the first person I thought of when my dad said I needed to stay away from home for a while."

"Really?" Quinn wiped her eyes.

"Yeah. I knew you'd make it better." Santana ducked her head bashfully. "I hope it's okay if I stay here a few days."

Quinn nodded. She was glad there was something she could do to help her. "Of course. Whatever you need."

"Are you sure your mom won't care?"

"She won't. She's so glad my Skank phase is over, she'll let me do anything." Quinn smiled shakily. She was still so worried about Santana. She wished there was something more that she could do for her. "What else do you need?"

"I need you to be normal, okay? That's why I came to you. We're both bitches. I can't deal with pity and softness." Santana closed her eyes. "Is that okay?"

"I can do that." Quinn stood up. "Come on. Let's get you settled in the guest room."

"I can sleep on the couch." Santana followed Quinn. "I don't want to be any trouble."

Quinn rolled her eyes. "That's what a guest room's for. Now, do you want me to get you something to eat?"

"No." Santana shook her head. "I'm all twisted inside. I can't eat anything."

"Okay." Quinn went to leave the room, hesitating when she got to the door. "Do you want me to call Brittany?"

"I texted her and told her I was okay. I know she feels guilty but this wasn't her fault." Santana settled on the bed and looked up at Quinn. "I just can't comfort her right now. Do you think that makes me a horrible person?"

"No, of course not." Quinn rushed over to her, sitting on the edge of the bed. "There's nothing wrong with taking care of yourself. I wasn't implying anything. I just thought- she's your girlfriend. I thought you'd want to talk to her."

"Brittany's not my girlfriend."

"Santana, it's fine. You don't have to hide anymore. I mean, it's all out there now."

"I'm not hiding, I-" Santana looked down. "We decided we're better off as friends."

"What? Are you okay with that?"

"I am." Santana sighed. "We waited too long. We missed our chance to be together. I hurt her and she hurt me. I love her and I'll always be grateful to her for being there for me. But she's my best friend and that's all."

"Oh, I- that's very mature." Quinn turned red and giggled a little. "God, I'm sorry. I sound like an idiot. I was just trying to help."

Santana shrugged. "Don't worry. I know it's weird. I always thought we'd ended up together but we're not."

"I'm just glad you've got someone you can talk to." Quinn looked at her. "I'd like you to talk to me, too. You know, if you want to."

"I'd like that, too." They shared a smile before awkwardly looking away.

"Um, maybe I'd better go, leave you alone for a minute." Quinn started to stand but was stopped by Santana.

"No. Do you think you could stay with me? I don't want to be alone," Santana said shyly.

Quinn couldn't contain her smile. "I can do that."

"Can you talk to me a little? I need to be distracted." Santana pressed her leg to Quinn's when she settled next to her. She really needed the contact.

“Sure. Oh, I got a text from Kurt earlier. There’s some special Glee Club meeting tomorrow morning.” Quinn scoffed. “I bet everyone’s going to sing to you.”

Santana rolled her eyes. “Probably. I got messages from Mr. Schue and Ms. Corcoran. I have a meeting with Figgins before school tomorrow.”

“Oh, crap. Is there anything I can do?”

“You can pick up my homework after I get suspended.”

“Maybe it won’t be so bad. Maybe…” Quinn trailed off, knowing there wasn’t anything she could say. It likely would be pretty bad.

“Give me a break. Schue is going to cover for his golden boy. I’m getting screwed,” Santana snapped. She could appreciate that Quinn was trying to help but platitudes weren’t doing anything but pissing her off. “I’m sorry. It’s not your fault. It’s just- you know how this is going to go.”

“I do. But I’ll be here through it all.” Quinn gave her a one-armed hug.

“You promise?”

“I promise.” Quinn squeezed her tightly, not willing to let go for a while.

—

Leaving Mr. Figgin’s office, Santana spotted Quinn and made a beeline for her. “It’s official. I’m suspended for a week.”

“There’s nothing you can do about it?” Quinn asked, glaring at a few people who stopped to stare at them.

“Not unless I’m willing to kiss up to Finn and I’m sure as hell not doing that.” Santana noticed people looking at her. “The commercial’s not out yet, why is everyone looking at me? That makes no sense.”

“It’s because of the black eye and broken arm.” Quinn put a hand on her shoulder. “Plus, there’s rumors going on about you and Finn.”

“That bastard’s set on ruining my life,” Santana muttered, growling when she saw Finn coming toward her. “Walk along, Lurch. The best part of my suspension is I don’t have to see your face for a week.”

“Don’t be like that, I’ll tell Figgins we were just acting.”

“Screw you. I’d cut off my hand and eat it before I ever let you help me.”

Finn frowned. “I want to fix this.”

“No, you don’t. You want to feel better. Well, forget it. You’re not going to play the hero here.” Santana tried to shove past him but he wouldn’t move.

“Get out of her way, Finn. Haven’t you done enough to her?” Quinn stared at him until he huffed and walked away.

“Thanks for that.” Santana smiled gratefully. “I’ll see you later. I think I’m going to head over to my house and pick up some stuff.”

“Wait. Keep your phone on. I’ve got an idea to get you out of this.” Quinn shook her head when Santana opened her mouth. “Don’t ask. I need some time. Just wait for my call.”

“That’s hardly fair,” Santana grumbled. “Why don’t you tell me what you’re planning?”

“I’ve got a few trick up my sleeve. That’s all I’m saying.” Quinn walked away, hoping she looked more confident than she felt. She did have an idea and she thought it might work. She’d just have to be willing to deal with someone she really didn’t want to deal with. She arrived at her destination and steadied herself. “Coach. We need to talk.”

—

Walking to the choir room, Quinn felt a weight had been lifted off of her. Maybe Sue wouldn’t be able to fix it but she was willing try. Sure, it was mostly to stick it to Mr. Schue but still. Santana didn’t deserve a suspension and if Sue could get her out of it, Quinn really didn’t care why.

Once Quinn arrived at the choir room and saw Finn’s smirking face, she had a hard time controlling her temper. She knew attacking him wouldn’t help Santana but she wanted to so badly. Instead, she took a seat next to Mercedes, smiling when the other girl asked if she had talked to Santana. “She’s hanging in there.”

“That’s good.” Mercedes looked like she expected Quinn to say more but she knew better than to reveal too many details. Santana would never forgive her if she did.

Brittany came and sat in and sat in front of them. “Santana said she’s okay but why isn’t she here? Why did she leave?”

Quinn rolled her eyes. “She’s suspended for slapping Finn.”

“What about him?” Brittany demanded.

“Oh, he’ll probably get a parade thrown in his honor.” Quinn closed her mouth when Mr. Schue and Ms. Corcoran came into the room.

“Listen up, guys, Finn’s got something he wants to do.”

“I hope you don’t expect us to combine choirs for Sectionals. Santana wouldn’t stand for that,” Mercedes stated, her eyes focused on Finn.

“Santana is suspended and won’t be competing at Sectionals,” Shelby said, taking note of the defensive stances of Brittany and Mercedes. “But that’s not what this is about. Finn would like us to join together to help Santana.”

“Yeah, she needs support. We all care about her and we should be there for her,” Finn said eagerly. “I think we should sing songs to her. We’re calling it Lady Music Week. Kurt and Blaine already have a song they want to sing.”

“It’s a song we sing in the car to each other to feel better.” Kurt smiled at Blaine, not detecting the dark looks being sent his way.

“Are you kidding me?” Brittany asked with wide eyes. “That’s a ridiculous idea.”

“What? No, she needs, us.” Finn looked at her in confusion.

“No, she needs her friends, which half the people in this room are not,” Quinn retorted, a scowl on her face. “Especially you.”

“Hey, I’m trying to help. I feel bad.”

“Which is the point. That’s what this is about. You feeling bad. Not about Santana feeling better. But you making yourself feel better.” Quinn stalked over to him, hands on her hips.

“She’s right. This is outrageous,” Mercedes spoke up, looking around the room. “Come on, you guys know Santana. She’d hate this. Even without Finn, she’d hate you looking at her, feeling sorry for her.”

“That’s not what this is,” Blaine said.

“It doesn’t matter. Santana’s not here, thank to Finn. But even if she were, she’d want no part of this.” Quinn blew out a breath. “Forget it. You do what you want. But I’m not going to be a part of it.”

When Quinn left the room, Brittany followed her. She leaned against some lockers and looked at her. “You think that’ll do any good?”

“Probably not but I’m not participating in it.” Quinn looked over at her Brittany and nudged her shoulder. “She’s not mad at you.”

“She should be. It’s my fault.”

“No. The person whose fault it is is getting pats on the back for being such a good guy.” Quinn shrugged. “I don’t know what’s going to happen but I talked to Coach Sylvester and she seemed to want to help.”

“Really? What did you have to promise her?” Brittany asked, surprised that Coach would stand up for one of them.

“I think she feels bad about Santana getting tied into her campaign.” Quinn shook her head. “I don’t know. I don’t really care why she helps so long as she does.”

“You’re right.” Brittany pushed off the locker. “I don’t know. This is all so stupid. I’m so worried about Santana but I’ve got to deal with Kurt and that stupid election. There’s that debate this afternoon and I don’t even want to go.”

“Don’t talk like that. You should want to be President. You have to do your best. You know Santana wants you to. She’s so proud of you.”

Brittany thought for a moment. “I know you’re right. Plus, beating his brother would be a good way to stick it to Finn.”

Quinn couldn’t stop her laughter. “Yes. Kurt’s such a hypocrite. He talks a good game about not bullying but he’s in the middle of Finn’s Lady Music ridiculousness. I bet he hasn’t even said anything to Finn about Santana.”

“Exactly. I hate how people get on Santana but nobody does anything about Finn.” Brittany sighed, some of the fight going out of her. “I know she’s so difficult but she didn’t deserve what she got.”

“No, she didn’t.” Quinn flashed back to the night before. Santana had looked so small. As they had laid in bed, Santana had let her hold her. It was wonderful, comforting Santana. She’d felt 10 feet tall, like she could do anything. And she wanted to figure out how to help her. It felt like nothing she did was good enough.

“Hey, where’d you go?”

“I was just thinking about Santana. I want to help her.” Quinn flushed, hoping her thoughts about Santana weren’t written all over her face.

“You are. I’m glad you’re there for her since I can’t be. No matter what she says, I know she’s mad at me.” Brittany looked down.

“She’s not, Britt. You’re her best friend,” Quinn assured her. “She doesn’t want you to feel bad. She still adores you.”

“Maybe.”

Quinn smiled, another idea coming to mind. Maybe they couldn’t get to Finn directly but there was someone they could. “I know Santana would want you to defeat Kurt. Can I give you some advice on the debate?”

“Sure.” Brittany grinned. Quinn had the same look that Santana got when she was plotting. It usually meant that she was up to no good and someone was about to get screwed over. Trouble sounded good at that moment.

It was a very different Santana who followed Sue into Mr. Figgins’ office. Earlier that day, she’d been terrified of her punishment and resentful of the situation. Now, she was still pissed but she knew Sue had her back. Granted, it probably had less to do with her and more to do with some scam Sue was running but whatever. Santana was willing to ride on her coattails. She sat down and smirked at the confusion on Mr. Schuester’s and Ms. Corcoran’s faces.

“Thanks for coming on such short notice. I’m sure plotting out all those ooos and ahhs takes a lot of time.”

“Save it, Sue. What are you doing here? We settled this mess with Santana this morning,” Will said impatiently.

“Thanks for all the concern about my life,” Santana mumbled, falling silent when Sue glared at her sternly.

“We’re here because I’m concerned about Sandbags here,” Sue began. “Why was she suspended?”

“We have zero tolerance toward physical violence here.” Mr. Figgins sighed edgily. “And it’s none of your business.”

“That’s where you’re wrong. Santana is my head cheerleader.” Sue placed a hand on Santana’s shoulder. “I have a responsibility to stand up for her.”

“I don’t want to lose her for Sectionals either but she has to be punished,” Shelby said.

Sue snorted. “You can be forgiven for your naiveté since you’re new here but I’m no longer going to stand for the double standards. My Hispanic, lesbian captain gets punished when Glee Club’s straight, white male captain is never punished.”

“Excuse me?”

“I think it’s absurd that Finn can start a fist fight at Prom but still compete at Nationals when Santana is disciplined for a slap.” Sue clapped her hands together, enjoying the looks on Figgins and Will’s faces. “No more. I’m going to make a commercial of my own that exposes the horrifying treatment of minorities in this place.”

“You can’t do that,” Mr. Figgins’ eyes widened with fear at the thought of the lawsuit that would follow. “That’s not fair.”

“What’s fair?” Sue mused. “I don’t really care. Santana has agreed to film a spot discussing the hard times she has suffered at this school. Her injuries will play beautifully on camera, don’t you think?”

“You weren’t hurt at school,” Shelby said, the implications hitting her hard.

“Oh, that hardly matters. What matters is perception.”

Will frowned. “Santana why would you do this? Do you really want to be all over TV?”

“Are you kidding? Thanks to Finn, I’m already going to be on TV.” Santana scoffed. “At least with this, I get a tiny bit of control.”

“Sue, what do you want? I assume that’s why you called this meeting instead of just doing what you want.” Mr. Figgins slapped his hands on the table. He just wanted this over with, one way or another.

“It’s simple. I want Santana back at school, participating in her extracurriculars, with no repercussions for the incident.”

Mr. Figgins glanced around the room, feeling a sense of foreboding. He knew when he was beat. "Fine. You've got your way."

"What? That's not right." Will looked at Santana. "I realize you're going through a tough time but--"

"A tough time? Look at me. I don't see that you give a crap about me."

"Santana, I--"

"No." Santana forced herself to take a deep breath. It would do no good to blow up at Shelby. She wasn't even really angry at her, she barely knew her. She didn't have any expectations that Shelby cared about her for anything other than her voice. "I don't need anything from any of you if my suspension's been lifted. That's the only thing I care about. Especially since I know you don't care about me."

"That's not true. Both Glee Clubs are planning on supporting you."

"Forget that." Santana stood up. She couldn't contain her anger any longer. "Brittany and Quinn told me about that. We all know that was to make Finn feel like such a good guy and I'm not going to sit through a bunch of people feeling sorry for me to make Finn Hudson feel like a freaking hero."

Will stood up, too. He took a few steps toward her. "Santana, did it ever occur to you that you push people away? That maybe the reason you don't have any support right now is because you don't let anyone in?"

"The last time I let my guard down around you, you kicked me out of Glee Club." Santana held up a hand, stopping his protests. "I don't want to get into this. I just want to go now. I assume we're done?"

"Go on to class, Ms. Lopez." Mr. Figgins dismissed her, his spirit broken.

"Terrific." Santana turned to Shelby. "Do we have Troubletones practice this afternoon?"

"No. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Great. Thanks for your help, Coach."

"No problem, Santana." Sue slapped her back as she walked out the door.

Will shook his head in disappointment. "Are you proud of yourself? You helped Santana completely avoid the consequences of her actions."

"Skip the self-righteousness, William. I think that girl has enough trouble in her life without adding a suspension from school to it." Sue smirked. "And the fact that I got to stick it to you? That's just a bonus. Bye."

Santana peered suspiciously around the auditorium. "It doesn't look like anyone's judging me but I don't know for sure. Maybe we shouldn't be here."

“We both want to support Brittany. Besides, you’re fine. You’re Santana Lopez. Nobody’s going to force you to back down.” Quinn patted Santana’s hand as they took their seats.

“Yeah, yeah.” Santana pursed her lips. “Do you think Brittany’s ready for this? A debate’s different than a speech. I don’t want Kurt making her look brainless.”

“Don’t worry. Brittany’s prepared. I gave her some tips and we talked about a way to make sure Kurt backs off.” Quinn leaned back in her seat, spotting Rachel, Finn and Blaine across the room. They’d likely take offense to Brittany but oh, well. Quinn was past the point of caring. It was about time someone knocked Kurt down a few pegs. She couldn’t stand how self-righteous he could be.

“It’s starting,” Santana said, looking bored. “I can’t believe I’m spending my lunch listening to this. Brittany better appreciate it.”

“I’m sure she does.” Quinn rolled her eyes. “Anyway it’ll be a good show. Just watch.”

The debate was long and tedious. Neither Quinn or Santana could bring herself to care about anything they were saying. They knew they were voting for Brittany and none of the rest of it really mattered. They paid enough attention to know that Brittany was holding her own. She hadn’t exactly slapped him down yet but Kurt wasn’t making her look silly. Finally, Brittany got her chance when Kurt mentioned his stance against bullying. “I know what it’s like to be bullied and that’s something neither of my opponents can say.”

“That’s not exactly fair. I have bullied but you don’t know what I’ve been through .”

Kurt scoffed. “Like you know what it’s like to be bullied? Give me a break. You’re the one who does the bullying.”

“You’re right, Kurt. I have bullied people. So have my friends. But it’s wrong,” Brittany said confidently. “And that’s a big part in stopping it. The bullies have to admit that what they have been doing is wrong.”

“I agree. That’s what I’m saying,” Kurt said slowly. He couldn’t figure out what where Brittany was going with this.

“I think your anti-bullying policies are a good start but we’ve also got to get the bullies to recognize what they’re doing.”

“We’ve got to reach out to bullies? They’re the ones who need help?” Kurt was incredulous. None of this made sense.

“No. But nothing’s going to get done if we don’t start talking to people. Everyone deserves a voice. We don’t know the problems that people have and if we start out by pushing a certain group away because they’re popular or offensive, nothing is going to get done.”

Santana turned to Quinn, a stunned look on her face. “You told her this?”

“A little.” Quinn shook her head. “I wanted to stand up for you and this- this seemed like the best way to do it in front of everyone.”

“Thank you.” Santana kissed her cheek, a warm feeling in her belly.

“I- I don’t understand what you’re saying here,” Kurt sputtered, all the talking points he had in his head slipping away.

Brittany turned to Kurt. “If we accept bullying by our friends, it’s never going to stop. I’ve stopped and most of my friends have, too. That’s my point. No matter who it is, we’ve got to stop bullying.”

“That’s an excellent point.”

“I’m glad you think so, Kurt. But it does make me wonder. If you believe that, why haven’t you spoken out against Finn?” Brittany asked, enjoying it when Kurt’s face lost all of its color.

“Excuse me?”

“Well, your step-brother outted someone and you haven’t said a single thing about it. Don’t you think it’s wrong to out somebody?”

“Of course but-”

“How do you expect to stop bullying at school when you can’t stop it in your family?”

“That’s not exactly what happened. Finn was pushed to his limit by Santana,” Kurt stammered as he tried to figure out a response.

“Oh. So it’s okay to mistreated someone if they deserve it.”

“That’s not what I said.”

“But it’s what you meant.” Brittany paused, remembering what Quinn had said about choosing her words carefully and not saying too much. She looked out into the audience, finding Quinn and Santana holding onto each other and grinning wildly. “I’m not perfect. No one is. But I want to make this school a better place. And I promise, if I’m elected class president, I will do my best to make sure everyone has a voice. Nobody will feel excluded or be made to suffer. We all will be safe. My name is Brittany S. Pierce and I want to be your class president.”

Santana and Quinn shot to their feet, cheering with everyone else. “You’re a genius, Quinn. She’s going to win.”

“Yeah, she is.” Quinn high-fived Santana and then embraced her. She was careful not to hurt her but she had to hold her. She buried her face in Santana’s neck, her heart starting to pound. It shouldn’t feel this good to be close to her friend but she couldn’t help herself. She needed Santana in her arms like she needed air.

—

“Where’s your mom?” Santana asked, following Quinn into her house.

“She’s working late tonight. We’re on our own for dinner.” Quinn smiled nervously as she realized that she and Santana were completely alone for the first time in a while. That could be a problem with all of the thoughts swirling around her mind lately.

“It’s fine. I don’t expect her to feed me. It’s nice enough she’s letting me stay here.” Santana bit her lip, wondering why Quinn wouldn’t look at her. “Are you sure it’s okay? Does she want me gone? Is that why you won’t look at me?”

“No. That’s not it.” Quinn’s eyes widened with panic. She was nervous but she didn’t want Santana to feel unwanted. “My mom doesn’t care and I- I’m glad you’re here. It’s been so long since we’ve had alone time.”

Santana started at Quinn, searching for any sign of deception. When she didn’t find any, she breathed a sigh of relief. “It has been a long time but I’ve missed you. A lot. Maybe it’s good we’ve got some time together.”

“Yeah.” Quinn blushed, avoiding Santana’s eyes once again. “Why don’t you go shower and I’ll make us something to eat?”

“You cook?”

“A little bit.” Quinn headed to the kitchen. “Go relax and I’ll see you soon.”

“Okay.” Santana grabbed a tank top and shorts and went to the bathroom. She grew frustrated when she realized she tried to take off her uniform and couldn’t manage it. The stupid cast prevented her from unzipping. She was helpless and hated it. Tears fill her eyes and she hit the wall. She couldn’t call Quinn, she didn’t want to look weak. There was nothing she could do. She decided to sit down until something occurred to her.

—

After putting bread in the oven, Quinn went upstairs to change her clothes. When she passed the bathroom, she realized the shower wasn’t on. She checked the guest room and didn’t find Santana. Slightly worried, she knocked on the bathroom door. Santana grumbled something Quinn couldn’t understand and she decided to go in. “Santana? Are you okay? I thought you were taking a shower.”

“I changed my mind. Don’t come in. I’ll be out in a second.”

“Not likely.” Quinn pushed her way in, a knot forming in her stomach when she saw Santana’s tears and the clothes on the floor. “What happened?”

“I can’t unzip.” Santana wouldn’t meet Quinn’s eyes.

“Stand up.” Quinn swallowed hard when Santana turned her back to her. She was going to undress Santana. Oh, boy. She attempted to focus on the task at hand and not how much she wanted to touch her. “How’d you get dressed this morning?”

“I don’t remember.” Santana was quiet as Quinn removed her sling and maneuvered her uniform off.

“You could’ve asked for help. I don’t mind.” Quinn used a finger to trace Santana’s spine. Her skin was so soft. Quinn was practically hypnotized by it. Tearing her eyes away, she moved in

front of Santana, carefully pulling the tank top on. It was difficult to get Santana dressed without staring at inappropriate places.

"I don't like to ask for help. I don't want to have to depend on anyone." Santana tried to catch Quinn's eye but the other girl wouldn't meet her gaze.

"You can depend on me, Santana. Whatever you need."

"Really? Because you won't even look at me."

"I can." Quinn sank to her knees so that she could pull Santana's shorts on, keeping eye contact with Santana the whole way. She hoped it wasn't obvious how she felt. Santana didn't need a friend with a crazy attraction to her. She needed somebody who wouldn't let her down. And while Quinn may have failed her many times before, she wouldn't now.

"I..." Santana trailed off once she glimpsed the heat in Quinn's eyes. She'd never looked at her like this before. She couldn't look away, even though she knew she should. That hungry look in Quinn's eyes didn't necessarily mean she felt the same things Santana felt. She had to stop, she couldn't afford to lose another person in her life. Her dad was confused, her brothers were disgusted, and her mother hated her. The woman had shoved her down a flight of stairs rather than talk to her. She wouldn't push another person she cared about away from her.

"All done," Quinn said, standing up. It felt like that a taken an hour just to pull on some shorts. She knew her face was red but she made herself focus on Santana and not her own feelings. "Oh. You were supposed to take a shower. I forget about that."

"It's okay. It'd probably be more trouble than it's worth." Santana glanced away, not seeing the way Quinn's face fell.

"Oh. Okay." Quinn groaned inwardly. Santana must have noticed her leering and didn't want to be in the shower with her this close. "I'll go back downstairs. Food should be ready any minute now. Come down when you're ready. If you want."

"Wait. Is something wrong?" Santana asked as she watched Quinn dart for the door.

"No. of course not. I'll see you in a bit."

Santana stared as Quinn rushed from the room. It took her a minute to process what happened. Quinn must have picked up on her attraction to her and it made her uncomfortable. Of courses. She always did this. She always wrecked the best things she had in her life.

They ate in silence, both Quinn and Santana sneaking looks at each other. It was unbearable but neither girl wanted to be the first to speak. They both were afraid of ruining their friendship. Eventually, Santana grew tired of the indecision and spoke up. "Look, I know I'm an idiot who pushed too hard but you can't hate me, okay? I need you, Quinn. I need you so much."

"What? I don't hate you. Why would you think that?"

“You ran out of the bathroom like you were horrified. And now you’ll barely look at me, again.” Santana sniffled, hating the tears that filled her eyes. “It’s because I scared you. I liked it when you touched me.”

“No, I wasn’t scared.”

Santana squeezed her eyes shut, rubbing them with her fists. “I’m not stupid. You don’t have to spare my feelings. I know I freaked you out.”

“You didn’t.” Quinn dragged her chair closer to Santana’s, taking a breath. “I freaked out but not because of you. Because of me.”

“What?” Santana was miserable and completely confused. Why did this always happen? Why did she always feel this pull of attraction that destroyed her life?

“I ran away because I enjoyed getting you dressed, touching you. In a way a friend really wouldn’t.” Quinn blushed and looked away. Even the Santana had sort of said that the feelings were mutual, she couldn’t quite bring herself to really believe it.

“No. You’re just saying that so I don’t feel bad.” Santana shook her head.

“Listen to me.”

“No, you don’t-”

Realizing that Santana was too stubborn to really hear her, Quinn leaned over and kissed her. It was barely a kiss, a simple press of lips but she thought it got her point across. “Do you get it now?”

“Why did you do that?” Santana asked, bringing a finger to her lips.

“Because you wouldn’t listen to me. And I wanted to.”

“No. No, no, no.” Santana stood up, backing away from Quinn. “You don’t mean that.”

“Stop. Damn it, Santana. When have I ever spared your feelings?” Quinn stalked across the kitchen, backing Santana up until she was pinned against the wall.

“Why are you doing this? You don’t-”

“I do.” Quinn cupped Santana’s face in one hand, using her other to keep her body in place. “I don’t know when it happened, if it was always there or something new but it’s there. You’re beautiful and smart and funny and tough. You’re everything I always wanted, just not in the package it expected it would be in.”

“See? Whatever you think your feelings are, it’s not real.” Santana closed her eyes, hoping Quinn would just leave it alone.

“Open your eyes, Santana.” When she refused, Quinn shook her head with a soft smile on her face. Of course, Santana wouldn’t make it easy on her. “I can’t promise that I won’t hurt you. But I do know how I feel right now. I want you and I care about you. I think this could be really special.”

Santana finally looked at Quinn, unable to understand what she was saying. “Do you get what this is? It’s not easy.”

“Of course it’s not easy. We’re impulsive, hot-tempered people. It’s going to be messy. But I want you.” Quinn stared openly at Santana, hoping she’d be able to see that Quinn meant every word.

“You say that but you’ve never been with a woman before. How do I know you’re sure about this?” Santana finally voiced her biggest fear.

“Oh. Is that what you’re afraid of? That we’ll start something and I’ll freak out?” Quinn waited for Santana to nod. “I’m not going to freak. This is real. I am actually attracted to you. As for the rest of it- You know my parents. They kicked me out when I got pregnant, this would cause a massive argument. I kind of assumed I’d wait until college to do anything about it.”

Santana ran through Quinn’s words. It made sense what she was saying but Santana didn’t quite believe it. “I don’t know.”

“Look, if you don’t want this, just say it. I’m not going to abandon you. I’ll always be your friend.” Quinn rubbed her nose against Santana’s. “I just think we could be so much more.”

“I don’t know,” Santana repeated. “I want you, too, but-”

“Oh, come on. We’re going in circles here.” Quinn captured Santana’s lips. Their lips met sweetly in a slow, tender caress that quickly turned into something more. Their mouths opened, tongues met, hands wandered. Quinn’s hands probed Santana’s body delicately, almost branding her. She’d never gotten lost in a kiss like this before.

“Wow.” Santana was in daze when Quinn finally pulled away.

“Believe me now?” Quinn asked teasingly.

“Yeah, I do.” Santana allowed Quinn to take her into the living room. She climbed onto Quinn’s lap, resting her head on her chest. “You know this is the easy part, right?”

“I know.” Quinn played with Santana’s hair as they talked. “But we’ll figure it out. We’ve both had tough lives, we can figure this out. Together.”

“This is going to sound stupid, considering the commercial but I don’t think I can walk around school holding your hand.” Santana held her breath as she waited for Quinn’s response.

“That’s fine. I don’t particularly want to push things with my mom, either. Especially when things are so new between us.” Quinn pressed her cheek to Santana’s hair.

“We’re agreed, this is just ours for now? No one needs to know?” Santana lifted her head, her eyes twinkling when they met Quinn’s.

“Yeah, it’s ours.” Quinn kissed her once again and those were the last words spoken for a while. They had talked enough for now.

The next day was sunny and cloudless. That was a good sign, Quinn thought. “You nervous?”

“No. I should be asking you that. You know that there are going to be rumors about any female who is near me.” Despite her words, Santana was grateful that Quinn stayed by her side.

“There’s always rumors. I don’t care. It’s me and you, Santana.” Quinn grinned and they made their way into school, ready to handle anything the world threw at them.

The Marriage, by 78Violetfan

Quinn Fabray stood on the ground outside, staring at the building before her. "It's big." She whispered. "I don't wanna go." She glanced to the taller blonde standing beside her, "can't I go with you?"

"If you think this is big, you'd faint at the sight of mine." Frannie Fabray, her older sister answered. She knelt down beside the seven year old, "you'll be fine, Quinnie...It's just second grade."

"What if no one likes me?"

"You're a Fabray." Frannie shrugged.

Quinn's brow furrowed, "you and mom and dad say that all the time. I'm still not sure what it's supposed to mean. It's just a name."

"No, everyone else's name is just a name...Ours is a lifestyle."

"Huh?"

"You have to go to school, Quinn." Frannie concluded, "look around you, everyone here seems to be doing just fine." She glanced around the courtyard. "You can make friends, it's easy, just step over and start talking to someone."

"What if they walk away?"

"Then follow them...I don't know, but I can't stand here all day and hold your hand, I've gotta get to my own school. Cheerio tryouts are today."

"You're not even holding my hand."

Frannie chuckled, "good luck, kid." She smiled brightly at her little sister before she turned toward her car.

Quinn watched Frannie climb into her car before her eyes roamed around the courtyard. There was a girl wearing a plaid skirt, a black shirt with ribbons on it and knee high socks talking to two men who had knelt down beside her. A few strides away from her was a taller boy with brown hair who seemed to be shrugging off his mom who was crying telling him to be good. Behind him was a little boy with a Mohawk, wearing torn up jeans and a cut off t-shirt. He was tapping his foot impatiently.

"Yes, I know." A girl growled, "I get it ma, you don't have to tell me twice."

"Now, honey, I just want to make myself clear."

"And you have."

Quinn turned toward the right where she saw a small tan skinned girl with dark hair shuffling her feet. "No fighting." The girl said looking up to her mother. Quinn watched the girl's mother smile brightly before she bent down to hug her daughter.

"Oh, I love you!"

"Love you, too." The girl replied, pushing her mother away with a smile, "I'll be good." She promised.

Quinn watched the woman lean in to hug the girl again before finally pulling away to walk to her car. "What are you looking at?" That caught her off guard. She had been caught staring, "hello?" And now there was a hand waving in her face.

"W-what?"

The tan girl shrugged, "why were you staring at me and my mom...it's kinda creepy."

Quinn shook her head quickly, "no, it's not...I-I mean I wasn't staring."

The girl's brow furrowed. "Yeah, you were."

"No." Quinn shook her head again, "I-I was just noticing that everyone seems to be here with their parents."

"Well, duh, Sherlock, we can't walk here alone. We're too young."

"My sister dropped me off." Quinn shrugged, "my parents didn't want too."

"Ouch!" The girl smirked, "sucks to be you."

"S'up ladies!" The boy with the Mohawk wiggled his eyebrows as he joined them.

"Go away, Puckerman."

"Ouch! Santana, there goes my heart." Puckerman put his hand on his chest.

Quinn watched him a moment before saying, "your heart is on the other side."

He looked bewildered, "what?"

The girl, Santana, smirked, "ha!"

"The left." Quinn shrugged, "your heart is on the left."

"Whatever." The boy shrugged before turning away, "come on, Finn. Girls have cooties anyway." The taller boy that Quinn had seen earlier looked at them a moment before following Puckerman.

"You know them?" Quinn asked looking back to Santana.

"Yeah, that was Noah Puckerman and Finn Hudson." She shrugged, "losers, everyone here is a loser."

"Oh."

"Except me and Brittany and...you."

"Me?" Quinn was confused.

"Yeah, because you totally embarrassed Puck. That means you're awesome."

"Oh."

"I'm Santana Lopez." She shrugged, "you didn't go to first grade with us."

"No, I was in Belleville...I'm Quinn Fabray."

"Quinn? Weird, I like it."

Quinn sighed in relief, "thanks."

"That's Rachel Berry," Santana pointed to the girl in the plaid, "she's super annoying, always singing something, but she's kinda nice...She gave Brittany her brownie once." Quinn watched the girl's eyes trace around the yard, "right there is Kurt Hummel, he's always wearing weird clothes, and next we have Mercedes Jones, she stole my cupcake this one time in preschool." She paused and looked at Quinn, "I hate her now."

Quinn giggled, causing Santana to smile. "Which one's Brittany?"

Santana's eyes seemed to light up at the name, "well, there's Mike and Matt...Ah! Brittany Pierce, only the coolest person ever." She pointed to the blonde climbing out of a minivan. "She's my best friend."

Quinn's heart sank a little, but she wouldn't let that get the best of her. "She looks happy."

"Brittany's always happy." Santana shrugged.

"Santana!" Brittany squealed upon seeing her best friend, she grinned wildly before skipping over to the pair, without a second glance toward the van.

"Brittany! Honey!" Her mother's voice came from the van.

Brittany stopped when she was standing in front of Quinn and Santana, she turned back toward the street, "sorry, bye Mom!" She hollered back.

Her mother looked a little taken aback, but she carried on anyway. "Who's this?" Brittany asked looking at Quinn.

"Quinn." Santana answered, "she's gonna be our new best friend."

Brittany smiled, "okay! Hi, I'm Brittany! I have a cat named Lord Tubbington, he's fat and judgmental."

Quinn took a glance at Santana who shrugged before she turned back to Brittany, "I'm sorry."

"It's okay, he's only honest."

—

Quinn liked Lima so far. She liked second grade so far. It wasn't as bad as she had thought it was going to be, it was only the fourth day and she had already found the two greatest friends she could find.

First was Brittany. The girl was a sweetheart. She was nice to everyone, she was bright and shiny, she always had a smile on her face. If you wanted to use something she had she wouldn't

hesitate to give it to you. That was something Quinn wasn't used too. Quinn had also come to realize that Brittany wasn't exactly the brightest, which often got her picked on. Which led to her other best friend.

Santana. She wasn't sure what it was about this girl, but Quinn knew that she was special. There was always this look in Santana's eyes when she was talking about something she liked, there was this sparkle...Santana was protective, always standing up for Brittany, and when Noah Puckerman ended up with his face in the dirt for saying Quinn was a loser (because she was reading at recess) Quinn had realized why her mother had been telling her not to fight. Noah ended up crying the whole way to the nurses office.

"He's the loser." Santana said calmly taking a seat next to Quinn.

"Yeah." Quinn nodded, closing her book and looking at her. "He is."

Santana smiled, "but you are reading, Q." It was a nickname Santana had given her almost an hour after meeting. "We're at recess, you should be playing."

"Playing what?"

"Anything." Santana shrugged.

"You guys!" Brittany cried running over to them, "look, look!" She showed them her left hand which had a Ring Pop gracing her ring finger, "Mike and I are getting married, you should come to the wedding."

"Wedding?" Quinn frowned.

"Yeah, remember a few days ago it was Matt and Mercedes." Brittany shrugged, "everyone's getting married, it's like a disease. Mike asked me after lunch."

Santana shrugged, "she's right...yesterday it was Finn and Rachel."

"Who are you gonna marry, Santana?" Brittany asked as the pair stood up to join her.

Santana looked around the playground, "the only guys left are Kurt, Puck, Dave and Azimio."

"So?"

"I don't like those guys." Santana shrugged.

"Who are you gonna marry, then?" Brittany shrugged, "you can't be left out."

Santana smirked grabbing onto Quinn's free hand, "Quinn."

"Cool." Quinn smiled.

"Come on, Q, let's go get you a ring." Santana said, tugging on Quinn's hand. The blonde quickly chased after her. "What's your favorite color?" Santana asked, glancing over her shoulder.

"Green."

"Okay, I'll get the watermelon kind."

"Wait, you're gonna miss my wedding!" Brittany called after them.

"We'll be right back!" Santana hollered back. "Mrs. Rodgers!" Santana called as they reached the door.

Mrs. Rodgers was their teacher. She glanced at them with a smile, "what can I do for you?"

"We want to get married." Santana shrugged, "can you give us a green Ring Pop and a red one."

Mrs. Rodgers glanced at the two girls before shrugging, "as long as we're pretending." She smiled, "who are the lucky guys?"

Santana eyed her a moment before taking the rings she had in her hands. "We're marrying each other." She pulled at Quinn's hand, "we have to get to Brittany's wedding."

"Now, girls a marriage should be-"

"Thank you." Quinn said before she and Santana ran off giggling toward the tree at the top of the hill, where all the weddings had been taken place.

"I now announce you husband and wife." Dave Karofsky smiled looking at Brittany and Mike, you may kiss the bride.

Brittany and Mike both scrunched up their noses saying, "Ew." But Mike still leaned forward and kissed Brittany's cheek.

"Who's next?" Dave asked.

"We are." Santana and Quinn said.

"What do you mean?" Puck asked, he had a band aide on his cheek from his visit to the nurse.

"We want to get married." Santana stated obviously.

"You can't marry each other." Azimio said, "my daddy says that's not allowed. You're both girls."

"So." Quinn shrugged, "why should that matter?"

"It doesn't." Rachel said quickly. She was standing next to Finn. Much like every other bride Rachel was wearing a Ring Pop and like every groom Finn was wearing a hair tie on his wrist.

"Well, if our parents say it's not allowed, than I'm not going to marry you." Dave said.

"That's not fair!" Santana cried out.

Mercedes shrugged, "sometimes life isn't fair."

Finn furrowed his brow, "I don't understand what's going on."

"I'll marry you, Quinn." Puck smirked, his brow wiggling.

"You won't!" Santana said, "she's mine."

Rachel took a step forward, "don't worry, I'll marry you girls." She smirked. "David, if you would please step aside."

"This is against the rules." The boy said, "I'm the Minister."

"Well, you're not a very good one." Kurt shrugged.

"Where's your wife, huh?" Azimio asked.

"I don't see you with one either!" The boy replied quickly.

"Now, now!" Rachel interrupted, "we're here for a wedding, let's all be polite." She then smiled at Quinn and Santana, "join hands."

Quinn smiled widely as she and Santana latched onto each other's hands. "I'm not watching this." Dave said before he stalked down the hill, he was followed by Azimio. Rachel eyed everyone before saying, "if there is anyone else who is not willing to be here, please leave now, so they can get married."

No one else moved.

"Good." Again Rachel smiled, "dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to join this girl with this other girl....Quinn, do you take Santana to be your wife?"

"I do." Quinn nodded.

"And Santana, do you take Quinn to be your wife?"

"Duh!" She blushed at Quinn's grin, while the other kids chuckled. "I mean, I do."

Rachel nodded, "now, you give each other your rings...they're a symbol of your marriage to each other."

Santana ripped open her Ring Pop, handing the wrapper to Brittany, who was standing behind her with a smile, "here." She said holding the green ring out, before she slid it on Quinn's offered hand. Quinn did the same with her red ring, also handing the wrapper off to Brittany.

"Awesome." Rachel gushed, "now by the power in me I announce you wife and wife. You may kiss your bride."

Quinn and Santana hesitated a moment before Santana leaned forward and kissed her cheek. Quinn watched her a moment before bringing Santana's hand up to her lips and kissing it.

"That's the bell!" Mercedes called out before all the kids took off down the hill.

A few hours later when they were walking outside to be picked up by their parents Santana glanced at Quinn's hand, "hey, where's your ring?"

Quinn glanced at her before rubbing her stomach, "I ate it."

"What!?" Santana laughed.

"Well, if you didn't want me to eat it, then you shouldn't have given me a candy ring."

Santana stared at her a moment, ignoring her mother who was calling for her, saying they needed to get to her Abuela's. "Well, then I guess I'm just gonna have to get you one you can't eat."

"I guess so." Quinn smirked.

Lucy (1), by Brittanyismyunicorn

Santana's P.O.V.

I hate the first day of school, I always have. My family moves around a lot because my dad is in the army. We moved to Lima this summer and now school starts today. I don't like Lima. It just seems...lame. There's this girl on my street I met when we moved in. She seemed really nice so we've hung out almost every day since I got here and surprisingly I like her. We're going to the same school so at least there will be one person I already know. I'm supposed to take the school bus but I convinced my mom to let me walk this morning. I want time to myself before I walk into this new school.

Being the new kid always sucks. Everyone knows everyone and you're just the outsider. I've gotten used to it and now I just push people away, why get attached when I'm only going to leave? I'll probably ask my mom if I can start high school online next year, it just makes sense to me since I never really make friends. The walk to the middle school was longer than I thought so I was late to class. I tried to quietly walk in and sit at an empty desk, but it didn't go as planned. The teacher, Ms. Gates, was in the middle of a *get to know you* game with the class.

"Welcome to class." She says to me as I shut the door. All eyes are on me as I glance around to find an empty desk. Ms. Gates is sitting on her desk, facing the class and is tossing a foam football in her hands.

"Take a seat." She says then points the football in the direction of an empty desk. I walk to the desk and sit my bookbag on the floor before sitting down.

"Alright. Ms. Tardy, tell us a little about yourself?" She says looking directly towards me. Ugh, why do teachers call out students all the time?

"What do you want to know?" I ask as I lean back in my chair with a sigh.

"Start with your name." She says.

"Santana Lopez."

"Okay Ms. Lopez. What's something you like to do?"

"Well I love telling an entire class full of strangers what I like to do in my spare time." A few kids snicker and Ms. Gates smirks at me.

"Well since you love doing that, go right ahead." She probes.

"I love not answering stupid personal questions even more than sharing my personal business." I say with a smirk.

"Have you met the principal yet Ms. Lopez?" She asks and I sigh then roll my eyes. Knew this was coming.

"No but I'm sure you want me to go see him." I say and Ms. Gates nods her head.

"That would be correct." I stand and grab my bookbag.

"Maybe he'll be more original than this stupid 'what's your favorite color?' crap to get to know me that you have going on in this lame classroom." I say as I walk past her and out the door.

"This will be a fun year." I hear the teacher say before I walk the halls. I'm not going to the principals so I find a bathroom and sit in the window seal. Today is going...terrific. As I sit in the bathroom, bored out of my mind, I hear the door open. I look to see a plump girl with red hair, glasses and a hideous sweater skirt combination. This girl is like...queen nerd. I look back out the window as she walks into a stall. I put my headphones in my ears and listen to music. As I look out the window, I catch her reflection as she walks over to the sinks. After she washes her hands, she grips the sink and stares at herself in the mirror then hangs her head. I turn my head towards her and watch as she stares at the drain.

"Hey." I say to get her attention. She lifts her head and looks at me as I take my headphones out.

"What's your deal?" I ask.

"What do you mean?" She counters, showing me her mouth full of braces.

"You're staring at a drain, looking depressed as hell. You're killing my mood." I say and she rolls her eyes.

"Says the class skipping delinquent." She says.

"Excuse me? I'm not a delinquent, nerd."

"Nerd is the best you can do?" She says as she stands up straight. I roll my eyes and stand.

"You don't want to start with me loser." I say but this girl doesn't back down. She stands her ground.

"I'm not afraid of you Santana." She says and I furrow my eyebrows.

"How do you know my name?" I ask.

"I was in your class, duh." She says and I nod. Makes sense.

"Shouldn't you be in the principals office?" She asks.

"Shouldn't you be minding your business?" I counter and she rolls her eyes.

"Hall monitors come in here regularly. If you want to hide out, go down the hall to the janitors office. There's a door that leads to a back room. It's not much to do there but you won't get caught." She says then walks out of the bathroom.

The girl was right. I went to the room the next period and sat on one of the two bean bags in the room. I think this is a storage area or something because there are boxes and boxes filled with different stuff. I stayed in there until I heard the lunch bell. The cafeteria is loud and full of people walking around, talking, laughing, swapping stories about what they did this summer. I got

my lunch and as I go to sit down I see Brittany waving me over to her. I walk over to her and sit at the table with her and her friends. As they talk, I sit quietly and watch them. I'm not interested in their conversation so I look around the cafeteria. I see the girl from earlier at a table in the back of the cafeteria. She's sitting with three girls and they're talking idly. Hm.

After school I decide to walk home. I got sent to the principals office again after lunch and went back to that secluded back room. I'd rather sit in there all day then go to class anyway. I waited with Brittany for her bus then started my walk home. As I walk, I look at the names of streets and houses as I pass them. Once I'm a few streets from my house I see that same hideous sweater and skirt. Lucy. I asked one of the girls that sat at her table when I ran into her in the bathroom. I walk a little faster to catch up to her but I don't reach her until she stops and bends down to tie her shoe.

"Stalking me now are we?" She says with her head still pointed towards the ground.

"Like you're worth stalking." I say as she finishes tying her shoe then stands.

"What do you want?" She asks as she continues to walk and I follow.

"Nothing much. Thanks for telling me about that spot though Lucy." She turns her head towards me.

"How do you know my name?" She asks.

"For me to know." I say.

"Stalker." She says with a smirk and I can't help but laugh a little. Only a little.

"How did you know about that room?" I ask.

"You're not the only one who skips class." She says and I nod my head.

"Plan on skipping any classes tomorrow?" I ask and Lucy shrugs.

"Why?"

"That room can get pretty boring."

"So you want company?" She asks and I shrug as I turn towards her.

"I figured I could either take over your space or designate sides." I say and she nods.

"I'll be there at lunch."

"Cool." I say as we keep walking.

Lucy lives the next street over from my house so we walked to the corner of my street before splitting up. I think I may like her, which is pretty rare but there's something about her that makes me want to talk to her. It's weird but I think...I might have just made a friend.

38237 - New York to San Francisco, by bloodyelectro

The sky above New York was a bright blue on this first Sunday in November and the weather was pretty much perfect for running a marathon. The city was buzzing with excitement, thousands of fans and runners filling the streets and in the middle of it all were Quinn and her best friend Rachel.

"This is going to be so great. We will feel so accomplished once we've finished this," Rachel told her as she stretched her legs.

Quinn nodded silently as she took a look around. She wasn't sure if she was going to make this. Everyone around her seemed to be better prepared than her and she seriously considered faking an injury two miles into the race. Her best friend on the other hand seemed to have no such thoughts. Rachel was jumping up and down next to her, excitedly babbling about overstepping one's limits and being strong willed, the head overcoming the limitations of the body.

To be honest Quinn had stopped paying attention to her five minutes ago. The only time Rachel crossed her mind was when she was reminding herself that she was her best friend and that she had meant no harm when she had talked her into participating in this madness. But strangling her after they crossed the finish line was still an option, given that she made it that far.

"I can't believe I flew out here for this," Quinn muttered quietly, half-heartedly stretching her legs.

Shoving her a bit Rachel nearly made her lose her balance, "I know that you've trained just as hard as I did and we will do great. This is also a super bonding experience and it will strengthen our friendship even further."

Before she could reply Quinn felt a tap on her shoulder and when she turned around she was met with a wide and happy smile.

"Hey," the Latina in front of her greeted her happily.

Like everybody in the near vicinity she was dressed in running clothes and sporting the obligatory bib number on her shirt. Admittedly not many around them wore that outfit as good as the woman in front of her and those legs...

"Uhm...hi," Quinn finally managed to reply looking back up to meet the stranger's eyes.

"You're number 38237," the black-haired woman said motioning to her shirt.

A quick check confirmed: yes that was indeed her number, "So?"

The other woman held up her hand which had Quinn's bib number in a messy scrawl on the palm. "It's a thing my friends and I do, if you find the person with the number you had the year before you don't have to pay for dinner," she explained with a smile, "So could we maybe take a picture together? They'll want to see some proof."

"Uhm... okay, do you have a camera or phone with you?"

Pulling a phone out of her arm pocket she turned to Rachel, "Would you mind?"

"No, not at all," taking the phone Rachel winked at her best friend as the other woman put an arm around her waist to pose for the photo.

"Thank you so much. This is the first time I find my number," she told Quinn conversationally, "actually that's not true. Two years ago I saw the guy with my number but he looked super creepy so I didn't approach him."

"Well, no problem. I'm always happy to help," which was true. Quinn loved helping out incredible attractive women.

They both smiled for the photo and Rachel handed the phone back to its owner.

"Perfect," the other woman judged after checking the picture, "I'm Santana by the way."

"I'm Quinn, this is my friend Rachel."

"You're first time running a marathon?"

"Yes, I'm concluding you've ran before?"

"Yup, usually twice a year since I've been twenty," Santana confirmed as she pocketed her phone. A quick look at the time told her that their race would start in just under five minutes, "Okay, I have to go back to my friends, but thanks again and have a good run."

"You too."

With another wide smile Santana turned around and disappeared back into the crowd.

"Wow."

"Trying to catch flies there, Quinnie?" Rachel teased her friend who was still looking in the direction the other woman had left for.

The blonde quickly snapped her mouth shut and glared at her friend, "Don't call me that."

"Maybe she'll wait for you at the finish line," Rachel sing sang with a grin on her face.

Just the possibility of that was reason enough for Quinn wanting to finish this run.

Rachel and her lost visual contact around mile ten, when Quinn dropped a bit behind. They had agreed not to run together but instead meet up in the finish area, because concentrating on one's own tempo was hard enough.

Quinn saw Santana a few times during the race, mostly checking on other people, which explained the first aid armband she had wrapped around her upper arm. But it was only after twenty miles that the other woman fell into step with her.

"Hey, how's it going?"

"Okay I guess," Quinn panted out.

"You'll do great, it's just a few more miles anyway," Santana said with an encouraging smile.

Grunting in acknowledgement Quinn tried her best not to show the other woman that she felt like she was slowly dying.

"The first time I ran a marathon some grandma left me in her dust at mile 18 and I was like 'Okay, if she can do this, I can do this too.'," Santana remembered, "and you've already made it this far, the rest is gonna be a piece of cake."

Great, now she was thinking about cake.

"Hey, what do you get when you run in front of a car?" Santana asked her.

Quinn gave her a side glance and shrugged.

"Tired," the Latina answered her own question, laughing to herself. "You're not one for running jokes I take it?" She asked when Quinn only barely smiled in response.

"Can't laugh. I need all the air I can get," she paused to take a deep breath, "to make it through this."

"Oh I get it. I'll stop distracting you, if you join me for dinner tonight. I can make my friends pay for you as well and if you want you can bring your friend Rachel," Santana suggested and Quinn nearly tripped over her own feet.

"Woah, careful there," the other woman teased, "so what do you say?"

"Maybe."

"You could give me your number and then I could call you later for details?"

"Do you have something to write?" Quinn asked after taking another deep breath.

"You can just tell me. I'll remember till I find something to write," Santana explained, "I'm like the best rememberer ever."

Quinn couldn't help the snort accompanying her laughter, "rememberer? Sounds like a nerdy super hero."

The blush on Santana's face was the cutest thing ever.

"Ready to use your super power?" She asked before stating her phone number, "should I repeat it?"

"No, I got it, super power and all," Santana replied with a wink. Obviously she recovered quickly from embarrassment. "Okay, so, talk to you later?"

"Sure."

"Cool and look it's only five more miles," Santana said motioning to the big sign at the side of the street, "you'll be fine," after winking at the blonde one last time Santana speed up and quickly got lost in the mass of runners.

"I feel like I'm dying," Quinn said sinking to the ground once she found Rachel in the finish area twenty minutes after she'd crossed the finish line. She'd barely managed to warm-down, her whole body was screaming at her in pain.

"But we did it! We just finished our first marathon!" Rachel exclaimed showing off her medal.

"First and last!"

Once they got to Rachel's apartment they both took a long shower and then fell onto Rachel's bed, armed with ice bags and some food.

"Thanks for doing this with me," Rachel said when they were settled.

"No problem," her best friend replied around a yawn.

They fell asleep quickly after and Quinn never even heard her phone ring when Santana called.

The next morning when she charged her phone she got the voicemail Santana had left the night before. "Hey, this is Santana, so if you're still up for it we're meeting at the River Café at eight tonight, just ask for Lopez when you get there. Hope to see you soon, bye."

"Damn it," Quinn checked the message for a phone number but the call had come from an unknown caller. All she could do now was hope Santana would call again.

Unfortunately she never did.

—

"You know volunteering is kind of exhausting as well," Rachel noted a few months later in the finish area of the San Francisco Marathon where she handed out water and medals along with Quinn.

"Oh come on, this is much more fun than running yourself, look how happy and accomplished they all look," Quinn replied before she handed another runner their medal and congratulated them on their success.

When she turned back around she was met with a familiar face.

"Hey, Quinn, right? You remember me? We met in New York last November," Santana's smile was just as wide and happy as Quinn remembered.

"Santana, of course! How was your race?"

"Great, new personal best time," she stated, a proud grin on her flushed face.

"Congratulations!" Quinn and Rachel replied at the same time.

It was only then that Santana noticed the other women, "Oh, hey. You're the friend from last time, sorry I forgot your name..."

"Rachel."

"Right Rachel. Why aren't you guys running this time?"

Quinn was a little preoccupied by not so subtly staring at Santana's legs so it took her a moment to answer, "Last time was more of a one time thing. You know, run a marathon once in your life and all. Prove to yourself that you can do it."

"I see... So if I'd asked you again would you join me for dinner this time?" Santana asked after a short pause.

The blonde nodded her head enthusiastically, "Yes! I'm so sorry about New York, we crashed after the race and I missed your call and I didn't have your number and you never called again so..."

"Yeah, my flight back home left the day after and I figured I maybe had come on too strong or something," Santana recalled.

"No, no. I wanted to get to know you, I still do. So, yes to dinner."

"Cool, but just in case can I give you my number?"

"Absolutely," Quinn replied with a big smile as she went to grab some paper and a pen.

"Are you from around here or just visiting?" Santana asked as she scribbled her contact info on the post-it.

"Rachel's from New York, but I live up in Berkeley. And you? Just here for the marathon?"

"Nope, I live in Oakland, so we're kind of neighbors," Santana grinned at her and handed Quinn her number, "How much longer do you need to stay here?"

"A few more hours, our shift just started and not everybody finishes as quickly as you do," the blonde awkwardly tried to flirt.

The smile on Santana's face only widened, "Speaking off: are you going to give me my medal?" she asked leaning closer to the blonde.

"Oh, of course."

Quinn carefully put the medal around Santana's neck and then placed a lingering kiss on her cheek, leaving both of them blushing. Rachel did her best not to squeal in delight, her best friend was so smitten already.

"Thanks," Santana said biting her lip, "well, I gotta go, see if I can find my friends. I'll call you later about dinner, okay?"

"Totally."

"And I really hope you'll answer this time," Santana said as she slowly backed away.

Waving the paper with her number Quinn grinned, "if I don't, I can call you back this time around."

"Okay, talk to you soon. Good seeing you again, Rachel," with that Santana turned around and disappeared back into the mass of people.

"You do realize that if you start dating her you're more than likely going to have to participate in another marathon at some point in the future, right?"

"If *she's* waiting for me at the finish line, I'll happily run a dozen more marathons," Quinn said dreamily.

"I'll be sure to remind you of that when the time comes," Rachel replied with a smile, happy for her best friend.

Almost Quinntana, by buffy46143

"Damn Fabray!" I fell back against the headboard next to Quinn. "So glad, we made it a two-time thing."

She laughed and looked over at me. She still had that hot after sex hair look.

"And just how long have you been thinking about doing that?"

"With you?"

"Obviously." She took another drink out of her bottle of water.

"You remember the day we met?" I asked.

"Yeah."

"Since then."

"Liar." She passed me her water and I took a drink.

"Please, why would I lie about that?"

She turned and rested her head on her elbow.

"Really?"

"Are you really that senile, Q? Do you not remember the beginning of freshman year?"

"I remember. I think maybe I remember it differently than you though." She paused and then helped move a hair out of my face. "You were madly in love with Brittany back then. Still are, I think."

"Hey, I'm working on it. I'd say doing this with you is a good start at getting over her, but you do know that I liked you first, right? I mean, that day..."

"Not in the same way as her, Santana."

"You've got some revisionist history going on inside that brain, Quinn." I laid back on the bed. "The first time we met, even though I didn't understand, I knew there's was something about you. Something I wasn't exactly ready to deal with, but there was something."

Freshman Year

"Well congratulations, you two have achieved two of the highest scores in the history of Sue Sylvester's Cheerio tryouts." Coach Sylvester sat in her red track suit behind her desk. I could see the rows and rows of trophies behind her that had driven me to tryout for the Cheerios in the first place. "On a scale of one to ten, you two pieces of chunky, fresh meat received a 5.5, which at normal schools with pathetic excuses for coaches, that would be an 11. Here at McKinley, we set a higher standard." She paused and blended what I assumed was a protein shake in a personal blender and I looked at the girl sitting next to me. She had long, blonde hair in a French braid and looked a little pretentious. "The upper classmen I've got this year are a bunch of sad sacks with no work ethic who spent

their summers lounging by pools snacking on pork rinds and reading Tiger Beat. I need a new crop of underclassmen to light a fire under their sagging behinds and I think the two of you would be perfect for that role."

"Thanks, Coach Sylvester. I know I-" The girl next to me spoke, but Coach's hand went up to stop her.

"The first thing you'll learn about me blonde is that I rarely need you to speak when I do, I'll tell you what to say." She paused. "Actually, the first thing you'll learn about me is that I am a winner who wins and I don't care for loser who lose. Speaking of, there goes William Schuester." She pointed out the door where a man with what looked like a botched perm and a sweater vest walked by. "You'll do well to stay away from that guy, ladies. He's what we like to call around here a Lima Loser and do I tolerate losers on my Cheerios?" I sat quietly and I saw the blonde almost say something, but stop herself. "Well, at least you listen well. Welcome to the Cheerios. You're on varsity now, blonde and brown. You screw this up, you'll be sitting next to Schuester in the teacher's lounge wishing you could re-live your glory days. Dismissed." She handed us each a box and motioned for us to leave the office.

I stood and the girl followed me out of the office. We walked next to each other a few steps before I opened the box and saw a new Cheerios uniform.

"Works for me. Red is definitely my color." I told her. "I'm Santana, by the way. We didn't exactly get to do a whole meet and greet during tryouts."

"Quinn Fabray."

"Do you maybe want to work out together? We're the only freshman on the varsity squad. Maybe we should stick together." I offered, closing the box in time to arrive at my locker.

"I'll let you know. I've kind of got my eyes on the prize. I want to be head cheerleader as a sophomore. That's never happened before here and I want to win nationals as head cheerleader."

I was a little taken aback by this. I thought we could be friends who helped each other out, but this chick had other plans.

"Listen up braids, I was trying to do you a favor by helping you get your ass into shape, but if you want to make this a battle royale, I'm all kinds of in and you should know that like Coach Sylvester in there, I do not lose."

"Bring it." She walked off toward her own locker at the other end of the hall.

"You dropped me on purpose, Santana. Just admit it." She scolded on the field after the rest of the Cheerios and Sue had gone. I was changing into my work out pants.

"I didn't drop you on purpose, Fabray. Maybe you could stop eating from the same troth as those seniors who can't even run a lap on the track before passing out."

"You're trying to make me look bad. If you're going to play this game, at least play fair."

I walked over to her and stood in front of her.

"You started this thing. I tried to be nice to you and you went all thunderdome on me. This is what you get when you say 'bring it,' Fabray. Amateur hour is over."

"Hey guys, Coach Sylvester told me to come to practice today, but I thought varsity had a lot more than 2 girls on it. I'm Brittany."

"Practice was over like 10 minutes ago." I told her.

"Oh, I guess I never changed my watch from the last time we were supposed to do that."

"If you want, I can walk you through the cheers we learned today." Quinn offered.

"Are you a freshman?" I asked her.

"Yeah, I was on JV, but coach said she kicked one of the juniors off the squad for fraternizing with one of the girls on the Carmel squad so she needs a replacement."

"I'll teach her the cheers, Quinn. I'm sure you have some pasta to go eat." I mocked. The truth was that Quinn wasn't at all fat. She was incredibly beautiful. She had this old world vibe about her that I really liked and I could see us, in another timeline maybe, being friends, but she threw the gauntlet down and I am not one to turn away from a challenge.

"We can both teach her, Santana. I know you're just trying to look good in front of Coach Sylvester."

"Do you see Coach Sylvester here?" I turned my back to the new girl to argue more with Quinn. As much as she drove me crazy, I kind of like arguing with her. She and I matched wits pretty well and no practice was boring.

"She might not be here, but you know you're going to walk into school tomorrow and tell her how nice you were to stay late and help the new girl with her cheers."

"Um... I think I'm just going to-" I could hear Brittany start.

"It's not even like that, blonde. I can be a nice person sometimes unlike someone I know."

"I am a nice person. I just go after what I want." She paused and looked past me. "Wait. Where did she go?"

"What?" I turned around and the new girl was gone. "Oh great, you probably scared her away." I grabbed my bag. "I'm outta here. There's going after what you want and there's being a bitch. You might want to figure out which you really want." I started walking off the field and made it to the bleachers before I heard her following after me.

"You know you're just as big of a bitch as I am. We're both stuck in this crap town unless we find a way out. Cheer could be that way for me and it's not like two girls from the same small town on the same squad are going to get scholarships to the big schools."

I started walking faster and she kept up to me.

"You could always use your brain to get out of here. I hear colleges like your grades to be good." I paused and stopped walking. She stopped too. I turned to her. "Oh, unless you're dumb. Is that the problem?"

"I'm getting all A's right now. So you tell me."

"Well, school just started so things are pretty easy. Let's see how you do when things get harder."

"What's your plan? Marry rich?" She asked me.

"You know you are seriously feisty. Maybe you need to get laid. Might help relieve some of that tension. That's probably what made you fall earlier."

"First of all, you'd be the last person I'd talk to about anything resembling my personal life and secondly, I don't do that. I'm waiting." She announced it as if it were something to brag about and dropped her bag on the ground and leaned against the bleachers.

"Waiting for what? Your knight in shining armor? The apocalypse?"

"My wedding night."

"Oh my God, I can't even imagine how tense you're going to be by then. You're going to explode, Fabray."

"I'm not a slut like you, Lopez."

I raised an eyebrow at her. The truth was that I hadn't had sex either yet, but I wasn't about to tell her that. I'd done stuff, but I hadn't gone all the way yet. I didn't look at my virginity as a stain, but I wasn't exactly bragging about the fact that I hadn't done it yet either. I looked at her and could see there was a fire in her eyes and it matched my own. I took a step toward her and dropped my bag to the ground. I moved so I was only inches from her face. She looked like she was both terrified and also maybe even turned on. I could tell that last part because that's how I felt in that moment.

"I'd rather be a slut than a prude." I professed and moved millimeters closer, almost closing the gaps between our lips, but leaving a little room because I was waiting for her to shove me backwards. Then, I'd laugh and tell her something about testing her and laugh some more. Really, I was kind of testing myself because I could tell she just put on some kind of berry flavored lip balm and I leaned in a little further and our lips touched briefly before I pulled back. Her eyes were huge and I could tell her brain was running at about a mile a minute. She was silent though and I took another step back. "Yeah, you're not making it out of here a virgin, Fabray."

I picked up my bag and walked off. My lips tasting of berry lip balm.

After the Two-Time Thing

"You were making fun of me, Santana. I'd hardly say you were into me. It was barely a peck and we never talked about it again. You were all over Brittany after that day." She proposed while pulling the sheet up to cover what I'd just ravaged.

"You don't know the thoughts going through my head, Quinn and Brit and I were friends, but I did a few guys before we started fooling around as you recall. You stole Puckerman from me in a cheating/baby daddy scandal that probably could have gotten us our own reality show."

She laughed and I smiled listening to it.

"So you really would've dated me back then. If I was into it..."

"Hell no. I wasn't into it back then. Well, I was. I just didn't understand and I needed to hide for a while, but things are a little different now, aren't they?"

She didn't say anything at first. She just reached down to the floor to pick up my bra that she'd thrown off earlier.

"Not really." She tossed it at me.

"You sure? It's only 1am." I said looking at the clock on the bedside table. "We could go again. That's the benefit of being with a woman, Q. More stamina."

"I'm sure." She picked up my dress too and threw it at me, hitting me in the face.

"You're kicking me out? I knew you were just using me for my body."

"It's either now or the walk of shame tomorrow morning. Your choice."

"That shame is all yours' girl. I just nailed Quinn Fabray." I held up two fingers. "Twice."

"Fine, but were both putting on clothes." She climbed out of bed and I checked her out as she walked naked over to her suitcase to open it. "And stop checking out my ass, Santana."

"Stop flaunting it all over the damn room."

She threw one of her t-shirts at me and I put it on. She put on another one and climbed back into bed. We talked for a little while. I wanted to make sure we were okay now that we've done things to each other and everything. She fell asleep with a smile on her face so I figured we were good. We woke up and I put my dress back on quickly while she opened the door to check if the coast was clear.

"Things are different now. You know that, right Q?"

"San, let's not make a big thing about this. We talked-"

"Look, I'm still dealing with Trouty Mouth fake marrying my ex-girlfriend in a pre-apocalyptic ceremony presided over by the high school football coach. I think it's safe to say I'm not ready for anything right now."

"Yeah well, I'm not really offering you anything."

"Oh you offered me a whole lot last night and I think there's more to this than you're letting on about, but if you need to deny, deny, deny, then do your thing, Lady Fabray." I slid my heels on and used her for balance.

When I stood back up, she was looking at me with that same look I saw all those years ago. The one that told me I was right.

"I'm not ready for this... or anything right now."

I smiled and grabbed my purse.

"That's okay. You and me, Q... we've been battling like this since the day we met. I have a feeling we'll keep at it for a while and who knows? Maybe one day, you'll be ready and I'll be ready and..."

"Don't hold your breath, Santana. I'm a mess."

"Nah, you're just a work in progress. We both are." I opened the door again and checked to see that none of the losers I went to high school with would see me in my clothes from last night.

"Don't be a stranger, Fabray." I said when I turned back to her. "We can't get ready for each other if you are."

She smiled and shook her head sideways. I let the door close behind me. I smiled and I walked to my own room thinking about how I could almost still taste that berry lip balm.

Firsts & Lasts, by comfortablyobsessed (CorvusCorvidae)

The first time you saw Quinn Fabray, you were eight, and the two of you were wearing the same white dress at Maddy Goldberg's birthday party.

There you were, standing on the edge of the group, pretending to be interested, and in walks Quinn, with her posse of friends. You didn't know her, you only knew of her. However, her reputation wasn't enough to scare you, the fierce Santana Lopez, off. One of you had to change, that was obvious, but you were certain it wasn't going to be you, and likewise, Quinn thought the same.

She had clocked you the second she came in, her eyes narrowing at you, and then your dress, and you knew what was going through her mind. You weren't going to back down if some daddy's little princess asked you to change. It didn't matter that Maddy would lend you whatever dress you wanted, you were staying as you were. This was a battle of wills, and the other girls at the party were catching on to it, too.

So, to best deal with the situation, you squared your shoulders and took off across the lawn. Maddy was biting her lip as you approached, and Quinn's posse already looked ready to wet themselves. But not Quinn. She looked at you like you were a challenge. So with all the confidence an eight year old can have, you complimented her dress, your dress. She immediately cocked her eyebrow, a move you now think she probably had perfected as a baby, and smirked.

"Yours is stunning, too," she replied, her voice sickly sweet with all the hints of fake-ness, but she was actually being genuine. She might not have been happy you were wearing the same dress, but she definitely wasn't implying the dress was ugly.

And somehow, from such a simple gesture, the two of you stood side by side, and ended up being the girl's everyone else wanted to talk to. Both of you didn't dare partner up with anyone else for the games Maddy had planned, and heaven forbid

Keep your friends close and your enemies closer; because that's exactly what you both saw each other as, competition, an enemy. Quinn knew you were a threat to her social standing, and you knew that Quinn was going to do what she could to keep you from the top.

It only made sense that the two of you would band together, in equal footing, and make the most of the opportunity presented. If Quinn stopped going after you, you could safely sit at the top of the social hierarchy, and in doing so, you'd have her back. The girl clearly needed a proper friend, not just another member of the posse, and you could easily take that place.

And, come the following week, at Stacy Lewis' house, everyone was wearing the dress Quinn and yourself had been wearing the week before. To ensure that neither of you were out doing the other, Quinn and you wore exactly the same blue dress, and never left the other's side.

The first time you kissed Quinn Fabray, you were fifteen, and the two of you were in your bedroom studying.

Or rather, you had been studying, but after so many minutes of staring at a math equation neither of you could do, you both opted to procrastinate for a little while. That meant going through the latest school gossip, who was dating who, and then who was cute.

"I actually think Finn is pretty cute," Quinn offered, shrugging her shoulders. She was sprawled out on your bed, her feet at your pillows and her head at the foot of the bed, where her math books were cluttered. You sat at the desk watching, ready to throw in your two cents.

"Yeah, if you want a bumbling idiot as a boyfriend," you replied, shaking your head in return. Finn was not good boyfriend material for Quinn.

"Well, maybe I do," she supplied, catching your attention. "He's easier to manipulate that way. Plus, at least I won't have to do anything with him, unlike if I was dating Puck."

"Ewe, don't date Puck, he'll have you knocked up before you graduate." And that thought had you glaring at the floor, your fist clenched, with a wave of emotion making you feel like killing him. It wasn't the first time you'd experienced that, because any time the thought of Puck even attempting to touch Quinn, you wanted to put his balls in a blender. But that was the same for anyone even attempting to touch Quinn; it pulled out the jealous and protective side of you.

"Don't I know it," Quinn murmured, rolling onto her back, staring at your ceiling, having missed your train of thought. "Why can't it just be easy?" she asked.

"Easy?" you questioned in return.

"Yeah. Why can't it be like in the movies or on the tv shows, where I fall in love with my best friend, or I meet the love of my life at some party and everything is perfect," she wondered, and you watched her carefully.

You were going to have to tell her eventually, or it was only going to get harder. At sixteen, the two of you were expected to have boyfriends and be up to no good. And eventually there would be a guy who would catch Quinn's attention, and then what? What would you do? Would you settle for missing your chance? No, probably not, but you would never put Quinn in that position, of having to choose.

That meant you needed to confess before all that happened, before she had to choose, before there was a boyfriend to complicate things, and before you potentially lost her.

"Well, maybe you could fall in love with your best friend," you said, with no hint of nonchalance, like one would expect usually.

"Santana, you're my best friend," Quinn replied quickly, waving her hand dismissively, still staring at the ceiling.

"I know," you replied, letting the words sink in.

Quinn paused and then slowly stopped what she was doing, rolling onto her side, to look at you, as if she hadn't heard you right. It was, though, and you could see her processing what you'd said, running through all the ways of how to misinterpret that and then coming to the same conclusion; she couldn't misinterpret what you were saying.

And that moment, that moment was your bravest, staring back at her, unwavering in your certainty. You already knew where you stood, and had since you were thirteen. You'd walked in her shadow, you'd had her back since that day at Stacy Lewis' house, and you'd protected her from the likes of Puck and his sleazy hands. And why? Because she was your best friend, sure, but it was more than that. It was so much more than that.

Quinn knew it too, from the looks of things.

Keeping your gaze, she gestured you closer, with her staying put on the bed, lying on her stomach, perching on her arms, still looking at you. And you moved, you had to, you always did as she asked, and this time was no different, so you moved, you moved closer until you were kneeling before her at the bottom of the bed.

Yes, the carpet was hurting your knees, and the Cheerio skirt gave you nothing to lean on as it was so damn short, but she was looking at you as though something had just clicked, and you were desperate to know what it was. Your knees would heal; your friendship might not, depending on what was to happen.

Slowly, and ever so carefully, Quinn's hand reached out, cupping your cheek, and pulling your face forward. You swallowed the lump in your throat and moved in, your forehead leaning on hers, feeling her breath across your lips, and hearing the catch in her throat. Your eyes never left hers, not even to glance down to the lips you were so desperate to kiss. You needed to know what she was thinking, to see if she was going to freak out. But none of that was there, none of that was in her eyes, and they looked nothing but confident, and a little turned on. Though, the latter might have been wishful thinking on your part.

"Q," you whispered, scared to break what was about to happen, but desperate to know what her next move was going to be. You didn't count on your lips ever so slightly touching hers as you spoke, nor did you count on her slight whimper as she closed the distance.

Her kiss was soft, tentative, showing the uncertainty she was clearly trying to hide, but also revealing the confidence she felt as her lips brushed yours again, and again, and her hand moved into your hair. You tried to stay calm, to hold back the lust running round your system, but then her tongue swiped against your lip, followed by a nip of your bottom lip, and you couldn't fight back the moan.

You were panting as you kissed her back, your tongue meeting hers, her fingers scratching against your scalp, pulling you closer, your knees scraping against the carpet, and it was so much more than you ever expected. The slight hesitation was gone, and she was kissing you back with as much want as you had for her. And this, this moment, this was your defining moment, with her lips on yours, and your heart in her hand.

"We should get back to our homework," Quinn whispered, ending the kiss slowly, bringing it to a natural end. You were still catching your breath, your body abuzz with her, but you nodded, assuming that was the right thing to do.

Shuffling back from the bed, you wondered if she was going to freak, if she was going to run, but then her hand was on yours, pulling you back in, and her kiss was sweet, tender, a sign. She smiled at you as if she knew exactly what you were thinking, and you returned her smile, appreciating the gesture.

Whatever was to happen, you were content knowing you had made your feelings known. You weren't a coward pinning after your oblivious best friend. You'd given a hint, and she'd kissed you like that was the answer she had been searching for all along. And that, you were never going to forget, because whether it moved forward, at that moment, she had wanted you just as much as you had wanted her.

—

The first time you told Quinn you loved her, you were seventeen, and it had been long overdue.

The two of you were dating, were going steady, whatever you wanted to call it, you two were together. It had been slow, a nervous process of should you or shouldn't you, and in the end, you were glad you did. It took a lot of time, a lot of discussions, to get to now, where you both could be sitting in your back yard, Quinn lying against you, holding your hand under the afternoon sun, while your parents were inside.

With so much extra stress, the stress of coming out, the stress of school and parents and life, it meant adding any more burdens to your relationship might just sink it. Or, at least, that's what you thought.

So you held back, you went on dates, you made sure to tell Quinn how stunning she was, how she made you so happy, and you did everything you could to show her, too. You were saying the words without saying them, and had been for over a year. You didn't want to scare her off, you didn't want to frighten her away.

She might have loved you as a best friend, but loving you as a lover, that was something entirely different. You may have already been there, you may have already known you would follow her to the end of the earth, but she hadn't, and you couldn't risk spooking her.

Now, though, all of that seemed ridiculous. Two years. It had been almost two years since that first kiss, and you were as in love with her then as you were now, nothing had changed that. Only now, you could tell her. You were going to tell her. You needed her to hear the words you had been saying silently for years.

Rolling onto your side, curling into her body a little more, you moved your sunglasses off your face and looked at her. She truly was stunning, and it only took her a moment to take her glasses off, too, and look back at you.

"What? Are you too hot?" The opportunity to make a joke wasn't worth ruining the moment, so you shook your head in response.

“No, I just...” you stopped yourself and leant in to kiss her, revelling in the ability to do that as you pleased and to have her smile at you like that after each kiss. “I love you – I’m in love with you, Q.”

It only took a moment, a second for the words to sink in, and then Quinn was smiling at you like you were the morning sun, the rain during a drought, and the answer to all questions, and it had you smiling back at her; the euphoric feeling coursing through your body.

She laughed, the happiness spreading to you, and kissed you again, and okay, maybe you thought she’d say it back, but you weren’t going to be disappointed if she didn’t. You weren’t going to rush her. But then the kiss ended and she pulled back, leaning up on her elbows, and you were so sure she was going to tell you she loved you too.

“I’m going to go get something, stay here?” The words tumbled out her mouth and left yours dry.

“What? Now?” you asked, trying to hide what a little like rejection. But she was still smiling at you, which made no sense.

“Yeah, just wait, alright?” Quinn asked, brushing herself off as she stood up, leaving you lying out on the grass.

“Where is it? Where are you going?” You couldn’t stop the questions from falling, and the frown forming on your brow.

“It’s at my house, I’ll just go get it,” she laughed, shaking her head at you as if you were the ridiculous one.

“You’re going to leave me, after what I just told you?” You had to ask, you needed the clarification, because maybe she hadn’t heard you right.

“Yes,” Quinn laughed again, playfully rolling her eyes. “I’ll be ten minutes, just wait here, I’ll be right.” Surely she knew patience wasn’t a virtue you had.

Leaning down, she pecked your lips once before jogging her way into the house, leaving you to lie back on the grass, staring up at the sky, wondering what the heck was going. You had told her, you had told her you loved her, you were in love with her, and that wasn’t exactly the reaction you were expecting. But hey, you’d done it. You’d told her, and she knew.

But that, that was also the last time were able to tell her you loved her.

—

The last time you kissed Quinn Fabray, you were eighteen, and she was in the Intensive Care Unit at Lima General Hospital.

She had far too many machines hooked up to her for it to be good, and she was on her ninth day of being in a coma. Your hand was shaking as you slipped it into hers, trying hard not to touch or catch the IVs in her hands and arms, trying hard not to hurt her, to bruise her delicate skin, or upset the perfect rhythm of her heart.

You needed to hear the continuous beep beep beep of the machines, and you needed her to be okay. No one was telling you anything, though. Her parents were keeping very hush hush about her recovery, and had they known you were with her, they would have thrown a fit. You'd convinced your dad to sneak you in, because he saw how much weight you'd lost these last few days, and he saw how red your eyes were every hour of the day, and he saw that you were slowly but surely dying inside not being able to see her.

But now you could, you could see Quinn, and it was a painful sight to behold. She was still so beautiful, but the damage she had sustained was harsh on her, making her look frail and weak; a contrast to the strong girl you knew and loved.

You wanted to stay with her, to be with her every hour of every day to ensure she recovered, to ensure she woke up, she made it through this. You wanted to look after her, to protect her, to support her. Yet, you were powerless, much like she was.

It wasn't up to Quinn, but up to her body, now, to see if she'd recover, to see if she'd make it through this. And you hated those odds, especially as each day crawled by and she remained critical.

It was beginning to look like you were going to lose her, and with that thought, you dropped your head onto the bed, burying it in the blanket, and let it soak the fresh tears.

Holding her hand so gently, you kissed her palm, trying hard not to hurt her in the process and used your free hand to wipe away your tears. The beep beep beep was still a reminder that she was alive, she was still fighting to stay, and you calmed yourself with that thought, settling down again.

You'd stay with her until your dad came to get you, before the Fabrays arrived, and in that time, you'd pray to any God listening to save her.

—

The last time you saw Quinn Fabray, you were eighteen, and they were lowering her coffin into the ground at the Lima Cemetery.

You stood stoic, amongst the crowd, not shedding a tear because you'd done that, you'd already broken your heart out over her. You'd cried yourself to sleep every night since the accident. You'd cried in the shower, in the car, in class, in the waiting room, by her bedside, and it hadn't changed a thing.

And now, now everything was final.

You couldn't kid yourself anymore. You couldn't pretend that this was one dreadful nightmare. You couldn't go lie to yourself about her death. But knowing, knowing that she was dead, that she wasn't coming back, that was the worst to swallow.

Ten minutes, she'd said, I'll be right back, she'd said. But it had turned into three hours, five missed calls, seven texts that went unanswered, and then your mother looking at you with so much sadness that you felt your world cave in.

And now, now you were there, watching her go, trying to let her go, and failing miserably.

Ten years. You'd had ten years with her, and it had not been enough. Ten years of standing at her side, protecting her, looking after her, but obviously you didn't do a good enough job because this was her funeral, her goodbye, her farewell.

You weren't ready to say goodbye, you weren't ready to let her go, to leave her. This wasn't how it was meant to be. This wasn't what was meant to happen. Quinn had a future, a life, goals and aspirations and hopes and dreams, and how was she going to achieve them now? And why? Why did it have to be her? Why did she have to die?

The sudden rush of tears was too much, and you clenched your fist, tightening around the slip of paper you held, trying to fight them back. You couldn't cry, because you knew, once you started this time, you wouldn't be able to stop.

In your hand, you held her last words to you, her first and last I love you, and a tale of what might have been. She'd had it on her in the crash, and you'd not been able to let go of it since. It had been your light in the dark, but was now the anchor tied around your feet in the swirling sea.

The NYU logo stood out from the page, followed by the dirt and the blood stain on the corner. And across the top, Quinn's neat scrawl, the blue biro pen having saved a part of her from destruction. Only, they were your undoing.

I've been accepted! I know you want me to go to Yale, but I want to be with you. New Hampshire has nothing on New York. You've had my back since that party at Stacy Lewis' house years ago, so let me have yours for a change. We're finally getting out of Lima, so let's go together. No matter what, I want to be by your side, as a friend, as a lover, I want to be with you. I love you, and I can't wait to see what the future holds for us. X

With one final look, with one final teary-eyed glance, you said goodbye. Goodbye the dreams of living in New York together, goodbye to the kisses in Times Square and the afternoons in Central Park, goodbye to the mornings in bed and the nights out drinking, goodbye to the laughter and the tears, goodbye to 'I love you' and 'I love you too', and goodbye to the future standing at her side, loving her, caring for her and protecting her.

Goodbye to Quinn Fabray.

Goodbye.

How I Met Your Mother, by conceptoftwo

"Kids, have I ever told you the story of how I met your mother?" Santana asked her two children who were sat on the couch in front of her.

"Yeah, like a thousand times" Emily, her eldest sarcastically replied and Jack, her youngest nodded his head.

"Buckle your seatbelt kids because im about to tell you the story of you freaking life"

"Mami" they both groaned.

"It all started in the year 2012..."

—

Santana Lopez and Noah Puckerman were McKinley royalty; they were at the top of the social ladder. Everyone wanted to be like them and everyone wanted to be with them. They were the two biggest players in the school and everyone knew it, but it didn't stop all of the girls throwing themselves at the duo.

Santana was a lesbian, not only that but she was McKinley's only lesbian, or however, open lesbian, which you would think made getting girls hard, but not for Santana, no. Everyone wanted her, guys, girls, hell she even knew that teachers gave her an extra-long glance when she walked by. So when she wanted someone, she had them. Nobody said no to Santana Lopez.

Whilst Santana was busy checking blessing the pervert who made the cheerio's skirts, Puck was gawking away at something.

"Psst, Lopez" Puck nudged her.

"What?" She asked a tad annoyed because Amy McCallum was just about to bend over and pick up the book she just dropped and Puck just made her miss it.

"New chick, twelve o'clock" he said.

Santana turned her head to where puck was looking.

Straight ahead of her was a blonde headed girl dressed in a sundress which cut off just before the knee. Having a new girl wasn't news to McKinley, no, but having a girl that radiated this kind of beauty and to be honest, a girl that actually took Santana's breath away was a rare thing. This girl was definitely something special.

"Damn, she's hot" Puck interrupted her thoughts.

"She's beautiful" Santana whispered.

"What do you say San, first one to get this one wins?" Puck suggested.

Santana smirked at this, she loved playing these types of games with Puck mainly because she was the one that won most of the time.

"Deal"

Before more words could be said between the two Santana wasted no time in walking over to the blonde, Puck immediately scowled knowing that Santana would get there first.

A few quick steps and she was leaning next to the blonde's locker, eyeing her up and down. Santana was definitely impressed with what she saw although she did wish that the dress was a tad more revealing, but still, this girl made it work.

The blonde turned her head to the side as she saw a figure come up next to her. Santana knew that girl probably just saw her checking her out but she wasn't going to let that stop her game.

"Could you be more obvious?" The blonde said. Her voice sounded even better than Santana had imagined, the raspy tone to it just added to this girl's sexiness.

Santana grinned playfully. "Well, have you seen yourself? It's kind of hard not to stare"

The blonde released a small blush, with that Santana knew she had this girl in the palm of her hands.

"So, since we've established that you're all kinds of sexy, how about you tell me your name?" Santana asked.

"Quinn Fabray"

"Santana Lopez"

"So Quinn, since you're new here it's only right that I give you the famous Santana Lopez welcome package"

Quinn eyed her carefully and bit her lip. "And what's in this 'welcome package'?"

Santana leaned in closer so that she was slightly pressed up against Quinn.

"Whatever you want babe" she winked.

Quinn smiled at Santana and her confident words. Santana knew she was in when Quinn started to lean in closer however instead of connecting their lips like Santana thought she was doing she leaned into Santana's ear.

"You'll have to try a lot harder than that to get in my pants 'babe'" Quinn mimicked. As soon as she said this she walked away, leaving Santana standing there trying to piece together what had just happened.

She couldn't believe that Quinn had called her out like that, no one ever said no to Santana Lopez. Now Santana was determined to get this girl. She wouldn't rest until she had Quinn Fabray.

"Well, it looks like your 'Lopez charm' isn't working as well as it used to" Puck smirked as he came up and took the spot Quinn was standing in. "I guess it's now time the pukasaurus worked his magic"

"Work it all you want, I'll get that girl" Santana told him.

From that point on Santana's focus was on one thing and one alone. To get Quinn Fabray.

The next day Santana walked into her AP chemistry class, she always found it quite amusing to shock people when she walked into the harder classes which involved brains, people only ever associated her with beauty, she actually had brains too.

She sat down at her resident seat at the back, she chose to sit at the back because here she a full view of the class and she could also get away with a whole lot more mischief from back here.

This morning she wasn't in the greatest mood, she still couldn't get her mind wrapped around yesterday and she also hadn't figured out her next mood into charming Quinn. Mostly because she hadn't seen her the rest of the day.

However, that soon changed when she saw her new favourite blonde walk into the classroom. This day wasn't going to be so bad after all.

"Ah yes, I knew you were coming. Take a seat next to Miss Lopez at the back" Santana gleamed at she heard this. The fact that she was going to be sat next to Quinn every day for 1 hour a week immensely pleased her.

Quinn sat down in the vacant seat next to Santana.

"Looks like we meet again" Santana smiled.

"I guess we do" Quinn returned.

"Have I told you how good you look today? And here I thought it was too late for sundresses" She smirked.

"It's not going to happen Santana"

"What?"

"Im not going to sleep with you" Quinn stated.

"I love a challenge" Santana winked at her and then turned her attention towards the front as the teacher was starting the lesson.

All the way through the lesson Santana didn't say anything to Quinn, until the very end when the class was over and everyone was grabbing their things to go to their next class.

"So Q, there's a party tonight, wanna go?" Santana propositioned her. Santana knew that a party was a perfect opportunity for her plan to commence.

"Im actually already going" Quinn said which shocked Santana a bit.

"Oh?"

"Yeah, a guy called Puck asked me and I said yes" she shrugged. Santana couldn't help but roll her eyes.

"He did, did he?" Quinn nodded. "Well, I guess I'll see you there then" Santana started to walk off before she turned around.

"I would say wear something sexy but we both know you don't need to try" Santana turned around and walked away before Quinn could reply.

It was 10pm and the party was in full swing when Santana got there, she always made a point to turn up late to parties so that everyone was drunk and it wasn't dull when she got there.

She walked in and went straight to the swarm of bodies drunkenly grinding on or talking to another person. She spotted her target in the corner of the room talking to Puck. Credit to the guy that he actually seemed to have a shot from an outsider's point of view but something in Santana knew that this girl was different, that's why she was trying for her. There was just something different about Quinn which made Santana want to put that extra effort into seducing or maybe even more.

When Santana saw Puck take Quinn's cup and walk off to the kitchen leaving Quinn standing alone she knew it was time to make her move. She walked up to her and stopped as soon as she was stood behind her.

"Damn, I'd say you look beautiful but that would be an understatement" she whispered into Quinn's ear causing her to turn around.

A grin arrived on Quinn's face as soon as she saw Santana.

"Are you ever going to stop?" Quinn asked.

"Do you want me to?" Santana playfully said back.

Before Quinn could reply Santana felt a body press up against her side.

"Sanny come dance with me" Santana's friends and occasional hook up, Brittany said.

Santana glanced at Quinn before she responded to Brittany; she couldn't help but see a bit of jealousy in her eyes. This spurred her on even further.

"Sure thing Britt Britt"

She turned to Quinn before leaving with Brittany.

"If you'll excuse me"

Santana walked off following Brittany on to the dance floor, well, the living room but with the amount of sexually deprived teenagers grinding against one another it was more a dance floor.

When they got there Brittany immediately turned around so that her back was flushed against Santana's chest, she grabbed Santana's arms and wrapped them around her body tightly, grinding her ass into Santana's hips.

Remembering her plan Santana looked back over to where Quinn was standing, Puck had now re-joined her and she was nursing a fresh cup of whatever alcohol Puck has stocked up on.

Glancing over, Santana saw that Quinn's eyes were not on Puck, no, they were on Santana, staring deeply into brown orbs.

Check mate. She's got this and she knew it.

The next song came on and now Brittany had turned around so that she was now facing Santana. Before she could react Brittany leaned in to capture Santana's lips in a sloppy kiss. Santana complied to the kiss knowing that it was a part of her plan.

When it was over Santana instantaneously looked back over to where Quinn was. She saw the whole thing, but as soon as Santana looked over Quinn had soon walked away.

"Im gonna go get a drink" Santana informed Brittany.

She shortly followed after Quinn and found her in the kitchen downing a shot of what Santana assumed was vodka.

"Easy there Q, don't want you falling the rest of the night" Santana teased forcing Quinn to look up to her.

"Im a big girl Santana, I can take it" Quinn replied.

"Im sure you can but I wouldn't want to have to carry you home"

"You don't need to, Im sure Puck would be happy too" Quinn smirked.

Santana stepped closer to Quinn.

"Nah, you wouldn't want those sweaty meaty hands all over you" she stepped closer again so that now she was directly in front of Quinn.

"Surely you'd want soft, warm, sensual hands, who by the way definitely know what they're doing, to take care of you" As she said this Santana slowly placed her hands on Quinn's hips.

"What makes you such an expert in what I want and don't want?" Quinn said, however not removing Santana's hands from her waist.

Santana leaned in closer and closer until her lips were almost covering Quinn's.

"Are you saying you don't want this?" Santana placed a kiss along Quinn's jaw, on instant Quinn leaned her head back due to Santana's touch, slightly begging for more.

"And this?" she placed another kiss on her jaw, slowly reaching higher and higher to Quinn lips.

"And this?" she kissed the corner of her mouth.

Quinn couldn't take it anymore, she grabbed on to Santana hair, forcing her head closer to crash their lips together. Santana had never felt a kiss this good before, she never wanted this to end. It was all tongues and teeth, everything to make a kiss perfect. Both of them lost in the intensity of the kiss, forgetting their surroundings. When the kiss came to an end they were both out of breath.

"You taste like a liquor store... I like it" Santana said.

Santana decided to be bold and do something she never did before. Something which was out of her comfort zone, but she felt was just right for the moment and that it needed to be done.

"Go out with me" she asked.

"On one condition" Quinn said.

"What?"

"You don't date anybody else but me" Quinn told her. She knew of Santana's reputation around school, she didn't want to be one of those girls who got played by the infamous Santana Lopez.

"Deal"

—

"And that kids, is how I met your mother. Around school we were known as the power couple, your mom and I ruled that school our senior year. Especially your mom, she was known as the person that tamed Santana Lopez" Santana said proudly.

"We graduated high school, your mom went to Yale and I went to NYU. After college your mom joined me in the city, two years later we got engaged and married. Then you two were born and we all became the awesome family we are today" Santana smiled as she relived the past. She wouldn't change a single thing.

"And now that would be a thousand and one times you've told us that story" Emily said.

"You let me know when you want the next one" Santana jokingly said to her daughter. "Anyway, im going to go and get dinner started, stay out of trouble kids, who am I kidding you're my kids of course you won't" Santana joked and walked out of the room to the kitchen.

"Hey guys" Quinn greeted her children as she came in the room.

"Hey mom"

"What cha doing?" she asked as she took a seat on the couch opposite them.

"Nothing really, waiting for mami to make dinner" Emily said to her mother.

"Speaking of, did I ever tell you kids the story of how I met your mother?" Quinn asked.

"NOOOO"

Spread Fire in Me, by DreamsAreMyWords

Pale orange light poured in through the chink in the heavy red curtains drawn over the windows in my bedroom. The light crawled over my legs first, tangled and twisted up in the thin silk bed sheets, before rising higher and higher, flowing over my sleeping form to land on my face, bleeding red through my eyelids and making me wake with a start.

My eyes were difficult to open; they clung together in heavy black clumps, sticky with the residue of a night perhaps better left forgotten. My hair was a matted disarray of wild blonde tresses, and my body was aching sore as I pushed myself up onto my elbows, blowing my fringe out of my eyes before I swung my legs off the bed and stood up, wavering until finding my balance. I cringed at the sour taste in the back of my throat, and at the bitter, sharp pungency of alcohol permeating the air. My head throbbed, seemingly in vindictive glee over my displeasure as I remembered last night.

"Ugh, *God*," I moaned, and fell back onto the bed.

I didn't bother going ahead and checking my purse for the wad of bills that I knew weren't there. I flinched as I imagined what my father's reaction would be when he discovered that I had went out again, for the third time in the past week, and had again, for the third time in the past week, blown through my allowance. The other two times, it had been spent mostly on drinks. This time, however, I could vaguely recall, in random snippets of pumping music and flashing dance lights, that I had been screaming in raucous laughter as I tossed bill after bill at my best friend as he twirled around and around on a pole as half-naked woman shook their behinds around him. Oh, *Jesus*. Hopefully my father wouldn't find out about *that*.

I sighed as I rolled over in bed, and absently fingered a stray feather poking out of a pillow. My phone vibrated from where it was perched haphazardly on the dresser. I had probably thrown it there when I stumbled into the house in my intoxicated state last night. It buzzed again, but I ignored it. I knew it was Mike, just calling to check up on me. Actually, strike that, he probably wasn't calling to check on me, he was probably calling to see whether or not I wanted to grab lunch before we prepared to head back into town for the night. If the pounding of my head was any indication, I thought I'd had enough of partying for one week.

Of course, no sooner had I thought that did my door burst open with a loud bang as it rebounded against the wall. I jumped and cursed profusely, but that did nothing to hinder Mike, who only stood laughing with eyes I knew must be crinkled and sparkling behind black sunglasses.

Mike Chang Jr. had been my best friend since we were seven years old and during one sunny recess, fell in mutual love over our obsession with ballet. After a few days of chattering excitedly about everything we had in common (we were the richest kids in class, coincidentally), we had our parents put us in the same ballet class. Over the course of the next fifteen years, we were inseparable, "as thick as thieves," in the words of my father. It came as a shock to everyone when we decided to go our separate ways after high school, but it made sense to us. Mike, who had

always easily been the best dancer in class, was insanely talented, so getting a full-ride scholarship to Joffrey Ballet Academy of Dance was as natural as breathing to him. I managed to get a partial scholarship to Yale, and was currently enrolled to finish my senior year next semester, graduating with a degree in Drama. Being hundreds of miles apart was hard, but we still texted every day, and spoke to one another on the phone at least once a week. And when Spring, Christmas and Summer Breaks rolled around, we were back to being glued at the hips.

Presently, it was summer, thus the partying three times a week. I didn't think I could take any more of it, to be perfectly honest. We weren't as young as we used to be—even though twenty-two was still pretty young. I squinted up at Mike, appearing all handsome and chipper in his fashionable suit, with his carefully coifed hair and his blindingly white smile. Most of my other friends (my female ones in particular) were enamored with Mike, and I could see why. He was Asian, he was kind, he was hilarious, he was very attractive, he could dance like no one's business, he was smart, and he was the cutest dork ever, not to mention filthy rich. But I just didn't see him that way. I couldn't imagine myself being...intimate, with him. He was *Mike*. I knew that was a flimsy excuse, especially considering the fact that it was no secret that he wouldn't be opposed to being more than friends with me. He had asked me out on more than one occasion, but I always turned him down. I had shot down his advances so many times that my worn-down "I don't want to ruin our friendship" excuse was no longer believable, and I was terrified of what other reason I could give him, because the reality was not nearly believable enough. *I'm not attracted to you*—because after all, how could anyone not be attracted to Michael Chang Jr. ? But the truth was, I didn't even understand why even the thought of kissing him made my stomach turn, or why imagining sleeping with him made me feel cold and nauseous. Any girl would be lucky to have him, so I didn't understand why I was the one that could, and I didn't want any part of it. It was a question that had plagued me for so long that I actively tried not to think about it.

He grinned at the withering scowl I gave him, lifting up his peace offering—a tray of coffee, and judging by the holes where two missing cups were supposed to go, I assume he'd already delivered to my mother and to Sarah, the maid.

"Ugh, give it here then," I huffed, and snatched my coffee from his hand.

Mike sat down on the foot of my bed as I curled up at the head of it. "Now that you're up, do you want—"

"No," I said shortly, cutting him off before he could finish. His grin didn't falter, and when I lifted my eyebrows in warning, glaring at him over the rim of my mocha-Carmel coffee, he wagged his own.

"Kurt's going to be there."

I nearly spewed my coffee out; Mike thumped me on the back as I coughed, my eyes streaming as I struggled to regain some semblance of a normal breathing pattern. Finally, I managed to rasp, "What? Kurt Hummel?"

"No. Kurt Russel," said Mike somberly, and I glared at him again. He laughed. "Yes, Kurt Hummel. What other Kurt do we know?"

"Oh my God," I exclaimed, incredulous at the thought. "I haven't seen him in—years. I don't think I've seen him since we were in high school. Why is he in town?"

Mike shrugged. "He didn't say. He just Facebook messaged me and asked if we were doing anything tonight, then asked if we wanted to meet for a drink and catch up."

"Wow," I breathed, sitting back against the headboard of my bed. Kurt Hummel. Mike and I became friends with Kurt when we were nine, and Kurt joined our ballet class. He had just moved to the city, which at the time, Kurt said was because his father was opening up a new tire shop, though we later found out it was actually because his mother was moving into the hospital for her cancer treatments. Mrs. Chang later told Mike and I that Kurt had lied probably because he didn't want us to treat him any differently. But for that year, we had merely assumed what Kurt said was true, because why wouldn't we? It wasn't until his mother died and he moved away that our dance instructor, Ms. July, told the class the truth, and we all wrote Kurt a sorry-for-your-loss card that she mailed for us. Mike and I didn't hear from Kurt until a few years later, when we were sixteen and we ran into him at a coffee shop that he worked in at Sand Springs, Oklahoma, when Mike and I went to Tulsa with our dads (who worked together for the same law firm) for a couple weeks. It had been a weird coincidence we were all delighted by, and the three of us became Facebook-friends, and since then had sporadically emailed over the years. If we were being truthful here, I hadn't thought of Kurt in a couple years. But the fact that the last time I saw him was at my graduation party directly after my senior year of high school and he'd said something to me that was particularly...unsettling, made me really, really interested in seeing him again—not only to catch up with him, but to find out in person exactly what he'd meant to me by that irritating little comment he'd made that stuck with me even now, almost four years later.

"Alright," I decided. Mike's face lit up at the prospect of going out again. I didn't know how he did it; he was even more of a lightweight than me. "Let's go, then. Where did he want to meet?"

"The Bridge," answered Mike, as he stood up to follow me into my walk-in closet.

"That little bar on 71st that's always empty?" I inquired, turning to flash Mike a puzzled frown over my shoulder.

Mike nodded. "Yep." He shrugged. "Guess he wants somewhere quiet that we can talk.

"I guess," I said dubiously, shaking my head at Kurt's taste in bars. Nevertheless, I picked out my best dress, a sleek, smooth silvery fabric that shimmered whenever it moved, and draped it over Mike's waiting arm. After fifteen years of this, he knew the drill.

"We're totally still hitting Avenu Shade after, right?"

I sighed, my insatiable thirst for something to do other than waste away at this huge mansion listening to my mother bitch about my father finally getting the best of me. "I hate you, Michael Chang."

Mike chuckled from behind me. "It's not nice to lie, Lucy Fabray."

Kurt was waiting for us at an isolated table placed in one of the more shadowy corners of the bar, huddled close with a stranger with dark, slicked-back hair and a charming smile. He greeted Mike and I warmly, and had no reservations about tightly clasping our hands to shake, while Kurt seemed a little nervous and cool towards us. When Kurt's voice shook as he introduced us to Blaine, his fiancé of two years, Mike and I exchanged a look as we slid into our chairs.

"Are you feeling okay, Kurt?" I questioned as I pulled my coat off.

Kurt nodded immediately, though he overdid it. I frowned as he finally stilled himself after nodding five times. Blanching at Mike and I's confused silence, Kurt's eyes widened and he burst out, "No, no, I—I'm not. It—it's the...anniversary of m—my mother's death today."

My stomach clenched as my eyes widened. "Oh, God, Kurt, I—I'm so sorry, I completely..." My voice trailed off feebly; I watched helplessly as an ashen-faced Kurt was drawn into Blaine's embrace. Blaine smiled apologetically at us, holding his boyfriend against his chest as he rubbed his back consolingly. Mike and I were both at a loss for words. I had no idea that today was the anniversary of Kurt losing his mother to Breast Cancer, and I had no earthly idea why he would choose this day of all days to meet up with a couple of old friends for drinks. It made no sense to me, and I was so shaken up and uncomfortable that I couldn't even grasp the proper thought-process to wonder why, so I merely flagged over a waitress and ordered a round of drinks for the table.

"It—It's okay," sniffed Kurt after a time, coming up from Blaine's chest with skin so white it looked as though he could use a few cheeseburgers, let alone a couple drinks in his system. "I just—I didn't want to bring it up, make everything uncomfortable, but it's hard."

Mike and I both nodded sympathetically. "I'm sorry, Kurt," said Mike sincerely, and I nodded again to echo my agreement with him.

"It's fine, it's fine. Just...pretend that didn't just happen." Kurt sat up straighter, waving away the words as though it wiped them clean from our minds. "So," he began, his voice turning hesitant again. He glanced anxiously at Blaine, who only smiled serenely back at him, before continuing. "How have you guys been? How's...how's life treating ya?" The last question seemed almost desperate, as though Kurt was struggling to remain nonchalant about this whole situation. I didn't understand why. If he was really upset, he should just go home. It was honestly no big deal.

Mike, who forever remained immeasurably tactless compared to me, beamed as he began to speak of his dance school. Kurt listened to him with a blank face, while a strange intensity was fixed onto Blaine's. Though I kept my face carefully composed into a pleasant expression, as I sipped on my glass of wine, I was wondering what the hell was off about those two. My gut was telling me that something wasn't right, but I couldn't put my finger on it. They were just...weird. Kurt wasn't that weird normally. The last time I saw him, he was all smiles and beaming as he toasted me at my high school grad party. Now, he was nervously clasping his hands together as he pretended to listen to Mike, his eyes unfocused and the corners of his mouth trembling. If it

really were because of his mother, wouldn't he have picked a different day to meet us? Or was I just totally overthinking this whole thing?

"How about you, Lucy?" asked Blaine, turning his unnervingly intense gaze onto me once Mike finished speaking. Blaine took a deliberately small sip of his wine, never taking his eyes off me. They were a different hazel than mine, a darker brown. "I've heard you attend Yale? That's impressive."

I dipped my head in gracious acknowledgment. "Thank you. Yes, I'm about to be a senior there."

Blaine's thick brows furrowed in innocent interest that didn't seem at all good-intentioned to me. "And you're a...drama major. Right?"

I nodded again, taking another drink. I watched him for a second, tipping my half-empty glass back and forth and listening to the red wine quietly splash against the sides, before I decided to change the subject onto him. I really knew nothing about this Blaine, and he seemed shady already. How did I know he wasn't some asshole working for the man my father was running against, trying to screw me over to aid in taking out my dad? As the thought struck me, I gripped my glass more tightly. "Who are you?" I asked forthright.

For the first time this evening, Blaine's serene composure broke, and he leaned back, appearing slightly startled. What little color the wine had given to Kurt drained out again as his pink-tinged cheeks turned white, and he stared at me like a deer caught in headlights. I kept my gaze on Blaine, calm and curious, even though inside, my thoughts were steamrolling through my head, panic seeping into me. What if this Blaine was a reporter? I had seen pictures of him before, from whatever Kurt posted on Facebook that appeared on my newsfeed. There had never been anything to indicate he was in journalism, but this was just...weird. What if he knew about the office my father was planning on running for? What if he was here to dig up information on Russel Fabray's rich, partying daughter?

After a pregnant pause during which Mike repeatedly looked back and forth between the three of us, Blaine cleared his throat. "What do you mean by that?" he said, his voice judiciously composed.

My spidey senses were tingling. *God, I've been around Mike too much, if I'm starting to quote Spider-Man.*

Equally collected, I said evenly, "Who are you? All I know about you is your name and the fact that you're engaged to my friend and have been dating him for around two years. How did you meet? Where are you from? What brings the two of you..." My gaze shifted and lingered on Kurt, who fidgeted in his seat, appearing terrified. "To Connecticut?"

Blaine relaxed almost immediately, his face splitting into a charismatic beam. "Well, I'm from Wisconsin, actually," he said brightly. "Kurt and I met in high school, during the Show Choir Nationals in.... San Antonio, wasn't it?" Kurt nodded slowly, still pallid as he peered intently

down into his untouched glass of wine. "I went to an all-boys academy, and it was our third time Championship."

"Your school lost, huh?" asked Mike teasingly, grinning at Kurt. Kurt looked up, a wide smile fixed on his face that didn't quite meet his eyes. Again, he only nodded.

"I asked him for his number, and we texted off and on for the next two years. He was a grade above me, and so it took me a year longer to join him in New York, where, as you know, he was an intern at Vogue. I joined NYADA, and asked him out for coffee one afternoon, and he agreed, and it just..." Blaine shrugged, and though I was still suspicious, I had to begrudgingly admit that his smile appeared genuine now. "Just kind of snowballed from there. We started officially dating a month later, and here we are now."

I tilted my head, fluttering my lashes as I said sweetly, "That's cute. But you still didn't answer one question." Blaine's brows furrowed again. "*Why* are you *here*?" I repeated.

Blaine opened his mouth to speak, but before he could, Kurt spurt out in an overtly loud voice, "We—what do you mean, what a stupid question, why are we here? Because—because my mom, she would've—she would've wanted me to come see friends, and...and you guys are my friends, so—so that's why we came here, to see you, not for anything weird or anything, I mean—just friends catching up, of course," he said in one rushed breath, and ended it with a breathy, nervous laugh that seemed to echo around the table, as Mike frowned at Kurt in confusion, Kurt gaped at me, and Blaine and I glowered at one another.

I leaned forward and said in a lowered tone, "Do you *really* want to start something with my father? Because he's really good at making people like you, *disappear*."

The result was pandemonium. One moment, I was slanting across the table, clutching my empty glass of wine in one hand and using the other to balance myself. The next, the entire table was being toppled over, my glass shattered between my hand and the floor, someone's hand had a fistful of my hair, and another hand shoved hard at my chest, pushing me back. I heard a scream from the only other person in the entire bar, the barmaid behind the counter, before it was cut off. I heard a shriek that sounded like it came from Kurt's high-pitched alto, and I heard a grunt right in my ear that was definitely Mike, and the hand in my hair loosened its grip before falling out completely. A loud bang rang through the air, and there was a hissing noise before white smoke clouded through the dimly lit building in voluminous billows, and then shouting that I realized was coming from Blaine.

"She...self-aware!" I heard two disconnected words before there was a roaring sound, a wail, and then utter silence.

I lay frozen, blood dripping from the one long gash that extended from the bottom left of my palm and curved around to the back of my middle knuckle, and the multiple tiny cuts that crisscrossed the skin of my palm. The smoke that hung in the air seemed to settle, and I coughed as I lifted my head and surveyed the damage. The table we had sat at was strewn in splinters all over the room, and the other furniture was broken and in pieces too. Plates and glasses were in shards on the floor, and two of the front windows were shattered.

A groan that sounded next to me pulled me out of my shock, and I turned to see Mike lying on his back, the entirety of his torso stained with blood, beaming holly-bright from the huge patch of red on the front of his white shirt.

I screamed his name and lunged toward him, launching myself across the dilapidated remains of the table and chairs. While some part of me knew that a person that injured should not be moved, I still thoughtlessly seized him by the front of his drenched shirt and tugged him toward me, barely managing to pull him onto my lap. I shook him roughly, so stunned and panicked that I could not find the breath to scream with again. I only continued to shake him, whispering his name in croaky fragments. He was awake, and writhed in my arms a bit, bewilderment and fear on his face, and some numb, disjointed part of me wondered if he was going to die in my arms, with my hands clutching his shirt, all soaked in blood. Then the smell and the cold feel of it hit me, and I sagged in relief as I realized it was only spilled wine.

"God," I gasped, sucking in a ragged breath. I shoved him back, irrationally angry all of the sudden, my stomach curdling low in my gut. I was pissed at him for making me think he was dying. Then I realized the situation we were in, and that it was much more serious than I ever could have imagined. "Get up," I said at once, dropping my voice to a whisper.

"Wha—" began Mike, obviously nonplussed.

"Shh," I said urgently, and clutched his arms, trying to pull him up into a standing position with me. My right leg was burning for some reason, but I ignored it, struggling to help Mike to his feet. "Hurry." I held him behind me with one hand, swiftly side-stepping the piles of broken glass from the bar, and lead him towards the door. Kurt was slumped over unconscious in the center of the room, and Blaine lay sprawled out not far from him. I jumped when I saw him stir, and moved along faster as Mike and I darted out of the building.

"Hurry," I said again, marching down the street, where throngs of onlookers had already started to gather to get a look at the bar that had just half-blown up. My voice was cool and firm, unlike how I currently felt on the inside, which was stricken and horrified.

"Luc—Wait, Lucy!" I stopped, whirling around when Mike gripped me above my elbow, a snarl on my face. He let go at once, which certainly didn't help his confusion. "What's going on? What just happened?"

I quickly glanced around, furtively checking to make sure we were the only ones who stood in this dark alley. "That guy back there, Blaine—he's not really Kurt's boyfriend." I shook my head, remembering how I'd seen him on Kurt's Facebook for the past two years. "I mean, he is, but that's not all. He's—"

My next sentence was cut off with a strangled cry when something closed over my mouth and nose, and a strong, hard arm wrapped around my chest, pinning my arms to my side. I went to suck in a breath out of instinct and instead was met with some suffocating, cloying chemical that clogged my pores, made my eyes water and caused a gag to be ripped from my throat. As I was dragged backwards, I saw the same thing happening to Mike, with some human figure garbed in all-black wrestling him down to the ground.

"Shut up," a voice hissed in my ear, before my stomach started to float and my tongue went fuzzy and I was met with nothingness as my eyes rolled into the back of my head.

"Lady, you need to wake the fuck up. Come on."

I moaned quietly, my head lolling on my neck as a hand slapped lightly and insistently on my cheek. There was an impatient sigh, and then a woman's voice spoke again. "Get the water. Pour it on her head," the woman ordered.

I gasped in shock, inhaling the freezing cold liquid that had been dumped more on my face than on the top of my head. I coughed, my arms flailing as I sat up straighter, bowing my head and squeezing my eyes shut to rid myself of the water that was running my eyeliner right into my eyes. "F—fuck!" I managed through chattering teeth. I shivered, blinking rapidly as I looked up at whoever the hell was leering over me, an empty bucket hanging from his grip.

"She's up. Now let's get the fuck out of here," came a male voice that sounded just as irascible as the woman's did.

"Wait," said the woman firmly. As my gaze came into focus, I recognized the shape of a person squatting next to me, realized that I was sitting down on cold concrete, my back leaned up against a brick wall. A man stood a few feet away, holding the bucket. "Can you hear us?" asked the woman in a slow, clear tone.

I nodded, wincing when my head throbbed.

The woman glanced back over her shoulder at the man before she scooted closer to me. My pulse was pounding and I was breathing perhaps more rapidly than was healthy, but I was more scared than I had ever been in my life, including that time Mrs. Chang was in a car wreck on the way to Mike and I's ballet recital. I had no idea who these people were, but if they were here for the same reason as Blaine, who knows what they were going to do to me. Everyone knew state officials were rich, and my father was the richest of them all. If these people planned on kidnapping me and using me as a hostage to get rich off my father...well, it was a solid plan for financial gain, I'd give them that.

"Okay. Can you tell us what just happened in that bar?" the woman asked, her voice low and deliberately casual, but I could see her, garbed in all black, crouching beside me looking positively tense.

I swallowed, my mouth dry and my throat burning. My head swam, and I wished I hadn't drunk that glass of wine. "Um. I don't know." The woman made a *tsk* sound, as though she didn't believe me. I felt black creep toward the center of my vision again as my hearing seemed to flicker out. Her voice sounded distant as she gripped me by my shoulders and held me steady, murmuring, "Hang on a sec. We just want to talk. If you remain calm, there's no need for any violence. Alright? Now tell us. What happened in that bar?" She repeated the question firmly, slowly again, and I could tell by her fingers digging into my shoulders that she meant business.

Should I comply? I stared at her, wishing I could see something other than the slanted brown eyes that were watching me intently through the eyeholes on her black-swathed face. Of course they would wear masks. If I got away, they wouldn't want me to be able to recognize them in case they were caught at a line up, or they tried again. The skin around my eyes tightened. I was never one to back down from a challenge, so I would take the threatening route.

"My father is going to kill you," I whispered harshly, and I saw those admittedly pretty eyes narrow a moment before there was a sharp crack on the side of my head, and I fell into nothingness again.

"Rise and shine, Blondie."

"The sky is awake, and so should you be."

"Get the fuck up, bitch."

I grunted, squeezing my eyes shut tighter as I felt something make contact with my stomach. I was lying on my side, my legs tied and my arms bound together behind my back. I curled into a smaller fetal position as my gut radiated with the hollow pain of being kicked.

"Puck, don't kick her," said a soft female voice reproachfully.

"Shut up, B," answered a rough male one.

"Tell her to shut up one more time, and I will shove my fist so far down your throat that you'll taste my elbow before I pull your dick inside out," came a threateningly low female voice, and the male voice faded with a grumble. Absently, I recognized that that voice was the one that had hissed shut up to me, so it was pretty damn ironic that she was telling that guy off for saying shut up to the other girl.

The soft-voiced girl said something else that I didn't quite catch, and then the man spoke again.

"...Don't see why it matters. She knows, and she's still on his side. Bitch is not an ally."

"We don't know that," the soft-voiced girl said with an air of repetition in her tone, as though she'd had to remind the man of this on more than one occasion.

"We do, though!" the man insisted. "You saw her try to fucking blow up Blaine and Kurt, not to mention she took off running when any normal person would have called the fucking cops—"

"Maybe she was just scared," suggested the softer girl.

The man snorted. "Please. She's been living with Citadel scum for her entire life, not to mention running around with the Chang gang-bang. She's gunning for us, I'm *telling* you."

"Quiet," the lower female voice ordered again, and the other two fell silent. "She's waking up."

I stirred, blinking blearily as I tried to get my bearings. My mind worked furiously despite my sleepy state, and I quickly ran through the list of things I did know. I was being held hostage by a group of at least four people. My old friend was obviously in on it, which I never would have expected out of Kurt. My father wouldn't know I was missing until next week, when we were supposed to meet for the annual Fourth of July party. Mike was nowhere to be found, though I presumed he was locked up somewhere in the same building as me, considering he was a witness to the crime. And I was in deep, deep shit, I realized, as I stared up at the three people who towered above me, all wearing the same black suits that reminded me of some kind of mix between a ninja and a secret agent, and gave me a startling sense of surrealism as I had to wonder for a moment whether or not any of this was real, or I was home passed out from drinking too much, and was just having a fucking weird dream.

"What—" I squeaked, and the man started laughing, deep robust laughs that caused him to double over. The girl next to him, who had a blonde ponytail that stuck out of the back of her hood, shook her head, and I could tell by her body language that she was amused as well. The other girl, who stood at a slight distance from the other two, was shorter and had a long dark ponytail that snaked around her neck to hang over her shoulder.

"Aw, are you scared?" mockingly asked the man, and I frowned, my mouth tightening into a thin line and my chin lifting into the air. I was not about to give these losers the satisfaction of seeing me looking so nervous, so I adopted a cool, composed expression, and stared at him from my position on the ground.

"We should probably let her go to the bathroom," recommended the blond girl with the soft voice.

"Nah, Citadel rats can piss and shit in their pants, just like the scum they are," retorted the man, with only a hint of mirth in his voice, which told me he was serious and, if he had his way, I really would be pissing myself right here, because my bladder was about to burst.

"God, you are so dramatic," said the shorter girl with a lofty tone, and she snapped her fingers. The door to the far end of the white room I was in opened, and two people dressed in all white came marching in. They appeared a bit like mad scientists to me, especially with their hair that stuck up at the ends as though they'd been playing with too much electricity. "Tell Vester that we're taking the girl to the bathroom," she barked, and the two people in white bowed their heads before backing out of the room. The woman crossed the space between us, gripped me by my arm and began to pull me up.

"Nice," said the man enthusiastically, starting toward me. The woman currently helping me to my feet whipped her head around to face him, and must have really glared at him with her eyes because the man lifted his palms, shrugging as he backed off. "Fine, fine. I was just joking, anyway."

The blonde girl took my other arm and helped the brunette balance me. They marched me toward another door opposite the one I'd seen, and led me into a bathroom area.

"Don't mind Puck," spoke the blonde as she and the brunette untied my arms. I could see bright blue eyes appraising me through the blonde's mask. "He just really hates the Citadel."

What the fuck is the Citadel?

"Where's Mike?" I said in a shaky voice as I was pushed through a stall door.

"Dead," replied the brunette, and I felt my heart turn to ice in my chest as I gasped, my arm flinging out and finding the stall walls to support me so I wouldn't fall to the ground. My stomach had dropped to my feet, and tears easily overflowed and poured down my face. *Oh my God, Mike. My best friend. My Mike.*

My Mike was gone.

"Rose," said the blonde disapprovingly, lightly slapping the brunette on the shoulder. The brunette, apparently called Rose, laughed.

"Sorry. He's fine, he's in his cell. Been screaming about you for the past half hour since he woke, but he's fine."

The relief was so sudden and overwhelming that my knees went weak, and I really did sink to the floor this time.

"Oh, no, get up!" said the brunette in irritation, bending and hauling me up by my arms again. "Take a piss so we can get out of here, or you can kiss your boyfriend goodbye."

He's not my boyfriend. I bit my tongue, aware that it was so far from mattering right now that I really shouldn't care at all that my kidnapper had just called Mike my boyfriend. I hopped back (since my feet were still tied together), and the two women pulled the stall door shut.

I sat down and internally winced and cringed for a good thirty seconds as I emptied my bladder. Why in the world is this so awkward right now?

I did my best to rip off some toilet paper as loudly as I could, to mask my desperation as I looked around the stall for something, anything, to defend myself with. It was two against one, I was weak and my legs were bound together, but I'd be damned if I didn't go down without a fight.

But there was nothing I could use. Not even a spare plunger behind the toilet. So I finished my business, opened the stall, and morosely hobbled out, holding my hands out to be tied.

"Are you kidding me? Were you raised in a barn? Wash your hands!" snapped the brunette, pointing at the sinks in front of me. I automatically felt my cheeks flush red, and I silently hopped once to stand before the sink and put my hand beneath the soap dispenser. How was I supposed to know that my kidnappers were concerned about hygiene? I would have thought if I had tried to step past them, I would've received another swift kick to the gut.

The two women led me back to the white room I had woken up in, and I saw that there was absolutely nothing in it except for a white table, positioned against the wall and dead center

between the two doors. The brunette left me with the blonde, who sat me down gently, while she presumably went to go find the man.

"I'm B," said the blonde kindly. "What's your name?"

"Fuck you," I snarled back.

"Well that's not very nice," said the blonde mildly, and she didn't speak again for the entire time we waited. I idly wondered what the hell kind of name B was until I realized they were probably all using code names here. The brunette certainly didn't seem like a "Rose," and what kind of name was "Puck," anyway?

When the brunette finally returned, the man was back with her. They both came to stand by the blonde and lean up against the table. I watched them nervously, wondering what the hell they were going to do with me in the meantime, while they probably waited to hear from my father.

"They're bringing the DNA results to us," the brunette told the blonde, who nodded in response.

DNA test? What the hell were they doing with DNA? A million theories ran through my head, each more unrealistic than the last. I'd been watching too much Orphan Black with my college roommate lately.

"How long?" asked the blonde.

"Any minute," responded the man. The three stood up straighter; the blonde girl stared up at the ceiling, the man glared towards the door, and the brunette fixed her intense gaze onto me.

I scowled right back at her, daring her to say something to me. I didn't know who the fuck this bitch was, but I decided then and there that out of all four of these idiots, I disliked her the most. I didn't like the confidence that shone in her eyes, as though she knew she could out-strength and out-smart me if she wanted to. I mean yeah, she could probably out-strength me. But no one outsmarted me. I was Lucy Fabray, daughter of the esteemed lawyer Russell Fabray, and the highly intuitive therapist Judy Fabray. I was the only daughter and had been raised with millions of dollars in my bank before I'd even been able to spell the word out. The world was at my feet, and this silly, pathetic, wanna-be-paparazzi asshole was not going to make me her bitch.

As I glowered at her, her head tilted slightly, and a new light came into her eyes, one of entertainment. I felt my stomach sinking just as newfound anger bubbled inside me. Ever the riser to challenges, I vowed to myself that I would never let her beat me.

"Hey San, I have the results you requested, and you're not going to believe—"

"Are you fucking kidding me?" the brunette howled, finally ripping away from our silent eye contest. I raised my brows, pleasantly surprised that whoever it was that just strolled into the room had just majorly fucked up.

"Is Rose not your real name?" I called out sweetly. The man called Puck glanced nervously at me, while the blonde shook her head in exasperation. "What's San short for? Sandy? Sandra?"

The brunette made a loud growl, turning to stalk toward me. "If you don't shut the fuck up *right now*, Stretchmarks, I'm going to literally cut your tongue out of your pretty fat mouth."

My mouth fell open in horror as I realized the implications of the name she had just called me. Stretchmarks.

How much did she know about me?

The woman dipped her head in satisfaction. "That's fucking better." She turned to face the newcomer, a slender woman with long, auburn hair, pale skin, and wide, startled blue eyes. She had her hand over her mouth and appeared horrified with herself. "*Why* did you just give away my—"

"It's okay," the new woman said hastily, cutting across the brunette. She raised the folded papers she held in her hand. "She's one of us. She's not Citadel, she's—she's a Stark."

There was utter silence. All three of my captors stood frozen facing the newcomer. A full twenty seconds passed before one of them finally spoke up.

"A Stark?" marveled the blonde, her tone awestruck.

The newcomer nodded, a shining smile beaming out of a lovely face. "Yes! She's Emily Stark, Emily Stark who's been missing for—"

"Twenty years," said the brunette quietly, turning back to scrutinize me. The other three turned too; the newcomer looked joyous, the blonde appeared curious, and the man looked incredulous to the point of disbelieving. But the brunette, her gaze was cautious, hooded. As though she wasn't sure she wanted to believe what she was hearing, as though she weren't sure if she were capable of it. I could only remain where they had laid me down, my wrists aching where the rope was tied too tightly, my leg cramping beneath me, and my sweaty brow knitted in confusion as I looked back at her.

"Well," the brunette said after a long moment. Her three companions remained where they were as the brunette slowly advanced on me, reaching up behind her head as she did so. She pulled the band out of her hair before she pulled the mask off her face. She shook her head, fanning her dark hair back behind her shoulders before she came to a stop before me. "I'm Santana Lopez," she introduced herself, aiming her steady gaze onto me as she bent down and offered her free hand. If her eyes were captivating, they were nothing compared to how complimented they were by the rest of her face. Smooth tanned skin, defined cheekbones, an angled jaw, a long, straight nose, and full lips. She was easily the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, and the fact that it sent my straight-as-an-arrow heart pounding did nothing but aid in my confusion. "Welcome home, Emily Stark."

Emily Stark had become my ghost. For the next six hours, I was ushered through throngs of unfamiliar faces, pulled into tight embraces by people I had never met before, and stood numbly

as crying strangers wept on my shoulders that they had missed me and had never stopped looking for me.

The problem was, I couldn't recall ever having gone missing, let alone met any of these people.

My captors became a lifeline that I struggled to cling on to. The blonde reintroduced herself as Brittany Pierce, and the man introduced himself as Noah Puckerman. Brittany was as kind as she had been even as B, and had no qualms about nudging herself into a conversation to take the focus off an obviously bewildered me. Puck acted like an entirely new person now that he had taken off his mask; he apologized to me for kicking me and acting like an all-around douche, while easily spiriting me away from whatever uncomfortable situation I was in (most particularly when people were crying all over me) to take me to where the food was at.

Santana Lopez was nowhere to be found, and I was relieved about that, at least. I had not seen her since she had told me her real name, and while I felt slightly embarrassed that I had guessed names such as Sandy, I couldn't care less that I hadn't seen her since. Even if there was something captivating about her, and I wouldn't be altogether *too* displeased if I got the chance to have another glimpse of her—

"Hey." Speak of the devil. I turned away from the elderly woman who was engaged in a conversation with a younger man about what I had been like as a baby, which made no fucking sense to me since I had lived in Maine when I was a baby. I turned to face none other than Santana Lopez, who stood a comfortable distance away from me, her gaze still hooded and wary as she appraised me.

"What the hell is going on here?" I demanded, ignoring the shocked expressions of the people nearest me. The older woman and the younger man both shuffled a few feet away.

"Shh," muttered Santana quickly, glancing around at the people who were staring at us.

"I will not *shh*!" I glared at her, planting my hands on my hips. "Where is Mike?"

Santana rolled her eyes as she gripped me above my elbow and steered me around toward a staircase. I thought about resisting at first, before realizing she may be leading me to Mike.

I ripped my arm from her grasp and allowed her to lead me up the stairs and down a long, narrow hallway, before finally stopping before an ornate wooden door painted a rich purple and decorated with intricate carvings shaped somewhat like a willow tree.

Her hand on the doorknob, Santana turned to scrutinize me. "Look," she said after a moment, her voice raspy and low. "I know you're confused, and probably pretty pissed off. But this is a difficult situation, and that makes it hard. I apologize for the way my comrades and I treated you. It wasn't professional, and we should have gave you the benefit of the doubt before treating you like you were part of the Citadel."

I huffed an impatient breath, irritated beyond belief. "*What* is this Citadel no one seems to be shutting up about?"

Santana gave me a strange look, tilting her head and letting her dark hair swing forward to frame her face before she caught it and tucked it behind her ear. "You're telling me you don't even know what the Citadel is? Or who we are?"

I shook my head resolutely. Santana's eyes widened before she scowled, cursing.

"Great," she said flatly. "No fucking wonder you were so hard to deal with." She sighed. "Okay, just come in here, and we'll get things sorted. We'll explain everything to you, but you have to sit and hear us out. Alright?"

I chewed my bottom lip as I contemplated her offer. Finally, I nodded. "Deal." I took the hand she offered for me to shake, ignoring the slight tingle that her warm hand gave me. I had honestly never seen anyone as beautiful as her. She didn't look like she belonged here, in this ancient-looking building. She looked like she belonged on the cover of a magazine. I had always known I was reasonably attractive, and many a boy had told me I was beautiful. But next to this woman, I felt small and pale in comparison—especially considering I was still wearing the filthy silver dress I had been wearing last night, and had not had the chance to fix my makeup, hair, or do anything other than use the cheap new toothbrush they had allowed me to use.

Santana swung the door open and stepped back, allowing me to go inside first. When I did, the first thing I noticed was the huge round table, situated in the center of a large room with a high ceiling that made the place seem much bigger than it actually was. There were several people seated at it, the most striking being the tall woman with spiky blonde hair who sat what I guessed was at the head of the table, her chair being the largest.

"Sit," said the woman, and I got the impression that she gave a lot of orders around here. Rather than argue against it and make things more difficult to myself, I heeded Santana's request, and sat down at the table farthest from the woman's. Santana eased down into the chair next to mine, and exchanged greeting nods with the other five people who were in the room.

"My name is Sue Sylvester," said the woman, clasping her hands together before her. She was looking across the table at me as though I were a piece of meat, ready to be prodded and inspected before she threw me onto a grill. I shifted in my seat, uncomfortable. What was up with all the intense stares today? "Do you know who you are?"

I blinked at the question, wondering if this was about any more of that Emily Stark nonsense. "My name is Lucy Fabray."

"No," said Sue Sylvester, shaking her head. She pointed a finger at me. "Your name is Emily Stark."

I sucked in a long breath, struggling to rein in my steadily dwindling temper. "No," I said, keeping my tone deliberately light. I pointed at myself. "Lucy Fabray."

"She doesn't know anything about this," interjected Santana, but she fell silent when her superior shook her head again.

"Get Shuester in here. This is his place, not ours."

The tall, thickly built woman who sat at the chair nearest Sue's stood up and walked out of the door behind the table, opposite the one Santana and I entered through. The silence she left behind was awkward and stifling, but I still decided I should use this opportunity to speak up and ask where my best friend was.

Before I could, however, the woman was already back, with a man following in behind her.

The man was short, or perhaps seemed so compared to the large woman who had led him in. He had curly hair and a dimple in his chin. When his gaze landed on me, his eyes immediately welled up, and he brought an unsteady hand to his quivering mouth, choking back a sob. "Oh my God—" He staggered over to me, standing a few feet away from me as though he were afraid to come any closer. I frowned at him, baffled and more than a little disturbed, particularly when the man raised his hand, reached toward me and touched shaking fingertips to my forehead.

"Um, what the f—" I started as I pushed my chair back from him, freaked the fuck out, but before I could continue my sentence, Sue spoke up.

"She doesn't know anything."

The man cast an astonished, tearful gaze at Sue, swallowing hard before he shifted his gaze back onto me. "Emily—" he whispered, before Sue interrupted again.

"Yes, yes, that's Emily. Now explain it to her, so we can move on with things."

Santana rose out of her seat to offer it to the man, who lowered down onto it slowly, never taking his eyes off me. Then, slowly, with tears in his voice, he spoke. "You...your n—name is Emily Stark. And you...you're my daughter."

I blinked balefully up at the man, my stomach roiling with nausea at this unprecedented turn of events. "I'm not adopted," I said dumbly. When the man's brows knitted together, I went on. "I'm not adopted. I have a father and a mother. I have parents. I don't know what you're talking about." I looked up at Sue. "Whatever's going on, I think you have the wrong person."

"DNA does not lie, young lady," spoke Sue calmly. "That is your father, and you are his daughter."

I looked back at the man, dumbstruck. I saw nothing in his countenance that even remotely imitated mine. Were these people crazy? I was Lucy. Lucy Fabray. I was not this Emily Stark they were all so intent on believing I was. "I don't thi—"

"You look just like her," whispered the man in wonder as he studied me, a stray tear leaking out of the corner of one of his eyes. "Just like her."

"Who are you people?" I said loudly, panicked now. Fuck Santana's deal. This was creeping me out, and I was scared. I didn't want to be here. I wanted to be at home with Mike, where it was safe and comfortable and familiar. "What's—"

Sue stood up, clear disgust on her face as she looked the man's way before meeting my gaze. "Allow me, since my hideously-permed colleague seems unable to put on his big boy britches and be the father he was never given the chance to be." There was a stunned silence in the room, in

which the man slowly turned to look at Sue, tears rolling down his cheeks. Sue closed her eyes for a moment, inhaling and exhaling, before she opened them again and inclined her head. "I'm sorry. That was insensitive." She stood up straighter, walking around the table, pacing almost leisurely as she began to speak. "That sniveling excuse of a man before you is William Shuester, or as he's known by the Revenants, Shue. The Revenants are a group of military-trained specialists, created in order to hunt down and execute the remaining members of the corrupted branch of government Nazis commonly known as the Citadel, since they tend to find and create strongholds to use as fortresses against us while they attempt to manipulate their way to the top in various political conspiracies."

I glanced down at Santana, who only studied my stricken expression, something akin to pity in her dark eyes.

"As I said, my name is Sue Sylvester, and I am the leader of the Revenants. We've been engaged in open war with the enduring affiliates of the Citadel for the past eighty years, during which my mother, and my mother's father lead before me. The Citadel is always recruiting new members, generally through forms of mass influence and dogmatic harrying. On occasional, there are spies who infiltrate the Revenants, and use our information and our members against us. That's where you come in."

Sue turned to face me, her hands behind her back and her expression solemn. "Twenty years ago, two prominent members of our organization had a two-year old child called Emily Stark. Allison Necrosst, another member of our organization, turned sides. She took Emily from under our noses, and escaped with her. She brought the child to Scott Halvien, the recently promoted leader of the Citadel, who joined after he was fired from his own government job for selling information to terrorists. He faked his death, started over, and gave himself a new identity as one Russell Fabray, married to one Judy Fabray, otherwise known as the newly blonde Allison Necrosst, and father to his adorable young toddler, Lucy Fabray."

I gaped open-mouthed at Sue, who stood staring expectantly at me as though she had predicted me to thank her for such information.

I was in shock. They were accusing my father of...of horrible things. Of potential murder, for giving information to terrorists. Of lying to trick the government, of kidnapping a child and raising it as his own. They were accusing my mother of the same. This...none of this could possibly be even close to the truth, could it?

Sue raised a hand and beckoned toward the Indian man that sat two chairs down. With a serene smile, the man reached into the briefcase resting on the table. He set out one, two, three books before finally handing a small green binder to Sue, who opened it briefly to sift through the pages before she handed it over to William Shuester. Shuester took the booklet with quivering hands, opened it up and set it on the table before me. My heart was thumping a tattoo against my chest as I leaned forward and peered down at the pictures plastered over the pages, and I felt sick as I grasped what I was looking at.

The child could hardly be more than a year old, but it was unmistakably me. Her hair was almost white-blond and there wasn't very much of it. She was being scooped up in the arms of some laughing blond woman, who stood behind a laughing man who was....William Shuester. The man who claimed to be my....but no. This wasn't enough proof.

"This...this could be fake," I said, desperation clear in my tone.

"I think we all know it's not," said Sue simply.

It could be real, a tiny voice in the back of my head susurrated. What a strange coincidence, that I had never seen a single photograph of me any younger than around three years old, nor any pictures of my mother pregnant with me. My parents had told me we had lived in a different home, and that a fire had taken all of our valued possessions. And yet, there were clearly pictures of my parents at their wedding, holding hands and presenting broad smiles that didn't quite meet their eyes. How convenient...

And then there was the fact that my family was so well-off. We quite literally had millions of dollars. From what? My father was a lawyer, my mother a therapist. They didn't make that much. I had always assumed it was from my rich grandparents, who had died before I'd been born. But maybe...

But no. This couldn't possibly be real.

My chest rising and falling rapidly with my shallow breathing, I looked up at Santana again; I wasn't sure why, other than the fact that this was possibly the only person in the room as young as I was. She certainly looked young, but there was anything but youth in her eyes. She looked back at me with that pity solidified, and empathy, as though she had been here before.

My entire life just may be a lie.

What was I supposed to do about that?

My hands shaking, I pushed the binder away from me. Sue seemed to take that as confirmation, and with a snap of her fingers, the Indian man stuffed the binder back into his briefcase and closed it with a click.

I wanted nothing more than to melt away into the air. To be alone. To feel safe again, not alienated in this strange new world where I was not the person I had always believed I was. I felt a sudden rush of loathing for my parents, for Sue Sylvester, and for William Shuester. For my parents for lying to me among all the other things they did, if they really did them at all, for Sue for telling me the truth this way, by kidnapping me and bringing me to this fucked up place where everyone cried and hugged me and told me they'd missed me, and for Shuester for never bothering to hunt me down, assuming we were really related at all.

I missed my best friend. I wanted Mike's familiar arms around me, pulling me into his warm embrace. "Where's my friend?" I asked Sue, who raised her brows at the anxiety in my voice. "Where's Mike?"

"Michael is being detained."

"I want to see him." A few of the people around the table cast wary glances at Sue and I, obviously uncomfortable with the demanding tone I was exhibiting to their leader. I didn't know whether it was out of indignity over my lack of respect, or caution over the thin ice I was treading on in ordering something from a woman like Sue. Either way, I didn't care. I just wanted to see my best friend and make sure he was okay.

"You can't," replied Sue calmly. Before I could start snarling my retort, she silenced me with a raised hand. "You can't," she repeated. "You were born a Revenant. He is a Chang. The Changs are a well-known gang of criminals who have been aiding the Citadel in their efforts against the Revenants for as long as they've been around. We cannot risk Michael getting free and informing them of our whereabouts. We will assess the situation, and figure out the best process with which to deal with him."

"Deal with him?" I thundered, my voice growing louder with each syllable. "He's not in a gang! He's my best friend! He's a ballet dancer! He's Mike!" I felt arms close around my middle, pulling me back from the table. Sue continued to glare at me as I was hauled out of the room, screaming with each involuntary drag. "You can't hurt him! You can't! He's innocent! He doesn't have anything to do with you! He's a ballet dancer! Let him go!"

She *had* to let him go. They couldn't harm him. What if they hurt him? I couldn't bear the thought of him being hurt. He was my person, he was my best friend and I loved him too much to lose him. When was the last time I'd even told him I loved him? I felt ice flood through my veins as I remembered.

Five months ago. The end of Christmas break. I had been over at his parents' for dinner, and he was taking me home. He took a different route to my house, stopped at an ice cream shop and bought me my favorite strawberry cone. As we sat on the park bench, he had leaned forward and caught my lips beneath his. I froze, and I felt my ice cream cone crunch under my tightened grip. Panic sparked through me; I didn't know what to do. This was my third kiss with him, the first being when we were ten years old and decided we wanted to try kissing, the second being when we were sixteen and Mike told me he thought he loved me. Now here. How do I tell him no again? How do I explain to him that I don't feel butterflies when I kissed him? You were supposed to feel butterflies. Everyone felt butterflies when they kissed someone they liked, they all did in the books I read and the movies I watched. I didn't feel butterflies when Mike kissed me, I hadn't felt butterflies when Biff kissed me outside of the cafeteria in high school, I hadn't felt butterflies when Ricky, Zack, Matt, or Ryder had kissed me either. Maybe something was wrong with me. Maybe I just needed to try harder.

So I leaned forward and I pushed my lips harder into Mike, my breasts bumping up against his chest, and I could practically feel his surprise and excitement at my response. He gently, tentatively brushed my hair back from my face before splaying his fingertips across the curves of my cheeks, stroking me softly as he deepened the kiss. I felt nothing but panic, panic at the fact that I felt nothing. It was an endless paradox that poured fuel onto the fire that was my grief. He was my best friend, he was so kind and smart and talented and perfect. Why couldn't I feel anything?

Frustrated, I took a handful of his shirt, yanked him even closer as I parted my lips and kissed him with more aggression, more passion, a slight growl even ripping from my throat. Mike struggled to catch up with me,

enthusiastic with the turn of events. He thought that it was us. That I was enjoying this, and that's why I was kissing him this way. He didn't and couldn't understand that I was just overcompensating, trying to create something out of thin air that I knew would never exist. It wasn't him. It was me.

I pushed him back abruptly, and we both sat where we were, panting. My half-eaten ice cream had fallen to the pavement, and my fingers were sticky with the sweet melted mess that had dribbled out of the bit of cone I had crushed. Mike's own ice cream lay forgotten on the edge of the bench; fortunately, he had gotten a bowl, not a cone.

Why was I even thinking so much about this ice cream? There was a more significant problem at hand.

Mike was smiling at me, pure happiness lighting up his eyes. "I love you, Luce. I've been in love with you since the second grade. Please, say you'll give me a chance. Go out with me."

I stared at him, feeling as though I was an actor paralyzed on stage, gawking out at the audience with the vastest spotlight focused directly on me. I hated myself. I hated myself for my selfishness, for using Mike to try to convince myself I felt something. I hated myself for failing to, yet again. Something must be wrong with me.

"I—I can't," I stammered, dropping my hands from Mike's chest. I looked down at my lap, avoiding the crestfallen expression I knew would be on his face. "I can't, Mikey," I said quietly, a furious blush painting itself ruddy on my cheeks. "I—I don't want to risk what we have. Our friendship...it means everything to me."

"Aw, Lucy, come on," groaned Mike, and I looked up, surprised at the anguish that was displaying itself so clearly in his tone and on his face. "This is awesome," he said adamantly, taking my chin gently between two fingers. "Think of how much better it could be if we took it even farther. I'd do anything for you. All I want is to see you smile, to make you happy and bring a laugh out of you every day. You deserve everything, Lucy Fabray, and I promise I would do my best to give it to you."

"Mike, I..." I was at a loss for words, and feeling absolutely wretched with myself.

"Please," he said earnestly. "Give this a chance. And hey, just imagine...if we were dating, I would dance every day for you."

I was tearing up, a lump in my throat at the unfairness of this all, for Mike and for myself. He deserved so much better than me, and I was tired of hurting him. "You already dance every day for me, you loser, we're in the same dance class," I reminded him lightly, my voice croaky with the effort of fighting to hold back tears.

"Yeah, but do I dance naked for you?" he asked smugly, and I was so shocked that I forgot to fight the tears, and I broke down into heavy sobs that shook my entire body. Mike made a distressed noise, pulling me into a hug again. I wept in his arms, listening as he whispered assurances that it was okay.

"You know I love you," I told him, my voice thick with tears as I stared through blurry eyes at my hand, as I methodically spread and closed my fingers together, watching the way the melted ice cream clung to my skin. "Just... friend. I friend-love you."

"I know," muttered Mike, continuing to stroke me and tell me he would wait, wait until I was ready.

I didn't know how to tell him that I knew I never would be.

"For fuck's sake, shut your mouth, before she has him shot," muttered a raspy voice that yanked me out of my memories, and I realized it had been Santana who had lugged me out of the room.

I quieted at once at her warning, winded as she let me go and I stumbled before I regained my balance. "You have to let him go," I insisted as I reeled around to face her. I was again taken aback at how flawless her skin was, dark and glowing in the dim light of the lone lightbulb in the hallway. She was at a closer proximity than I was used to, and I lurched back to provide some much-needed space.

"I'll try my best," she said simply, appearing stressed as she ran a hand through her hair. I stood stupidly, caught off guard by how easily she agreed to help me.

"Thank you," I said suspiciously. I grew very aware that my own hair must look terrible right now, and I self-consciously brushed my fingertips through it, uncomfortable.

Santana's dark gaze followed the movement, and she spoke again, her words faltering with her own obvious discomfort. "Do you, uh...Do you want some clothes, or something? To change into? We're probably the same size..."

"I don't know," I mumbled, smoothing a wrinkle on my hip with my palm. It was pointless, considering my entire dress seemed to be composed of nothing but wrinkles.

"Oh. Right." Santana dipped her head, looking fixedly at the ground, and the awkwardness in the air was so palpable a knife probably couldn't have cut through it. "I guess...I'll just show you to your room, then."

"I have a room?" I pondered aloud.

Santana nodded, starting to walk forward. I followed her, easily keeping up with her long stride. "Yeah. It's right next to mine, so if you need anything..." As her voice trailed off, I frowned at a new thought.

"Why would they...?"

"So I can make sure you don't try to do anything reckless," said Santana, confirming my thoughts. She was basically my guard, here to make sure I don't try to go bust Mike out on my own, or escape.

"Makes sense," I breathed, and we fell silent as we rounded a corner and headed down another lengthy hallway.

Santana opened a door and I followed her into a room that made my jaw drop. The bed was huge and covered in rich comforters and lavish pillows that looked as though one could get lost in them. There was a mini-fridge perched upon the baroque dresser, and a big-screen TV hung on the wall adjacent to the bed. If they gave rooms like this to people they ordered a guard to watch overnight, I could only imagine how they treated their actual guests.

"*This*...is my room."

Oh. Of course. I hid my disappointment with a carefully composed blank expression, as Santana didn't bother to hide her smirk as she crossed the room to her dresser and pulled out a few articles of clothing. She tossed them at me as she passed by me again, back into the hallway. She closed the door behind her. "Here. Don't be weird, just take them," she ordered when I started to argue.

I arched a brow when I realized they were rather scanty lingerie. Santana shrugged when I met her gaze. I felt my neck and ears grow uncomfortably hot, as I understood this must be all she wore or, if these were the most decent clothes she could give me, she probably wore much less than this. I coughed, bewildered at the fact that I was blushing. If I didn't know any better, I would say the idea made me flustered. Which made zero sense, considering this was just some random girl who, several hours ago, had been someone I thought had kidnapped me.

As though traveling along the same wavelength, Santana asked, "By the way...if you don't mind me asking. If you didn't know about any of this...why the hell did you run?"

The bar. Kurt, and Blaine. Right. Looking at it now, I could see how it looked as though I were onto them, and running...especially when I used my father to threaten Blaine, and then later Santana as well.

"I thought Blaine was a reporter and had heard my father was going to run for governor," I confessed. "I thought he was trying to make stories up about me, or use me as a hostage to get a ransom sum out of us. People have tried that before."

Santana looked torn between disapproval and reasonable entertainment. "I suppose that makes sense," she conceded, after a pregnant pause. "For the record, they're both fine." At the blank expression she was met with, she added, "Kurt and Blaine. They're fine. Still unconscious, but our doctor said they'll heal up fine and be back to normal activity in a couple of days."

"Oh yeah...what exactly happened in that bar, anyway?" I asked nervously. I wasn't sure how I was supposed to feel about Kurt. At this point, I didn't know whether he was friend or foe.

"Blaine is a Revenant member. That's how we found you."

My eyebrows rose. "Blaine found me?"

"No, actually, I did." Santana gave a small smile, the closest to one I'd seen her give, with only the corners of her lips barely curved up. "When Blaine started seeing Kurt seriously, he brought Kurt into the loop. Kurt was hanging out here at headquarters waiting for Blaine to get back from basic training. He was scrolling through Facebook, and I saw a picture of you."

My brow furrowed; if there was a point here, I was missing it. "How would that—"

"We've actually met before," she interrupted, and her lips tugged into a wider smile, almost abashed as she held my baffled gaze. "If you had looked on through that green binder, you would have seen a picture of me and you. When we were babies. Our parents used to be friends," she supplied at my lingering confusion.

This was just too surreal. Here I was, standing with a woman who I had apparently known when I was a baby, who was now my captor and prison guard. What the hell was my twisted-up life coming to?

"I recognized the picture, found out information about you through Kurt. I already pretty much knew when he told me about the Changs', but when I found pictures of your parents and showed them to Shuester, he officially knew. We got the go-ahead from Sue, and set up Blaine for his first mission. He's good, but he's new and inexperienced. That bomb that went off in the bar wasn't supposed to except for emergencies. My guess is that when you threatened him with your father, he panicked and hit the button."

No wonder Kurt had been acting so weird; Blaine was a trained professional, but Kurt wasn't. He must have been a terrified mess.

Another thought occurred to me then, and I nervously fiddled with a stray thread poking out of the hem of my dress before hesitantly asking, "If my father really did...you know...why, do you think?"

Santana considered my question for a long moment, her dark eyes seeming to burn through me. I wasn't sure what it was about her, but something about that penetrating stare sent shivers down my spine, and it was pretty damn hard to convince myself that they were unpleasant ones. "Honestly?" she finally said after a time. "Probably to use you as a hostage. Maybe murder you to exact revenge, and to get a payout at the same time."

Ouch. The severity of the theory hit me like a load of bricks. I was disconcerted with her honesty. Most people would probably have at least tried to sugarcoat it, but I suppose it really wasn't surprising that Santana's personality was as intense and unapologetic as her gaze.

I nodded; there was no need to say anymore. Santana started walking again, and we crossed the few feet away from her door to stop before another. It wasn't quite as lavish as her room, and the colors were only a dull gray rather than red and bold as hers had been, but it certainly wasn't anything to complain about. It was more than I would have expected. "Thanks," I muttered before stepping inside. As I turned to close the door, I found myself stopped by a tanned hand with long, slender fingers splayed out in the center of the door. I didn't understand why my heart kicked a little faster when I turned to meet Santana's dark gaze again.

"One last thing," she said, and I waited for the other shoe to drop. Santana tilted her head, a thoughtful frown gracing her undeniably breathtaking features. "What do you prefer to be called?"

I returned the frown, though I was sure it wasn't nearly as attractive on my tear-stained, in-severe-need-of-a-bath face. "What?"

"Your name," she explained politely. "Lucy? Emily?"

My name. The thought brought a sick new twist of revulsion to the pit of my stomach. There was my old name, Lucy Fabray. And my new name, Emily Stark. Neither one fit me. Lucy was the name given to me by my psycho-terrorist family, who had kidnapped me from my real family.

At the same time, Emily was the name I was meant to have, but never had the chance to, and what was done was done. Both names were no longer suitable.

"Or a new one?" proposed Santana, again seeming to read my thoughts. "What about your middle name?" At my confused, slightly forlorn expression, she cringed, scrunching her face up adorably. "Shit. Right. You don't know. It's Quinn."

"So...Emily Quinn Stark, or Lucy Anna Fabray," I mused aloud.

Emily Quinn Stark. Lucy Anna Fabray. It was a mess.

But if I couldn't have neither of them...maybe I could have both. I couldn't be one or the other. After today, I couldn't return to my life and be Lucy again, nor could I reclaim my past self and be Emily once more. But I could put them together...

"I like Anna," suggested Santana, cocking an eyebrow. "Anna's hot."

I blinked twice in shock before a heat flooded through my body, as I seemed to melt beneath Santana's penetrating gaze, like she knew exactly how attractive she was and the effect it had on people. That was a really gay comment. Was she gay? Jesus, I was straight, but the way she was making my body temperature fluctuate, you would think...

"Quinn," I said firmly, ignoring the way Santana's lips quirked in a smirk. "I'll go with Quinn."

Santana's other brow winged up now. "Last name?"

"Fabray. That way it's..."

"Both of them," finished Santana for me. "Okay then. Quinn Fabray." She reached out, fully grinning now as she took my hand and shook it. "Nice to officially meet you."

My witty response faltered in my throat as I floundered under the shock of seeing Santana smile for the first time. Her full lips were spread wide, her white teeth sparkling. She was actually stunning, so beautiful it wasn't fair, and not because I was jealous, but because how fucked up was it that now, with her, here of all places, while Mike was somewhere in a cell and I had a new identity with two old ones chasing me down with a vengeance, as I gazed back into the intense dark eyes of my apparently very old friend, I finally felt what I'd been looking to feel my entire life:

Fucking butterflies, spreading fire with each flutter of their wingtips.

The one time she finally said yes (and the times she said no), by emilystark21barelylegal (breakingatthecracks)

Don't be so scared of the things you love.

- The Waves That Rolled You Under (Young Summer)

(No.)

It was during the first cheer camp when Santana first feels *it*.

Quinn Fabray—talk of the town, transferee from some other part of Ohio, pretty face, wealthy family—is everything Santana could possibly hate and best of all, she's joining the Cheerios. A freshman transferee from another town is threatening Santana's run for the coveted top spot.

She's bringing this girl down, she decides.

She made an elaborate mental list of reasons why she should hate this girl she hasn't even met yet. Alongside that list is another mental list of plans for taking her down.

She's already jumpy in excitement by the time the day rolls around.

But soon as the girl hops off their expensive family car, Santana feels her breath hitch. It's like some cliché just happened to her because Quinn Fabray is a movie transpiring right before her eyes. It's like everything slowed down, the breeze just decided to gently blow Quinn's hair in a way that highlights her perfect face.

Santana hates it—the way she feels her heart flutter at each step the girl took closer to her.

She thinks it's a *crush*.

But it quickly goes away when she walks to the girl to introduce herself.

"Hey, new girl. I'm Santana," Santana greets her, an air of pseudo-confidence masking her anxiousness.

The girl just smiles and raises an eyebrow. The girl just walks past her, ignoring her first attempt in fake-friending her.

Up until this day, Santana still says that introducing herself was part of the plan.

It wasn't.

Falling in love with Quinn Fabray on the first day of cheer camp—it was never part of Santana's plan.

(No.)

Sophomore year, shit gets real—things happen all at once and whatever friendship she had built with Quinn over the past year disappeared when the pregnancy got messy.

That's when she and Brittany become close.

Brittany is... *not Quinn* and oddly, Santana finds comfort in that.

It's easy with Brittany because she lets her be. Santana can stare at her without feeling guilty. She can talk to her without pretending to be a concerned co-captain.

Best of all, Santana can stand next to her without feeling like flying.

Brittany grounds her in places where Quinn Fabray just sends her floating. Brittany grounds her and when you're in high school, that's all you need.

Because knowing what love is when you don't know what isn't is a scary thought.

This is Quinn, leave a message.

"Finn and Puck are assholes. Whatever you decide to do with the baby, I won't judge. You're better than this and you're gonna come back from this. Call me for anything. I love you, Q"

Quinn doesn't call her.

In fact, Quinn strays further away, like she's detached from reality.

Up until this day, Santana still feels how much she meant the last sentence of her voicemail.

—

(No.)

Maybe, they are that kind of people; that kind of friendship—the one where they just always gravitate back to one another because that's how the world is supposed to be.

Quinn and Santana—despite competition and pregnancy—will always have each other's back. They will always be there for each other because they know no other way.

"Is it true?" Quinn asks her.

They've been friends for years and although that friendship has been nothing but dysfunctional, Santana doesn't need to ask to know that Quinn is talking about Finn outing her.

Santana locked herself in the bathroom and Quinn is standing outside the door.

"Yes."

The silence that follows almost makes Santana believe that Quinn has walked out of her bedroom and out of her life because all this time, her best friend has been a closeted lesbian. Think about all those times they've undressed in front of one another.

But then she hears some shuffling on the other side.

"I'm staying here until you come out."

Santana actually laughs after what feels like forever, "Too late, Quinn. Already did."

She hears Quinn laugh, too, "Of the bathroom, Santana."

When the laughs die down, Santana asks, "Why are you still here, Quinn? Shouldn't you be, I don't know, sacrificing a soul for forgiveness of your sins because your bestfriend happens to be a dyke?"

"I've sinned worse."

"How?"

"Sometimes, I wish I was someone else."

"Who?"

"Someone easier to love."

"Quinn, you're—"

"Someone who knows how to accept love."

It silences Santana because it clicks in her head.

Quinn's problem has never been not knowing how to love. It's never been about not feeling enough. Quinn Fabray grew up in a condescending household, had dinner in an empty table, and she has parents that paid more attention to their cliques than their own their daughter.

That's why Quinn doesn't know what love is like, how it looks or how it feels.

That's why she didn't—and still doesn't—recognize it from the way Santana has given it to her all these years.

To Quinn, love is like that new toy you get when you're a kid. You don't know what to do with it so you keep throwing it away, you keep slamming it against a wall to see if it works. When the toy starts chasing her around, when the toy starts having a life on its own, Quinn runs.

Quinn runs because it's not something she's familiar with. It's not something she's used to.

Love? It's not something Quinn knows how to accept.

"Would you change anything if you had the chance?" Santana asks, not really knowing why or what answer she wants to hear.

"A lot."

"Like?"

"I would have called you back.... *last year.*"

Santana's tear-stricken eyes widen.

"Quinn—"

"Don't."

Santana doesn't pry.

She doesn't pry because she felt it, too—*that fear*.

When you're in high school and you think you know what love looks like on a person who doesn't know what love is, it's scary. Because you know they'd keep on running.

Santana knows Quinn will keep on running.

Because *running* is the only thing she knows.

(No.)

"You almost died on me," Santana tells Quinn when she finally wakes up four days later.

Quinn just smiles a small smile and then winces at the pain it caused.

Tears fall down Santana's eyes because no words can ever explain how scared she was when she realized she could've lost Quinn.

She could've lost Quinn forever.

And Santana has imagined lifetimes and futures, and an alternate universe where people had special abilities. Santana has imagined her second life.

Santana has imagined heaven and hell.

But she has never imagined a life or a world without Quinn.

Where Santana is, there's Quinn.

Quinn's accident is the most scared Santana has felt all her life.

When Quinn drifts back to sleep minutes later, Santana hugs her carefully and whispers, "I love you."

She does.

Because she really doesn't know how not to.

(No.)

When Santana wakes up the morning after Valentine's, Quinn is gone.

So are her things.

Santana had to pinch herself just to really wake up. Santana had to blink a dozen times to know she's not dreaming.

On the desk sits a note next to a cup coffee that has gone cold. It's Santana's proof that last night was real, that it wasn't a pigment of her imagination.

I'll call you.

- Q

And Santana's not a bit surprised that Quinn never did.

(No.)

The New Directions disband and it makes Santana really mad because they worked hard for this and the newbies—and Blaine—couldn't even win a title to keep this club alive.

It's somehow important to her but shit happens and Santana can only shake her head on the fact that Sue Sylvester finally won.

Finn's dead and Rachel is trying her hard to survive Funny Girl. And then there's Brittany. There's also Quinn and Puck.

It's that last one that really makes her furious.

"Are you serious about getting back together with Puck?" Santana asks.

Quinn only nods.

"Why?"

"I love him."

Santana chuckles bitterly, "You must really do because you know it's stupid and you're still doing it."

"What is it to you, Santana?"

"It's everything to me because I waited," says Santana, the closest thing she's ever had to a confession.

It stops Quinn for a moment but Quinn Fabray, like always, never falters, "You waited? Really? Because you were on Brittany's arms soon as we got here."

"And you brought a guy who couldn't even take his eyes off his phone. I came here to ask you out, watch a movie."

There's a hint of surprise in Quinn's eyes but it quickly goes away. It breaks Santana's heart but she stands her ground.

So does Quinn, "I'm getting back with Puck because it's easier."

Santana thinks it should be easier with her.

"You're a coward, Quinn."

Quinn stares at her, hard; like she's trying to tell her something. But Santana is done waiting, she's done anticipating Quinn's next move.

Quinn stopped talking to her after Valentine's but Santana stuck around because that's who she is. Santana stuck around because even if it's painful not hearing anything after what could be the most amazing night she's had with Quinn, walking away was harder. She tried, so many times.

But the universe always sends her back to the path that always led to Quinn.

She's tried.

She really is.

But she knows it's equally tiring for Quinn.

Quinn runs, she chases.

Maybe, this is gonna end.

But it's not gonna end right now.

Quinn walks out of the room, leaving Santana to her thoughts.

It's always going to be like this, she knows.

But Quinn is a coward and Santana is stubborn.

Maybe, Quinn isn't just the only one doing the running.

It's in that moment that Santana realizes she's been stalling, too.

—

(Yes.)

She doesn't get back together with Brittany. Quinn breaks up with Puck. It feels like the universe is trying to tell her something.

She gets a call the morning after Rachel's opening night.

"Hey," Quinn says on the other line.

"Fabray," Santana greets calmly, rubbing her eyes.

"Come to the kitchen for breakfast."

Santana shoots up from her bed faster than she can ever admit. She *almost* runs to the kitchen and sees a table nicely setup complete with her favorite breakfast meal. But Quinn is nowhere to be found.

"Where are you?" Santana asks, her voice shaking in anticipation.

"On my way back," Quinn says before hanging up.

Santana feels a little bit nervous because *on my way* has a different effect to her—and to Rachel, especially when it comes from Quinn.

A few beats later, Quinn walks inside the loft, a cup of coffee in one hand. Santana looks up at her from staring at her breakfast for far too long.

Quinn fishes her phone from her pocket and calls someone.

Santana's phone rings.

Quinn is calling her.

She takes the call.

"Q?" she answers the call and looks at Quinn from across the room.

Quinn smiles and meets her gaze, tears welling in her eyes, "I owe you two calls. This is the second one."

Then, it dawns on her.

"Right."

"I also owe you breakfast."

"What is this?" Santana asks, now feeling her knees weaken at the possibility.

"That movie?"

"What?"

"That movie from months ago, is that still up for grabs?"

Santana thinks for a moment and it all suddenly comes back to her. Her heart starts beating incredibly fast.

"What are you saying?"

"I'm saying yes, S."

She couldn't help it so she smiles in that uncharacteristic way. It's surreal.

"To the movie?"

"To everything."

Silence embraces them once more.

And maybe, this is it.

Maybe, the reason why Quinn and Santana never happened before is because they're supposed to happen today.

And Santana's perfectly fine with that.

"I'm glad you waited, Santana."

Santana just smiles contentedly and says, "Me too."

The One Where They Meet, by empresskris

Santana gives the doorman a small nod as she walks into the bar. She glances around the dimly lit room briefly, noting how it's a moderate sized crowd for a Tuesday night. The sounds of quiet conversation and soft music fills the air as she makes her way to the back corner. It isn't an overly fancy place but it's far from being a dive. Plus, it's far enough away from the university to keep the college kids at bay, giving the place more a more mature feel.

This place has class and a certain charm that Santana takes great pleasure in. Which is the reason why she insists on meeting Puck here when she returns home.

She slides off her jacket as she approaches their usual table. Puck is already there as he nurses a beer, his Mohawk freshly trimmed and his muscle tee tighter than she remembered. With a roll of her eyes, she drops her leather jacket on the table and pulls up one of the empty chairs, falling into it with a heavy sigh.

She runs her hand through her slightly disheveled hair and yawns. She's exhausted after her redeye flight, but regardless, she is in desperate need for a drink. After getting home, she threw on a red, low cut, fitted shirt and tight, dark jeans with knee high black boots, left her suitcase by the door and headed to the bar.

Puck runs his eyes over her body with a smirk. "Rough trip?"

She reaches for his untouched glass of water and plucks out the straw, dropping it on the table. "Not too bad," she mumbles taking a long sip. Not that she would admit otherwise.

"Any trouble?" He wonders checking his phone.

"Nah. Just the usual," Santana leans back in her chair and stretches her arms over her head. "Took a nice hit to the head though. That's always fun," she sighs. She really is exhausted. "How are things here?"

Puck snorts and shakes his head. "Schue is starting to lose his mind. He's getting reckless with assignments. Power hungry or some shit."

"Yeah, saw that one coming a year ago in Dubai," Santana says stretching out her arms.

"Oh, yeah, Dubai," Puck muses sticking his phone in his pocket with a smirk. "Now that's a business trip I'll never forget," he grins. "Kitty was so hor -"

"I remember," Santana interjects with a groan. "I was there, remember? I don't need a recap."

"How long are you back?" He asks bringing his beer bottle to his lips.

"A few weeks. Then I head to Venezuela." Santana shakes her head. I need a vacation. I'm getting too old for this shit." She places the water back down in front of him.

Puck leans back in his chair with a smug expression. "You know, you would've been back a week ago if I had come along. Just shows how much you need me."

"In your dreams, Puckerman," she says absently as her eyes rake over the people filling the space.

"No, I dream about other stuff," he counters dreamily. "Like you and me on the beach at sunset and you jogging topless to me with open and willing arms," he smiles to himself as he stares across the room at nothing, lost in his daydream. "And open and willing other parts of your body..." he adds as an afterthought.

"Mmm," she hums; her eyes finding pause at the bar.

Puck turns towards Santana and narrows his eyes as he watches her staring into the distance. "'Mmm'? Are you serious? What are you looking at?" He follows her gaze until it lands on a nervous looking blonde, sitting alone at the bar picking at her dress. He rolls his eyes. "Figures. You're not back five minutes before you go looking for some hot piece of ass to keep you company for the night. I should've known you couldn't keep it in your pants for long."

Santana ignores his taunting and stands abruptly from the table, her eyes still fixed on the fidgety blonde. "Hey! Are you seriously going over there?" Santana walks away from the table towards the bar, Puck calling after her, irritated. "We were supposed to debrief!"

Santana stops at the other side of the bar, motioning the bartender over and ordering a drink. When he returns she inquires about the blonde at the other side of the bar.

The bartender smiles and goes to add another drink to Santana's order. While he's gone, Santana leisurely rakes her eyes over the girl. She smirks as the girl downs the last of her wine and looks down to check her phone. She lifts her eyes to look around the bar nervously for a brief moment before looking back down at her phone.

The bartender brings the second drink to Santana with a smile. Santana nods her head in thanks and makes her way in the girl's direction, both drinks in hand.

She places the glass of Cabernet in front of the blonde and leans casually against the bar. "It looked like you could use another one. Blind date?" she asks as the blonde looks up at her confused.

"That obvious?" The girl asks blushing. Santana gives her a sympathetic look. The blonde examines her closely, a curious look on her face. "You wouldn't happen to be...?"

"No, no. Unfortunately I'm just here for a few drinks," Santana says regretfully.

The blonde's shoulders slump and she takes the wine off of the bar. Looking down at it, she swirls the deep red liquid around in the glass. "This always happens. I'm early, they're late or they don't show."

Santana arches an eyebrow. "You've been stood up before?" She finds this entirely difficult to believe. She's never seen someone as beautiful as the nervous blonde beside her. Everything about her screams elegant; her long curled hair falling past her shoulders, her curious honey colored eyes, and shy smile...

"Once or twice," the girl admits taking a very long sip of the wine. It's only after she swallows that a thought dawns on her. "This is my favorite. How did you know what I liked?"

"Well," Santana starts, "it's all about reading people. You're wearing a designer dress so that says you have good taste and you have money," she trails her eyes down Quinn's body slowly and appreciatively. "Your shoes scream classy, and your body language appears nervous, but you're confident enough to meet someone here alone," Santana brings her own glass to her lips. "Am I close?"

Quinn eyes her suspiciously. "Maybe," she drawls slowly, not entirely buying Santana's story.

"I asked the bartender," Santana finally confesses with a smile.

Quinn laughs and shakes her head. "Well thank you for the drink," she smiles.

Santana nods, her eyes never leaving the girl, making the blonde blush. "I just don't see how it's possible. You getting stood up. Did you not post a picture on your online profile? Because..." she runs her eyes over Quinn and lets out a low whistle.

The blonde quickly shakes her head, her eyes wide. "Oh no! I don't date through dating sites," she says after taking another sip of wine. "Although, with my track record it'd probably go a lot better." Santana arches an eyebrow. "I let my friends set me up," she explains.

"Ouch," Santana winces. She'd done that once or twice. It never worked out and was awkward for everyone involved.

"Yeah," the girl leans further towards the bar.

Santana can't help but let her eyes wander down the girl's sleeveless V-neck black dress to the tops of her cleavage. Her eyes travel down to her crossed legs, the dress stopping mid-thigh, down to her stylish black pumps upon her feet. The woman is absolutely gorgeous. "Well you look amazing. Whoever it is that managed to get a blind date with you is extremely lucky."

The blush Santana seemed to be good at causing was back and the blonde looks up at her with a small smile. "Thank you," she says tucking her hair behind her ear. She turns her body to face Santana and places the wine glass back on the bar. "So did you come here alone or - "

"Quinn?" The hesitant voice stops the blonde short with whatever it was she was going to ask and both girls turn towards the interruption. "Are you Quinn?"

The intruder is short, with red hair and freckles splattered across her nose. Her hair is wavy and shoulder length, her bright blue eyes switching back and forth between Quinn and Santana curiously. Santana sighs. Quinn's date is attractive.

"Yes," Quinn confirms, her eyes glancing to Santana once more.

"I'm so sorry I'm late," the girl breathes in relief. "I had so much to finish up at work and then I got stuck in traffic when I was going home to get ready." Quinn's eyes glance back to Santana, who looks away unimpressed as she brings her glass up to her lips and takes a long sip. "Anyway, I'm Lacy," the girl says extending her hand with a smile.

Quinn smiles and takes the offered hand in her own to squeeze it politely. "Well it's nice to officially meet you, Lacy. I've heard many good things."

"Can I buy you a drink?" Lacy offers settling down on the other side of Quinn at the bar.

Quinn glances again at Santana who couldn't resist looking back at Quinn from the corner of her eyes. "I already have one, thank you. But please, let me get you one," she turns fully towards Santana with a charming smile. "Would you like to take a guess at what she drinks?"

Santana's gaze lingers on Quinn's eyes for a moment before slowly tearing them away and examining the redhead. "Carlo Rossi," she says casually.

Lacy's face lights up. "I love Carlo Rossi," she says excitedly. "Do they have that?"

Quinn bows her head to look at her lap, concealing her amused smile.

Santana grins, lifting her glass as if to toast them. "Well, Quinn, I'll leave you lovely ladies to your date," she says with a slight nod of her head. Her eyes remain on Quinn before pushing off of the bar and leaving the two alone.

Lacy watches her leave perplexed. "Who was that?"

Quinn stares at Santana's retreating form in a daze, not entirely sure what just happened. "I have no idea."

—

"Struck out, huh?" Puck teases with a smirk as Santana slides back into her seat.

She places her Old Fashioned on the table and raises her eyebrows. Tracing the rim of the glass with her finger, she glances over at the bar to catch Quinn's eyes over her date's shoulder. Santana smiles, Quinn returning the gesture quickly before turning back to Lacy. "We'll see," Santana smirks. "The night is young."

Puck leans back in his chair and laces his fingers behind his head, looking over at Quinn. "Home wrecker," he laughs.

Santana rolls her eyes. "You're one to talk," she says pointedly. "Anyway, it's their first date, not their honeymoon."

"Right," Puck says with a chuckle. He surveys the bar from his vantage point in the corner. "Well then I suppose I have free reign over all the rest of the hot and available women in this bar."

"With my blessing," Santana says encouragingly.

Puck's eyes land on a group of girls laughing near the door. "A bunch of *single* ladies. At least one of us has integrity," he teases.

Santana shoots him an amused look. "Oh yes, you set the moral standard for picking up girls in bars."

Puck stands and grabs his beer from the table, puffing out his chest.

Santana sighs and looks over at Quinn again. Her body language gives away her disinterest in whatever Lacy had just said. Quinn's eyes meet Santana's again briefly, both of them smiling.

Quinn leans casually against the bar, her body turned slightly toward Lacy and her head propped up on her hand. She tries, desperately, to pay attention to the story her date is telling her, but continually finds herself incapable of focusing on anything but the big, brown eyes that catch hers every time she looks over Lacy's shoulder. Really, they're making it nearly impossible not to keep looking.

After a moment, Quinn realizes quite embarrassingly that Lacy has stopped talking and is looking at her expectantly. "I'm sorry, what did you say?" Quinn asks with a blush.

"I was just asking what kind of photography you do," Lacy repeats.

"Oh...," Quinn stammers, hoping it wasn't *that* obvious she hadn't been listening. "I'll photograph anything really. I freelance around. But right now I've been working with ."

Lacy looks at her blankly. "I'm sorry, I just don't know what that is exactly."

"Um...," Quinn starts. Her eyes seem to wander back over to the dark corner of the bar, where Santana sits with her friend and two giggling girls. Quinn frowns as she tries to think of a way to explain. "Basically, the site consists of documentary photography from around the world, exploring the human condition."

"Oh," Lacy says but it's apparent she still doesn't quite understand. Quinn's short answers and distracted demeanor were not lost on her date, however. She turns her attention to her wine glass, spinning the stem between her thumb and forefinger while waiting for Quinn to look back in her direction.

After a moment, the lull pulls Quinn back to her date. "I'm sorry," she says finally. She looks at the redhead apologetically, realizing she hasn't been very good company. Inwardly, she chastises herself for not making more of an effort, even if only to be polite. "What do you like to do for fun?" she asks quickly, trying to get the conversation back on track.

Lacy looks at Quinn hesitantly. "Well, I recently got my scuba certification," she offers.

"Really?!" Quinn's eyes light up. "I love diving! There's just something so peaceful and calming about it. You are truly one with yourself, you know? You're down there alone with your inner thoughts and all you really hear is the sound of your own breathing. It's quite calming."

Lacy shrugs. "Yeah, but does anyone really look good in those smelly rubber suits?" she says lightly before downing the rest of her wine.

Quinn laughs. "True." Maybe this date could turn around after all.

Lacy looks at her excitedly as another subject pops into her head. "Do you like NASCAR?"

Quinn sighs, her smile fading. It was going to be a long evening.

Quinn watches with a sigh as Lacy exits out of the bar. One more unsuccessful date under her belt. She turns towards the bartender and points to her empty wine glass. "One more please, and can I get my tab?"

"Actually, you can put that last drink on my tab," Santana says casually as she steps up to the bar.

Quinn smiles at the sight of her. "Two drinks in one night? That's mighty generous of you."

"I couldn't resist," Santana answers with a smile.

"I see your friend found a friend," Quinn nods towards Puck in the corner with one of the girls from earlier on his lap.

"Yeeeeeah. Something about the Mohawk. I just don't get it," she sighs and turns back towards Quinn. "So how did the date go?"

Quinn reaches for her drink placed on the counter by the bartender. She smiles at him as he then places a pen on the counter along with her tab. "Not the best date I've ever been on," she admits. "She's not quite over her ex and we have nothing in common," Quinn explains off Santana's curious look. "And I was a little... distracted."

"Well," Santana says with a sigh as she slides onto the barstool beside her. "It wouldn't have worked out between you two anyway."

"No?" Quinn sips from her wine and crosses one leg over the other as she turns towards the other girl.

"No. A cabernet and a Carlo Rossi?" Santana shakes her head. "They just don't mix well."

Quinn chuckles. "Well then what does mix well with a cabernet?" Santana shrugs and casually glances down at her glass. She lifts her eyes back up towards Quinn with a smirk and arches a brow. "What is that? An Old Fashioned?" Quinn asks, amused.

"Yeah, why not?" Santana challenges. "I think they go together perfectly."

Quinn leans forward on her arms resting them flat on the bar. "And what does an Old Fashioned tell about a person?"

"You'll just have to have dinner with me and find out," Santana drawls flirtatiously.

Quinn lowers her gaze. "You're asking me out to dinner and I don't even know your name."

"Santana Lopez," she says, extending her hand. Quinn reaches out with her own. Their eyes remain on one another as they shake hands. Quinn goes to pull her hand away but instead of letting go, Santana holds on, her eyes gleaming. "Now will you have dinner with me?" Quinn's eyes fall to Santana's thumb lightly stroking her knuckles.

Quinn ducks her head, her eyes remaining on their joined hands. She chews on her bottom lip as she thinks about it. Her eyes flick up to meet Santana's and she smiled. "Okay," she agrees softly.

Santana smiles. "Let me see your phone." Amused, Quinn reaches for her phone inside of her purse and hands it to Santana. She watches curiously as the other girl punches in what she assumes is her phone number. When she's finished, she hands the phone back to Quinn. "Call me when you're free."

Quinn takes her phone and looks down at Santana's name now programmed into her contacts. "That's it? 'Call me when you're free'?" She asks looking up at Santana.

"Yeah," Santana shrugs.

Quinn looks at her curiously. "Well, what if you're busy?"

Santana's smile grows and her eyes lock intimately with Quinn's. "I won't be," she assures her.

"You sure are confident, aren't you?" Quinn chuckles. "I mean, don't you work?" she teases.

Santana laughs. "Oh no, I work. Trust me," she says rubbing the bruise still forming on her temple.

"Perhaps you can tell me all about it on our date," Quinn suggests seductively. "How about Saturday night? Is that too soon?"

Santana's smile falls into a lazy smirk and she shakes her head. "No, that doesn't work for me." Quinn's face falls. "It's not soon enough."

Quinn blushes. "Friday?" she offers instead. Santana winces and shakes her head. Quinn throws back her head and laughs. "Then why did you have me pick the day if you keep shooting me down?"

"How about right now," Santana suggests.

Quinn looks taken back. "Right now?"

"Yeah," Santana grins. "We're both here, we both have drinks, we're already conversing and you look absolutely stunning." Santana makes it a point to slowly drag her eyes down Quinn's body. "Why not?"

Quinn can't help but laugh. "You really *are* smooth."

Santana lifts her glass, peering over the top of it. "Only when I'm interested." Santana smirks and brings her drink up to her lips. It really was good to be home.

The line clicks, by fantasticbs

It was supposed to be the three of them, but Brittany said Lord Tubbington was in her father's cigarettes again and she needed to discipline him. Santana rolled her eyes and shook her head, while Quinn claimed she understood and they'd just see her at school on Monday. Santana hit end on the phone and tossed it on the bed.

"So I guess it's just you and me tonight. At least we don't have to watch another Disney movie." Santana flops on her bed.

"Are you sure she passed 8th grade?"

Santana shrugs. "I think she does a lot of extra credit."

"I don't know how there could possibly be enough." Quinn mumbles.

Perusing Santana's DVD collection for a few minutes, Quinn holds up a white box. "*Princess Diaries?*"

"My mom bought me that." Santana replies, but Quinn looks unconvinced. "You act like you didn't see it in the theater, bitch."

"I'm not the one trying to intimidate upperclassmen with some Lima Heights Adjacentschtick. If they only knew you *dreamed* of being a princess!" Quinn laughs.

"Shut up and pick a movie!" Santana throws a pillow from her bed.

Quinn dodges it easily and keeps looking. "Yes, your highness."

Santana lays back and stares at her nails waiting on Quinn to pick one, but finally sits up when it seems like Quinn is taking too long and is frankly, too quiet. What she sees terrifies her. Quinn has gone behind all the DVDs in the front and is looking at Santana's hidden L Word season 1. She could have sworn she pushed it all the way behind the entertainment center, but it had an open back and somehow Quinn had spotted it.

The blonde hears her sit up and looks up like a kid with their hand in the cookie jar. Quinn's mouth hangs open and she doesn't know what to say.

Santana can see it all now - She's easily off the team. Quinn and Brittany are done with her. She'll be the laughing stock of all McKinley and have to hang out with that Berry girl. Her life is over!

"That's not mine." Santana says nervously, but Quinn's not stupid and they both know it's a lie.

She jumps off the bed and snatches it from Quinn's fingers, throwing it in the garbage immediately. Maybe she can salvage this. Maybe Quinn won't tell.

"Santana, you-" Quinn is still shell shocked.

"It's not mine. I don't know how it got in there." It's like Santana can't function.

Quinn's signature gold cross twinkles on her neck. Santana feels tears coming and fights them with all her might.

"It's okay." Quinn finally climbs to her feet and attempts a reassuring step towards Santana who steps back and into her desk, rattling it into the wall.

"No, it's not." Santana looks like a frightened animal, but she's kept the tears at bay. "You can't tell anyone Quinn. Do you hear me? If you tell anyone, I'll...I'll..."

Santana scrambles for an appropriate threat. She's talking to the most beautiful girl at McKinley though. She can't think of anything that could bring her down. She's not even sure she could beat her up. Quinn has a few inches and at least 20 lbs on her.

"You'll go all Lima Heights?" Quinn is attempting unsuccessfully to lighten the mood.

"I'll ruin you!" Santana doesn't need specifics right now, she just needs something to ensure Quinn won't walk out of her house with Santana's secret on her lips.

A tear streaks down Santana's face and she wipes at it angrily, hoping Quinn didn't see. The blonde looks down at her feet for a moment disappointed.

"I thought we were closer than that." Quinn shares.

Santana doesn't even know what she's talking about. She expected Quinn to either look at her fearfully and nod or for her to storm out, ready to end the competition for who ran McKinley.

"What?" Santana can't control her scorn.

Quinn remains disappointed. "You think I would tell people you're ga-"

"I'm not! I'm not gay!" Santana paces away from Quinn and sits on her bed.

"Santana, you're threatening me over some lesbian dvds I found in your room." Quinn has stayed surprisingly level. "Do you like girls?"

"No. I've dated half the football team, Q! I'm not gay!"

"Okay..." Quinn tries again to calm Santana down, moving to sit beside her. "Okay."

Santana wants Quinn to leave so bad, but if she leaves Santana can't make sure she doesn't call someone or tell someone, so she wants her to stay even more.

"Can we just forget about this?" Santana questions, not looking at Quinn.

It's silent as Quinn thinks on it, not really sure it is a reasonable request, but agreeing nonetheless. "We can forget it."

Santana gets up immediately and picks a movie at random and puts it in. Quinn settles into the bed like normal, but when Santana returns to the other side, she sits as far away as possible. Quinn is surprised she doesn't fall off.

Quinn pretends to fall asleep towards the end of the movie because if Santana is wound this tight sitting beside her, she doesn't know how they're going to sleep next to each other.

Her curiosity is answered when she hears Santana grab her pillow and the throw blanket and settle on the floor beside the bed. Quinn frowns but says nothing.

The next morning Quinn wakes up to an empty room, Santana's pillow and blanket are thrown at the bottom of the bed. She walks past the trash can and the dvds are gone. She crouches back down under the tv to see if they were where she had discovered them, but they weren't there either. Quinn thought to herself that even if she had kept them, she'd never hide them there again.

Quinn got back on her feet just in time for Santana to walk back into the room, fully showered and dressed. Quinn could see she still looked tired and she wondered if it was the discomfort of sleeping on the floor or the worry that Quinn would tell.

"Hey." Santana offered breezily, even as she couldn't meet her eyes.

"Hey."

Quinn thought of arguing the silliness of her sleeping on the floor, but decided against it.

"Do you wanna go shopping?" Santana questioned, wanting to do anything to get out of the house and away from what happened the night before.

"Sure, let me get dressed." Quinn regretted announcing it, since Santana nodded and quickly left the room like she couldn't stay. They had always changed in front of each other.

Shopping went fine, although Santana seemed to be muted the entire day and they parted ways with an awkward hug when Quinn's mom came to pick her up. Santana was tempted to make a threat or maybe to beg, but nothing came out of her mouth.

Monday came and went with Santana as anxious and awkward as she had been on Sunday. She didn't insult people in the halls, she was quiet at practice and her eyes followed Quinn wherever she went.

Tuesday was much the same, as was Wednesday and Thursday and Friday. People thought there was something wrong with her, but the only time she seemed ready to fight is when they asked if she was okay. Even Brittany received a glare for saying Santana seemed off.

Quinn tried to act normal, tried to talk to Santana the way they always had, but Santana, ever watchful, didn't want that. She didn't want to be near her at all. Instead, she hovered a few feet away. Thankfully for Quinn, no one was perceptive enough to see their behavior with each other had changed.

It came to a head at Saturday practice when Santana actively tried to get into a different trio for cool down stretches. It was unspoken law that she, Santana and Brittany cooled down together.

Quinn hadn't used the secret to her advantage, hadn't bent Santana to her will once, but she would do it to maintain their friendship.

"Santana, come over here with us." Quinn tried to make it sound like less of a demand by saying it lightly, but Santana heard her correctly. She walked over a little unsure. Brittany smiled brightly.

"I just thought we could switch it up. It doesn't always have to be the three of us." Santana attempted to save some face with the girls she jogged away from, with Quinn herself.

"Actually it does." Quinn was getting tired of this. She had been trying to be patient with Santana, but it seemed like what happened was ruining their friendship.

"Whatever, fine." Santana begrudgingly participated and Quinn realized why when trembling hands pressed into her thigh, pushing Quinn's knee to her chest, Santana hovered above her for the 10 seconds Sue required, looking anywhere but at Quinn. She stood for a second for Quinn to switch legs and again Santana seemed to be super uncomfortable as the stretch was counted out.

Quinn should have seen this coming really – the sleeping on the floor, leaving the room when she changed, the physical distance at all times – Santana was worried Quinn would think she was hitting on her.

After packing up, Santana slammed her locker shut and walked by Quinn on her way out.

"Stay for a second, S." She requested as the last of the girls grabbed their things. Santana put her bag down with obvious irritation, when she was sure they were alone, she turned directly to Quinn.

"What is it?"

"I don't think you like me. Like, *like* me, like me." Quinn wanted to clear the air with that inane sentence.

Santana quickly looked around once more even though she knew they were alone and spoke in a whisper. "Good, because I don't! I thought you said we could forget it."

"I'm trying to, but it's really hard when you won't talk to me or even touch me." Quinn realized that sounded strange and Santana gave her an equally confused look. "You know what I mean."

Santana tries to compose herself. "I don't want you to get the wrong idea."

"Well I'm telling you that I won't, so stop avoiding me." Quinn states, but it's more of a request.

Santana is uneasy with the terms. "Fine."

"Fine." Quinn echoes.

"Good."

Quinn changes the subject. "Are we going to the party tonight?" Parties are a joint decision between the three of them. Brittany will do whatever they're doing.

"I guess. Britt's dad said he'd take us."

Santana takes another sip of her drink, not attempting to hide the boredom from her face as Puck leans against her in the corner talking about what he would do to her if she'd just let him.

She glances over and sees Quinn with that dope, Finn Hudson, talking nervously to her. Quinn smiles at her, but there's something sympathetic about it, like she knows Santana isn't interested in Puck.

Santana can't stand that look, so she leans up and kisses Puck and it only takes him a millisecond to respond, pressing her back into the wall firmly. They make out until Brittany taps Santana on the shoulder and says Quinn's ready to leave.

Santana looks up to see Quinn across the room, her gaze steady.

Puck protests immediately. "No, no, no, no. I'll take you home." He looks to Brittany. "Tell Fabray she's staying."

"No, Puckerman. We always leave together." Santana pats him on the chest and follows Brittany out.

It's a few hours later and the girls have laughed about all the guys hitting on them that didn't have a chance in hell and all the outfits that should have never seen the light of day before Brittany is passed out on her comforter.

Santana clears her throat and grabs her pillow off the bed. She's about to grab a blanket too, when Quinn grabs her wrist.

"What are you doing?"

Santana looks away. "It gets so hot with the three of us and Brittany snores sometimes."

"Santana."

Santana finally meets her eyes and can't hide her frustration. "What, Quinn?"

Quinn decides to ask again. Between the stretching and Puck, she can't help but ask. "Do you have feelings for girls too?"

Santana immediately looks to Brittany who is dead asleep before returning to Quinn.

"You can trust me, Santana. I want you to trust me."

Santana stays quiet, debating on how truthful she can be.

"I don't know."

Quinn realizes this is a breakthrough, not just for their friendship, but for Santana. She knows she shouldn't ask for more.

"Well, sleep on the bed. For me? I'll take the middle so you won't be too hot."

Santana still looks nervous, but nods her assent.

Quinn climbs into the bed, nudging Brittany so she'll scoot over some. Santana puts her pillow back down and gets in beside her. For a moment they're facing each other and Quinn feels this overwhelming urge to hug her, but she knows this is a precarious time, and when Santana rolls over to face away, Quinn simply closes her eyes.

Santana is somewhat wary in the following weeks, but she has largely gotten back to her old self – complete with Puck as her current football-boyfriend. Quinn cringes at the pairing. She had hoped Santana would find someone more like Finn at least.

They're walking through the hall like they own it right now and there's a visible hickey on Santana's neck. Quinn yanks Santana out from under Puck's arm and pulls her to the side.

"Cheerio business." She tells Puck to get him to leave and Santana turns to look at her a little peeved.

Quinn is equally peeved. "I don't know what you see in him. He's crude."

Santana snaps her gum. "He's hot. Which is more than I can say for Hudson."

Quinn decides to ignore the comment. "You're tanning with me today, right?"

Santana laughs. "Is this the '*Cheerio business*' you were referencing?"

"Shut up! Are you coming or not?" Quinn hates to be called out.

"Yes. Jesus, Quinn! You're so bossy!"

They get the 'tanning-for-two' special and climb into beds beside each other with the alien goggles on after slathering on Hawaiian Tropic. Quinn is pleased Santana seems to have gotten over her fear of touch since the incident, but the thought brings the topic back to the forefront of her mind.

Once they've closed the doors she decides now might be a good time to bring it up again. They can't move after all.

"So you and Puck, huh?" Quinn asks to get the ball rolling.

She can almost see Santana's annoyance. "Uhhh, yeah."

"Are you sure he's what you want?"

"Are you going to give me another speech about yolks being even and abstinence, Quinn, because I'm really not in the mood."

Quinn is almost pleased that she's done such a good job that Santana doesn't immediately think she's referencing girls. Then again, perhaps Santana is just playing the conversation in the direction she prefers.

"No, I mean...I mean...are you sure boys are what you want?"

It's quiet for a long time. Quinn thinks the silence may last the remaining 15 minutes they have to tan and perhaps she deserves that, but Santana answers her eventually.

"Why are you asking?"

"I don't know. We're best friends." They haven't ever declared that aloud, but it is what people say about them. It's what Quinn wants. "I just want you to be happy."

Santana is quiet again for a while.

"I am happy." She claims before turning up the radio.

"Ok." Quinn says mostly to herself.

The football team finally wins a game and anyone who suffered through watching them play in their many losses is at Jason Vensted's bonfire, Quinn and Santana included.

Quinn grasps her red cup as the boys ram past her, reenacting the single touchdown they made. Finn beams with pride and she thinks he's more handsome than she's ever seen him.

Puck holds Santana close over by the fire telling his own story with his free arm. Santana laughs and Quinn can hear it over everything, it's so clear. Quinn can't help but think Puck will never be good enough for her best friend. She looks around the party, and realizes that no one would be good enough in her mind.

No one would ever understand it, not even Santana in all her narcissism, but Quinn revered Santana above everyone else. Santana had come to sit by her that first day at cheer boot camp in the hot summer sun when she didn't know anyone. Santana had pushed the captain when she yelled at Quinn for missing a mark in one of their early routines. Santana had told her how amazing she looked in her new clothes and helped her to see that she really wasn't Lucy anymore. She was Quinn now.

She taught her how to be Quinn without even knowing it.

Brittany grabbed her hand suddenly and ran over to get Santana too and they followed their friend away from the noise and the music towards the tree line.

"Oh, hell no, Britts! I am not going in those woods!"

"No, come on. You have to see this!" Brittany is undeterred as per usual, yanking on both of them.

Quinn laughs and decides it could be fun, moving forward with Brittany as Santana is dragged behind.

"You guys are assholes!" Santana laments, though she is moving with them now, if only to escape her own fear of being in the back.

They walk for a few minutes and they're truly in the darkness now.

Quinn even begins to worry. "Where are you taking us, Brittany?"

"We're almost there." Brittany says excitedly. Quinn and Santana are straining to see where their feet are landing so they don't trip. It could explain why they aren't prepared for the sight

before them – a field with long grass is partially illuminated by thousands of fireflies. It's a magical sight really and even Santana can't keep the amazement from her voice.

"Wow! There's so many!"

"Isn't it great!" Brittany jumps a few times and claps to herself.

"How did you even know this was here, Brittany?"

"Jason took me out here a few days ago." They both realize they should have known.

Santana steps out further into the field. "I hope there aren't snakes." Normally, Santana wouldn't step foot anywhere she thought there were animals of any variety lurking, but something about the beauty of it all draws her in.

To Quinn, she looks magical herself in the midst of the slowly blinking lights and she remembers how embarrassed Santana was about The Princess Diaries. She remembers how uninterested she looked before she kissed Puck at that party. It gives her an idea that she thinks could only work right now.

Brittany is prancing around further into the field as Santana holds out her hand for a firefly to land on.

Quinn walks toward her slowly and watches her smile as the firefly takes flight again, lit up. Only then does Santana see how close Quinn has gotten and her smile remains but she is clearly unsure of what Quinn is up to.

Quinn steps forward then, before Santana can protest, and kisses her. Kisses her soundly. They pull apart for a second to catch their breath, looking into each others' eyes and then Santana leans forward again kissing Quinn with everything she has.

It's only a few minutes later when they hear Brittany singing 'A Whole New World' as she dances back towards them and they break apart quickly, finding Brittany completely oblivious as she closes out the song.

"Ya!" She jumps up and races towards them. "Something touched me."

Santana looks down warily as Quinn hugs a frightened Brittany. "This was really cool! Thanks for showing us."

"You're welcome!" Brittany smiles, but looks back down to the ground concerned. "We should get back." She leads the way back through the forest and Quinn and Santana fall in behind her.

Quinn can hear Santana's brain humming beside her, but she doesn't say anything.

They get back to the fire and in moments, each has a boy hanging on them.

Santana catches Quinn's eye from across the fire a few times, her dark eyes searching for something Quinn isn't sure of.

Santana is in bed by the time her phone rings.

"Quinn?"

"Hi." Quinn grips the phone tightly.

"Hey."

"I still can't believe we won." Quinn is breathless even though she's been sitting, staring at Santana's number for 10 minutes.

"Me neither." Santana rubs her thumb and forefinger together nervously.

"About...about the kiss. I wanted to..." Santana waits patiently for Quinn to find her words. "Puck isn't good enough for you."

Santana wasn't expecting Puck's name to be in this conversation at all. His name makes her squint in confusion.

"What?"

"He's an idiot and you're beautiful and charming and a bitch, but mostly the first two." Quinn rambles.

"What does this have to do with you kissing me tonight? With *us* kissing?" She amends.

Quinn's tone is upbeat, falsely chipper. "I wanted you to know. I wanted you to know how you felt."

Santana's voice has taken on an edge. "Know what, Quinn?"

"I wanted you to know if you like girls. Puck is a waste of your time and I thought why not now, why not find out how you really feel. I mean I know you don't like me, but I thought...well, I figured a girl's a girl, right? The moment was so perfect. Like a fairy tale."

The line is silent.

"You wanted to know didn't you? I thought I was helping." Quinn pleads.

Santana finally responds. "You did, Quinn. Thanks."

Quinn is hesitant. "I'm sorry, Santana, if I took it too far. Now you know though, and you can dump Pu-"

Santana interjects sharply. "I'm not dumping Puck."

"But-"

"I didn't feel anything." Santana runs her fingers through her hair. "I'm not gay."

"But, Santana? I kn-"

"Quinn." The blonde finally quiets. "Let it go. I'll see you on Monday."

The line clicks.

Beginnings, by headcannonwip (headcannon)

Quinn's eyes widened as she scanned the email. It was sent to a group to which she hadn't realized she'd been subscribed: New Directions Graduates. The note read like the Christmas letters her mother used to send out every year. Rachel achieved this! Kurt is excelling in that! We're so proud of Santana ... and Mercedes ... even Puck ...

Of course there was no mention of Quinn. But that's okay. She didn't expect there to be.

It's the last bit of the email -the part about an "unofficial" Glee reunion – that causes her to inhale sharply, her hand on her chest as though it might alleviate the pressure already pushing down on her.

Wasn't she supposed to get ten or at the very least five years before she was called back to defend her existence?

There were years of college to complete in which she'd find herself and hone the person she wanted to be. There were people she would meet and perhaps even one she'd want on her arm when she graced the halls of her alma mater, again. Quinn was supposed to have time to prepare – to work on herself and to come back better than anyone - better than even she - ever believed she could be.

Quinn narrowed her eyes and pursed her lips. If she had to go – and she knew she couldn't decline the invitation without enduring a bona fide Rachel Berry inquisition – she was going to do it on her terms.

Armed with a practiced smile and her mother's pearls, Quinn glided through the familiar high school halls with her head held high and her gaze burning a path through the crowd of students. It was as though she never left: the hushed whispering as she passed, the feral gawking of boys who wanted her, and the envious staring of girls who wanted to be her.

Pausing in front of the choir room door, she quirked a brow as she peeked through the small square window. As she expected, Rachel was surrounded by her entourage – which now included Santana – as she sang at the piano with their former teacher.

Santana. The wild card. She was the one person Quinn could always count on to (publicly and loudly) call her out on her bullshit. She was the one person Quinn knew could ruin her expertly laid plan – and, given the opportunity, Quinn knew she would.

A panic swelled in her chest and Quinn took a step back. Her immediate fight or flight response suggested the latter; however, her escape was thwarted by the very character she'd cast in the game of make-believe she'd created to get her through the reunion.

Biff McIntosh wasn't like the boys she'd known in high school. His upbringing fostered in him the finer aspects of being a gentleman. He wasn't rough around the edges; no one needed to smooth him out to find the shiny diamond hidden underneath.

On the surface, Biff was perfect. And perfect was exactly what Quinn was going for.

Did it matter that she had to fight the urge to roll her eyes when he spoke about the plight of the working man, a struggle he'd never know? His future was as set as the amount his parents filtered into his trust fund every month.

Did it matter that the only thing she found exciting about Biff had absolutely nothing to do with the young man and everything to do with Quinn in survival mode?

In his pressed khaki pants and starched button-up, Biff smirked derisively. With a placating chuckle, he said, "Careful now."

"I was just coming to look for you." Quinn smiled sweetly to cover up her lie.

Biff adjusted her necklace, as though it needed his touch in order to be perfect. He glanced down the hallway, all beat-up lockers and scuff-marked linoleum, before tilting his head in the direction of the choir room door.

"So, this is it?" he asked, his tone suggesting a sense of being underwhelmed.

Over the course of the next hour, underwhelmed transformed into completely unimpressed which reared its ugly head in the form of boredom. While her former classmates shimmied and swayed, her boyfriend did exactly what Quinn expected of him: he set himself apart – above - by making himself busy on his phone with things more important than a trivial little singing club.

Biff hadn't gone so far as to carry on conversations while others were performing; but, he made sure the emails in his inbox were answered, awaiting text messages received replies and his Facebook status was updated. It would be much later that Quinn would see his self-congratulatory status proclaiming himself a great boyfriend for putting up with the "poor-man's *High School Musical*" performances.

Perhaps in an effort not to hurt Quinn's feelings, no one mentioned her boyfriend's lack of interest. They allowed him to take up space while shooting concerned glances at their friend. Quinn simply kept her back straight, her chin up and defiantly met every one of their eyes.

Almost.

Quinn knew better than to make eye contact with Santana. It's not that Quinn actually believed the other girl had some sort of psychic ability - a she claim made often. Santana didn't need special powers or maybe it was her special power that she could read Quinn like a book. Not just any book, either - one she'd read so many times she'd memorized it and already knew what was on the next page.

Santana always knew what to expect when it came to Quinn. The other girl only managed to surprise her once.

The pregnancy thing? Totally saw it coming – textbook ultra-conservative Catholic, Daddy's girl.

The rebellious punk thing? Santana could have cued pink-haired, tattooed Quinn's entrance – *recovering* ultra-conservative Catholic, Daddy's girl.

Quinn walking in with Prep Boy of the Year? Santana could have explained but preferred to roll her eyes at the obvious.

But the night in the hotel room? That one blind-sided her.

Santana had done her best to figure it out. She'd shied away from reaching out to Quinn, relegating their communications to quick texts or Snapchats, on the off-chance that the other girl thought she was somehow breaking some unspoken rule. They *had* said that nothing would change – that their actions that night didn't carry any meaning. Santana practically vowed not to show up with a U-Haul.

Having endured an hour of being ignored in the choir room – her existence completely unnoted by the other girl – and learning just as she arrived at Breadstix that she'd been stood up by Puck, her (extremely platonic) date for the evening, Santana was very close to calling the trip home a bust.

Her mood lifted, however, as she turned to leave and caught Quinn peeking at her, her face half-hidden by a menu. Curious about what caught his girlfriend's eye, Biff followed her eye-line to find one of Quinn's choir-mates standing alone in the lobby. The polite thing, of course, was to wave her over and invite her to join them.

Santana's eyes stayed on Quinn as she sauntered to the table. She allowed her glance to stray to Biff once as a simple acknowledgement of his presence. With her gaze trained on Quinn's, she said, "Fancy meeting you here."

"You're not here alone, are you?" Biff asked. Subtly looking the girl up and down, he couldn't imagine she'd have a problem finding someone to join her for an evening out.

Santana shrugged. "A certain Air Force officer was ordered home by his superior officer. Mom's house, Mom's rules."

"Air Force ... That's your friend Buck, right?"

"Puck." Quinn corrected gently and turned her eyes back to her menu.

"Puck," Biff repeated. "With a *p*. Interesting." Scooting closer to his girlfriend, he put his hand out, gesturing at the empty space in their booth. "Would you like to join us?"

"Love to." Santana said just as Quinn said, "She can't."

"Totally can. Evening's all freed up," Santana said, her lips curving upward as she slid into the booth next to Biff. With narrowed eyes and a knowing smile, she said, "Santana Lopez. That's with an *l* - like lesbian."

Biff congenially returned the smile. "Quinn's told me so much about you."

By the look on the other girl's face, that was an outright lie.

"Really? I'm flattered, Q." Turning her attention to Biff, Santana casually said, "She hasn't mentioned you at all." At the warning glare she received from Quinn, she added, "It's true."

"But isn't that just like our Quinn?" Biff asked leaning forward as though sharing some inside joke with Santana. "She likes her privacy, doesn't she? She's almost, I don't know, secretive. I've known her for two months and still don't know her middle name."

Santana smirked, propped her elbow on the table and cradled her chin in her hand. "I bet you a hundred bucks – cash - that you do."

Quinn cleared her throat primly. Santana schilling out details of her life in exchange for her boyfriend's pocket change was not on the schedule for the evening.

"Honey," she said, her voice dripping with sweetness. "Do you know what you'd like to order?"

"I'm considering the veal parmigiana." Santana wrinkled her nose at the way he overpronounced the last word. "It's hard to tell how good the food's going to be at a place like this. I don't think I've ever been to an Italian restaurant that so quaintly spells their name with an *x* – could be dicey. You want a salad?"

Santana tilted her head and waited for Quinn to object. Salad was sophomore year - pre-baby. Since then, Quinn allowed herself the tiny luxury of an actual entrée. Santana rarely saw her friend make concessions – it was always *I can't do this* or *I shouldn't do that*.

"Actually, I think Quinn prefers the chicken alfredo. Isn't that right, Q?" Santana asked when it was clear her friend was determined to continue to play the role of the dutiful girlfriend.

"You seem to know a lot about my Quinn here," Biff noted. He lowered his menu to the table and made a show of putting is arm around his girlfriend.

"Oh, *your* Quinn and I go way back." Barely able to contain her smile, Santana shrugged as though it was nothing. "I guess you could say I know her inside and out."

If the way Quinn's eyes widened registered with Santana, she wasn't showing it. She knew better than to play all of her cards so early in the game.

"You know, I came along on this trip to get to know Quinn better." Biff tightened his arm around his girlfriend "It seems like you're just the person I should talk to. The more I'm here, the more I realize how little I know about her life before we met."

Santana grinned at his understatement. She rolled her eyes to the side, pretending to have to think about his request. "Where to start? I could probably give you a whole list of little tid-bits: head cheerleader, national champion for cheer and glee..."

Quinn seemed to relax at Santana's chosen opener and her boyfriend puffed up with pride at the words "national" and "champion."

"You're so humble, sweetheart," he cooed before he explained to Santana, "She never mentioned any of that."

"She didn't?" Santana widened her eyes in faux-surprise. "Well, did she mention the bright pink hair, the menthol cigarettes, that ridiculous Ryan Seacrest tattoo ..."

At this Biff turned to his girlfriend, bewildered. "Tattoo?"

Quinn's jaw set. She inhaled deeply through her nose as she mentally berated herself for allowing the other girl to give her a false sense of security. She *knew* Santana would do something like this - it was just her style.

"Yeah – and setting the piano on fire. Classic Quinn." Raising her brows and meeting Quinn's dangerously narrowed eyes she added, "That was, for me personally, the highlight of purple piano week. Nothing says *glee*like fiery vandalism, right Q?"

In an instant, as quick as the flash in her eyes, Quinn's demeanor shifted. Her back relaxed, she leaned into her boyfriend and she started to giggle. "And she wonders why I've never mentioned you before. She takes her best friend duties very seriously. You *do* know she's just messing with you, right?"

Biff looked to Santana for verification and, even though he didn't receive anything more than a blank stare, he laughed along with Quinn. It was easier to accept that this girl he didn't know was yanking his chain than it was that his girlfriend, a model of virtue and grace, was formerly a rebellious high school vandal.

Once the food arrived, including a salad Santana was sure was unwanted, the meal moved along quickly.

Quinn wasn't about to take any more chances. She'd been able to pull the evening out of the fire once but didn't know if she'd be able to derail all of Santana's sabotage attempts. To keep ahead of the other girl, any time Santana tried to talk, Quinn interrupted her with an embellished story about their high school accomplishments.

"Didn't you like it?" Biff asked, eyeing his girlfriend's nearly full plate.

Quinn had been so busy keeping Santana from speaking that she'd barely eaten her dinner.

Before she could answer, Santana piped up. "Obviously not."

"Actually," Quinn argued, "I had a big lunch. I'm not very hungry right now."

"That's okay," her boyfriend said. "Mine was about as good as I imagined it'd be. Not very."

"I just thought of another thing to add to your list of Quinn-facts, Biffster," Santana drawled. "You wouldn't know it looking at her but Quinn's got quite an appetite."

Quinn's eyes narrowed suspiciously and the tightening in her stomach warned her that her friend was setting her up.

Santana shrugged. "What? We all know that once you taste something you like," she paused and looked her friend dead in the eye, "you're always up for seconds."

Tossing her napkin on the table a little more forcefully than intended, Quinn scooted out of the booth leaving a dumbfounded Biff blinking in confusion.

"Bathroom. Now." Quinn stalked away without waiting for confirmation that her friend would be following.

Santana cleared her throat and had the grace to look a little sheepish. "Pretty sure she means me," she noted as she slid out of the booth.

Reminding herself that this was what she wanted – to get Quinn angry enough to demand a private chat – Santana steeled herself for the fallout. Just because the other girl was on the ropes didn't mean Santana was guaranteed victory. It simply meant that Quinn was too invested in her charade to bear her claws in front of her leading man.

The door hadn't even closed all the way before Quinn started in. "Do you have any idea what you're doing out there?" she asked, her voice strained with the effort to stay below shouting level.

Santana crossed her arms and looked at her friend dubiously. "Do you? Because, from where I stand? You're grasping for straws – admittedly rich but also predictable straws. Haven't we already been here and done this?"

"I know you think you know what I'm doing, but you don't," Quinn said.

Santana's chin lifted even as she tilted her head. Narrowing her eyes in confusion, she double-checked she heard Quinn correctly. "What - you think I don't know you?"

Taking a step closer to her friend, Santana explained, "I know *everything* about you, Q. I know your moods and how easily they can be changed with ice cream and Motown. I know the movies that scare you and the movies you think are too funny to be scary." Looking meaningfully into Quinn's eyes, she added. "I even know you enough to know which freckles make you giggle and which ones make you *squirm*."

Raising her brows, she warned, "Think about it before you question my understanding of any situation concerning you. Even when *you* don't know what you're doing – I do."

Quinn pursed her lips, mirroring the other girl's stance with her arms crossed over her chest. "Enlighten me."

"Enlighten yourself, Quinn." The corners of Santana's lips pulled down as she uncrossed her arms and pointed at her friend. "How many times do we have to sing this song? How many times are you going let some guy tell you who you should be? Until you're able to figure out how to disappear completely?"

"That's not what I'm doing," Quinn argued with a shake of her head.

Santana clicked her tongue. "I know this trick, Q. It's your fallback position and it's tired. Try something new. The least you could have done is find a guy who doesn't act like he's better than everyone else." Turning up her nose, she imitated him, "... quaintly spelled with an *x*."

"He *is* better than everyone else. And he likes *me*," Quinn insisted.

"He actually isn't and he definitely doesn't," Santana argued. "He's a douchebag who looks down his nose at people like you and me –real people who have real lives and real problems. Being with him doesn't change who you are or where you come from."

Quinn clenched her jaw.

"You're better than this, Q. Remember? Fish and bicycles or whatever?"

Letting out a slow breath, Quinn dropped her hands to her sides. "I'm just trying to get through the weekend, Santana. Can you let me do things the easy way just this once?"

Santana's brows pushed together and her nose wrinkled on one side. Just this once? Quinn was always looking to take the easy way. And the easy way always ended up with her learning a hard lesson.

"Do you have any idea what it's like?" Quinn asked. "To think you have all this time and then find out you only have two months? I don't have the experiences you and Rachel and Kurt have been having in the city. I haven't been traveling like Puck or hopping from coast to coast like Mercedes. I don't have anything making me into *someone*."

"You have Yale –"

"I hate Yale!" Quinn spit out sharply. "It's hard and it's tedious – I don't like any of my classes and resent them more and more every time I drag myself out of bed to go to them. Everything about it is hard. The people, the professors, everything – the only classes I don't dread aren't even for my major."

When it was clear Santana wasn't following her, she explained. "All I had going for me when I got that email from Rachel was Biff – an arrogant, small-minded legacy student who seemed to think I was worth his time. Everyone else is going out and making themselves better and all I have to show for myself is *Biff*."

"So you brought him to show everyone that you can get some rich guy to hold your purse for you?" Santana asked. "If you thought this little get-together was about showing off, you're doing it wrong. No one likes Biff. No one." She narrowed her eyes and, tilting her head, and forced the other girl to meet her stare. "Not even you."

"I had to bring *someone*," Quinn argued. "You were going to be here with your new girlfriend and ..." It suddenly dawned on her that she hadn't actually seen Santana with this new person she was supposed to be seeing. "Where *is* your girlfriend?"

"If you mean Dani," Santana said, "she's covering my shift. But she's not my girlfriend anymore. So, the invitation to attend a reunion was not extended."

At Quinn's inquisitive look, she explained, "She had me join a band so that she could get in on it and then helped to kick me out. That kind of thing doesn't fly with me anymore." She shrugged. "We're still friends, I guess. I mean, she's got my back this weekend with Gunther, so ..."

Santana's brows lifted as a sudden thought hit her. "... so you brought someone because you thought I was bringing someone?"

"I'm not jealous that you have – had – a girlfriend." Quinn rolled her eyes. "It's not like that."

"No, I'm sure it's not. I mean, crazy is your thing and gay is my thing," Santana said as though stating a fact. "I'm not saying some of the gay couldn't have rubbed off – I seem to recall some good friction so I can imagine it happening."

"There were a lot of good things about that night," Quinn said, surprising her friend. They hadn't spoken about it since it happened and Santana really had no idea what the other girl thought about it – or if she even did. "But that doesn't mean you should be throwing out references to it whenever you want."

"Secret rendezvous – got it. Wouldn't want to give your little boyfriend out there any idea that you're not Saint Quinn, patron saint of arm candy and shallow relationships."

Santana pushed down the urge to make the conversation about that unexpected night in the hotel room and tried to focus on Biff, again. Partially because she didn't think it'd do anything for Quinn's current state of mind and partially out of fear it would turn into an argument. The memories she had of that night, though she probably wouldn't admit to revisiting them in those quiet times at night, were good – and she wanted to keep them that way.

Quinn let out a frustrated breath. "Or maybe I don't think it's anyone's business, least of all a boy I didn't plan to have sticking around much longer." Meeting Santana's eyes, she said, "Some things I like to keep for myself. And *that* thing I want to keep between us."

"So ..." Santana once again tilted her head, squinting at her friend as she stepped out on a limb. "No regrets or momentary lapses into big ol' gay panic?"

"No. Why?" Quinn asked slowly. "Is that what you thought?"

"Well, it's not like we've talked about it," the other girl rationalized. "And you've been kind of distant – more so than usual. So, I just figured ..."

"... that I was avoiding you because we slept together?" Quinn finished for her. "That's ridiculous. It was my idea ..."

Santana's back stiffened and she pressed her lips together. "Why are you admitting to that?" she asked cautiously.

"Because it's the truth and there's nothing wrong with it." Quinn laughed at her friend's wide eyes. "I think you're putting the panic on the wrong foot."

"It's too late for the gay panic ship to sail for me," the other girl replied coolly. "And, anyway, I had a good two years of that and lived to tell the tale. But since we're talking about it now ..."

Quinn's brow arched.

"Why?" Santana asked. "Why did you pick me? It's not like you couldn't have had Puck or, god, even Mike Chang. I bet there would have been a line if you advertised."

Quinn shrugged. "I didn't want anyone else. I just –" Another shrug. "I didn't want them."

"But you wanted me." Santana said evenly, as though trying to wrap her mind around the idea.

The other girl answered with another wordless shrug.

Quinn hadn't gone to the wedding with a plan. She hadn't arrived with the idea of taking Santana to a hotel room. Somewhere between complaining in the church pews and ordering their first drinks, Quinn had become ultra-aware of her best friend – the way her hair curled over her shoulder, the way her dress hugged her body, the way her perfume lingered when she stepped away to take care of business (namely, notifying their former teacher that his bride had run off). That awareness made her curious and that curiosity made her want to stay close to her best friend.

The closer she stayed, the more she felt a pull. Quinn realized later, when her curiosity had been sated, that her need to be near Santana wasn't.

She wrote it off as homesickness and forced herself to forget about it. It was, after all, what she assumed her best friend had done. It was only a few weeks after that Santana started dating someone – and the way it was relayed to Quinn, it had a chance of becoming something serious.

"Do you want Biff?" Santana asked curiously, her eyes searching Quinn's.

The other girl shook her head. "He's a means to an end. I'm breaking up with him when we get back," she informed Santana. "That was the plan from the very beginning."

The next question got stuck in Santana's throat. It was probably a good thing she couldn't force the words out. It was a ridiculous question – even as it rolled around in her head over and over again, she could recognize how insane the thought behind it was.

Do you want me?

Santana reminded herself about the U-Haul. She'd promised (sort of). No strings, no lesbian clichés. They were two best friends with an intimate – very intimate – bond. The affection they shared firm foundation for a relationship.

Not that Santana wanted that from Quinn.

Unless Quinn wanted that.

Then ... maybe?

Santana shook her head to clear her thoughts. "Send him home tonight," she requested plainly. "Just, tell him it's not working out, let him pay for dinner and then make him leave."

"I can't," Quinn replied sadly. "If he leaves now, there was never any point in bringing him. And who will I be then?"

"Someone free to make her own decisions, eat chicken alfredo and, if you want," Santana continued meaningfully, "spend the rest of the weekend with me."

The other girl pressed her lips together as she thought. "With you," Quinn repeated unsurely.

Santana's shoulders raised and her lips quirked into a half-smile. "I'm not saying we have to get a room, Q – I'm not saying we can't, either – I'm just making you an offer to be with someone who doesn't need you to pretend in order to like you."

After watching Quinn think for a moment, Santana raised her brows to signal her friend to give her an answer.

"Okay - yes," Quinn finally answered and brushed her hands down the sides of her skirt.

Watching her friend take a few steps toward the door, Santana tried to cover her surprise by cheekily asking, "To which part?"

A soft chuckle bounced against the tiles of the bathroom as Quinn looked over her shoulder, her eyes raking down and then up Santana's body. Knowing that she had some unpleasant business to attend to back in the dining room, Quinn tried not to laugh too much at her friend – all wide eyes and opened mouth – when she answered, "Depends on how the first part goes, I guess."

Two truths and a Lie (1), by Holdontohope

"Alright, everyone. Please go around the room and say your first name. For example, I am Eleanor Rigby, yes my parents did name me after a song, and I am your group leader." A young adult red-head introduced herself to a circle of pre-teen girls.

"Quinn Fabray." Quinn spoke softly, starting the circle around. Other names were murmured, ending with...

"Santana Lopez." A dark haired girl said, catching Quinn's eye.

"Great! Welcome to our 8 week anxiety and depression group. All of you have been selected to join this group by your own individual therapists. So, most of you know about confidentiality. However, with a group, remember to not talk about any other group member's information outside this room."

Santana sighed. Why oh why did Sylvia, her therapist think this was going to be a good idea? She hated people, especially whiny girls. Wasn't this just going to be a big gripe session?

"Now I want to say this is a safe place to talk, but I hope we cannot let it become a place to gripe only. I want us to be productive." Eleanor said and Santana nodded in surprised agreement.

"Sylvia, I have a question," Quinn said. When Sylvia nodded, she hesitated and then said, "Do we have to talk if we don't want to?"

"No, I am not going to force anyone to talk. I encourage everyone to listen, and even if you don't feel comfortable talking, I hope you can learn from other's stories, and learn that you are not alone in your struggles."

Quinn smiled, relieved. She was not exactly the most out-going person and didn't like being forced to talk, especially around a room full of strangers.

"Alright, so today, I want to go around the room. We are going to play a little game, called 2 Truths and 1 Lie. When it is your turn, say 2 things that are true about you and 1 that is not. We as the group have to decide which the lie is." Eleanor instructed. "Since we started the other way for names, how about you go first Santana? I'll give you a minute to think."

Santana thought and after a moment rattled off her list. "I've been to Mexico, I've lived in the same house all my life, and I have had sex." The last one made everyone in the room giggle, but Eleanor who rolled her eyes.

"The last one!" Several of the girls said giggling.

"Mexico," said Quinn softly, catching Santana's eye, who rewarded her with a small smile.

"Quinn's right. I have never been to Mexico." Santana admitted. Several of the girl's eyes widened, realizing that it meant Santana had indeed had sex.

"Moving on!" Eleanor said quickly. The game continued around the circle until it made its way back to Quinn.

"I love to dance, Quinn is not my real name and I have 1 sister." Quinn said.

The group murmured, with several saying that she had more than one sibling.

"Your name." Santana said, her voice stopping the rest of the conversation.

"That's right. But I'm not telling you what it is." Quinn said.

"That's ok, I like a little mystery," Santana said with such a beautiful smile that Quinn thought her heart was going to explode. Maybe this group wasn't going to be so bad after all. Little did she know, Santana was thinking the exact same thing.

Parallel Love (1), by ive-gotta-gay-go-go-ive-gotta-go

(FabrayQS)

December 26th, 2018

Quinn's POV

A continuous sound buzzed loudly a few feet away from me. My body feels numb, the vague sound now is growing louder, *stronger* and *irritating*. I curled my toes on warm sheets, yawning and exposing energy through my sluggish body.

I took a long, slow, deep breath. I glared at the alarm clock, as if my eyes were going to silence the object immediately. My eyes adjust at the darkness of the large space. The blue numbers shines brightly, alerting me it was time to move my ass out of bed.

I cannot be more tired. My body was used to the dense routine. Wake up early, go to work, go home and repeat every week. However, last night was Christmas and work is always busy after a holiday.

My bed feels so warm, as if the mattress get more comfortable every time I curl and snuggle into it. I extended my hand, finding the snooze button. My ears adapted at the white noise that floods the room. Any noise was better than that alarming, continuous, horrible sound.

The clock reads five o' four. I decided to drag my body, sluggishly to the bathroom, turning the shower on and walking back again to the dark room. It takes time for the water to heat up. I grab the thin cylindrical plastic stick hanging from the ceiling next to my bed; the curtains slide open, folding neatly next to each other. The gray, dim light enters the loft and my eyes find the mixture of color in the sky. Purple shades dances lightly against red, while soft orange surfs towards the unseen sun. It is beautiful. I can say waking up this early has its advantages.

I yawned; days like today are full of tension and require all of my positivism. I work for the Department of Time Anomalies. They are specialized in Quantum theories, and many scientific terms. My job consists in detecting energy, simple as that. Presently, there has been abnormal energy fluctuating in the breeze. When a nonstandard high energy gathers in a particular range or habitation, stopping its normal course, a time zone portal opens. I am the one who discovers the energy and prevents any merging into the past and present.

My boss transferred me from Boston to New York four months ago. One day I was in my office filing documents and the following day I was working on actual time changes, preventing the accumulation of energy. I love my job, cannot deny that; nonetheless, every eight -hour job, is tiring at one point.

The water must be warm by now. I jumped in the shower and took a long awakening wash. It took me around thirty minutes to get ready and leave the loft.

—

"Agent Fabray?" I blindly raise my head from my desk, responding in my name. My boss stood there with a white lab coat and some folders in his hands. "Merry Christmas." He said, wiggling his eyebrows and placing the folders neatly on the corner of my glass desk.

"Thank you?" I ask acknowledging the joke.

"Come on, you and your sister are the best implementing the job."

"We are, can't deny that."

"Oh, and before I go," He said shaking his head. "Can you please tell your sister to report to me in the afternoon?" I nodded. "Can't find her anywhere."

"No problem, Sir." He arched his brow and pointed to my back. "By the way, nice flowers." He checked his watch and walked away.

"Thank... you." I whispered to the empty office. I soon forgot about the flowers.

A bouquet of flowers was decorating my glass office this morning. The card had no recipient, not a name... nothing but just one word.

Seven

I cannot connect the dots. Who could have sent me these flowers? However, who could have sent me a beautiful bouquet, my favorite flowers. Sure I went out with a co-worker, have to say it was a bad idea; nevertheless, I do not believe I ever brought up anything about flowers in our dinner, not that I recall. I observed the luxuriant flowers inside a striking purple color vase. I set down the rectangle card back on the desk. Inspecting the handwriting, therefore it was still unknown for me. I smiled and thanked whoever got me the flowers and left the office.

On the way to my car, I saw the windows down and feet resting on the dashboard. My sister was sleeping in the passenger seat. I slapped the bumper and she jumps abruptly.

"What the hell are you doing?" She yawned, fixing her clothes and shifting her neck to the sides. "Why are you sleeping at work?"

"Chill, Lucy. Was just taking a nap, couldn't sleep last night." She said yawning again. "Plus, I'm not at work. I'm in a car."

I rolled my eyes entering the car. She smiles, kissing my cheek quickly. "Mr. Jones was looking for you."

"Oh right, forgot about that. I'll visit him later." She grabbed her watch from the dashboard and placed it round her wrist. The watch detects large amount of energy. It ran us through high-energy level and we spread out the rest with our other equipment.

"Now tell me, how did you sleep?" She said beaming at me.

I grabbed my watch and placed it around my wrist. "I'm good, ready for this busy week." I shrugged one shoulder and she nods vaguely biting her bottom lip.

"I feel you, working after Christmas... horrible."

"How's Jen?" I asked her. "Did she wake up with a hangover?" I smiled. Yesterday I spent the day with my sister and her girlfriend. We spend every holiday together, since my parents passing.

"She's good. She must be tired. We didn't sleep at all last night." She jiggled her brows. "If you know what I mean."

I laughed at her antics; it was so comforting to see my sister happy. She and her girlfriend have been together for three years.

"You are so disgusting. I sure didn't want to picture that."

She laughed. "Speaking of disgusting things. Who sent you the flowers?"

I set my stare along her. Maybe she knows something about it. "How do you know?"

"There's two Fabray working in this building. The messenger person brought them to my office. As shortly as I notice the type of flowers they were, I knew the Fabray he was addressing wasn't the correct one."

"I have no idea who would've have sent me flowers."

"Maybe they are for your birthday? It's three days away." She shrugs. "All the signs pointed toward you, Sis." I smiled at her certainly.

"How do you know, *missy*."

"They are white carnations. It's your favorite flower, Luce."

I squint my eyes, thinking of a person who might have sent the flowers, however, no one popped into my mind. "I am sure you are the only one who knows my new strange addiction to white carnations."

"Apparently not the only one. Perhaps you told Sarah?"

"I don't remember experiencing that type of conversation with her, our date was plain, full of nothing important." She rocked her head to the side; I could see her smug grin forming in her lip. "Unless you sent me the flowers."

She snorted derisively. "Why would I send flowers to my sister?"

"Sisters do these things, sometimes."

"I'm not charming enough." She laughed.

"You are impossible, Frannie."

"And I love you too. Luce."

I laughed and threw the folders at her. She opens the thin cover and starts reading when our next mission will be. "Okay, Quinnie. Brooklyn."

We completed seven of the folders already. Our dashboard clocks reads, three thirty –one in the afternoon. We found a minimal amount of energy grouped in different spaces. It was easy to dissipate with the expensive equipment we carry.

Frannie yawns opening the last folder. I was hoping the final one was an easy one and not an immense labor. However, in once we finish with our assigned work for the day, we have to get back to the office and document the events; this includes where the energy aggregated, how high was its intensity and the most significant, a corroboration of the dissipated energy.

"Last folder." I looked at Frannie. "Hope is not in an open area, I mean how we are failing to explain to people that we need to circle the arena with our cars? It's a long process." She laughed reading the paper. She flicked the page and scoff. "You're lucky, Luce."

"Why?"

"You get to go home early." She closes the folder and taps her watch. "The next energy report is in your building complex."

"Really?" I say, taking the folder from her hands, and endorsing that our following job was really in my building. "I guess it is."

We drove to the front of my building, finding no parking. I was used to the small headaches I would baffle, precisely because a parking spot is not available for me in front of the edifice. I tend to park my car right across the street. It took us a few minutes to gather our equipment. Frannie gets the high –energy decompressor out of the back seat. It looks like a small –wheeled bag, just when you open it, blue buttons cover the space sided with bars of electromagnetic impulses. Our watches are ready in our wrists, and we have a small device attached to our waist. A chart device allows us to recognize that the energy we will work on is nonviolent and secure. By harmless and good, I mean that we are not facing any danger in the time zones.

As soon as we open my building complex door, our watches buzz quietly, warning us of the massive energy in the area. Frannie and I expect at our devices simultaneously. "It's coming from upstairs." We reached the fifth floor and the energy was still not strong enough.

After many complaints about why I took the stairs and not the '*working elevator*', Frannie and I reached my floor. Seventh floor. Our watch buzzed again and I started walking into bright hall. We passed two doors on the right, the elevator and my loft door. Nothing.

"Are you sure we don't need to go higher." I double –check my watch and the energy was coming from around here.

"No." Frannie raised her hands, inspecting the watch and pointing to the door next to my loft.

"Is your neighbor's home?" Frannie says placing the bag in front of the loft door and sliding her hand on the door. The watch clicked twice, informing us the energy source comes from behind the wall. I nodded and we knocked.

Afterward a few moments, the doorway slid open, letting out an older woman smiling at us. "Hello, how can I assist you?"

"Hey Mrs. Susan, you know I work for the Department of Time Anomalies, and my sister and I are here to disperse the energy. Do you mind if we-"

"No, no, dear." She cuts me off, motioning me to come inside her loft. "Come in."

"Thank you." I smiled at the strong, sweet smell in the air. She lives here by herself and she bakes as an entertainment. Sometimes when I come home from work, the smell invades my living room.

"Would you ladies like some cookies?" She asks us and Frannie immediately nods.

Frannie set the bag on the floor, opening and pressing the button in the corner while chewing on a cookie. Thither was a little vibration on the base and the machine beeped. I look upwards and saw small silver circles forming next to each other's. The bands started to widen and decrease at the little beeping sound the condenser was making.

The device on my belt, pointed me to the right wall of the loft. Small circles were closing and opening on the wall. I pointed Frannie to the wall contrary to my loft and she nods, pressing a few more buttons, increasing the beeping sound.

Promptly, the silver circles were disappearing from Mrs. Susan living room and our watch stopped buzzing. We make sure the energy was not floating around her loft and we verify any possible groupings. Once the loft was clear, we said our goodbyes and left the loft.

"That was easy." I said, smiling at my sister.

"Yes sis, you can stay here. I can file the documents, don't worry."

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah, plus I have to go back to the office anyway. Remember, I need to meet with our boss."

"Oh, right." She hugged me and waved goodbye. "Oh, and Frann, take the elevator this time, so you can't die on your way downstairs." She stopped in her tracks and glared at me.

"You are so lucky I don't hate you." I laughed while she pressed the elevator button. "I would have changed my partner in a heartbeat."

"Nah, you wouldn't."

"Bye Lucy."

I slid open my loft door. Taking my jacket and scarf off and flopping on the couch. I rubbed my hands on my warm forehead. My lung fills with a comfortable, relaxing aroma of the loft. I

yawned lying back on the warm couch. The palm of my hands met cold cheeks, rubbing my face and massaging my scalp. My boots were thrown somewhere next to the couch. I turned off my watch, detaching the plastic material from my wrist, along with my chart sensor and placed it on the coffee table. I was struggling to hold my eyelids open.

I catch the blanket from the armrest and cover my torso. My breathing change, my body began to lose tension, my muscles felt at rest. I smiled, then I fell asleep.

I heard voices in the distance. The sound was muffled, *unclear, far*. My face is pressed to the sofa, my hand coming down over and bearing upon the floor. I blink, trying to wake up. The voice was slowly getting stronger, her tone increasing. My fingertips scratch the back of my neck and I turned to my right side, that's when the voice was clear and I could clearly understand the words.

"No, I don't believe so." I could hear her say. I was impressed by how clear and loud her voice was. I promptly moved my head, studying the loft. Is there someone in here? "*I will have to see her.*" The voice says again. "*What if I can't sell the loft? I mean, what will happen?*" This was not normal, the loft was empty and her voice was so clear, as if she was speaking on the phone right next to me. "*Yes, furnished.*"

I sat on the couch, looking at the empty right side. Could this be possible? I slowly leaned toward the right side, carefully leaning into the voice.

She whispers. "*I'm scared, you know.*" I quickly jumped from the couch, grabbing my watch from the coffee table and locking it around my wrist. This was no good at all. If she whispered something and I got word it clearly, a time zone portal must have open.

The watch clicked twice and my eyes widen. I went to find my telephone and call Frannie, but I erred with the blanket, falling hard on the wooden floor. "Fuck." I gasped, but I was not expecting what was going to happen next.

"Who's there?" The woman's voice was firm. Did she hear me falling? My heart was racing.

"Oh, shit." I whispered, taking hold of my phone.

"*I'll call you back.*" The woman said and I covered my mouth, preventing any type of conversation. This cannot be happening. A merge? Now? "*Who's there? I will call the police.*" The woman was nervous; I could hear the change in her voice.

What should I do? If I call Frannie, she will overhear the conversation and this can be dangerous. Really dangerous. Allowing communication with somebody from the past could be problematic and cause major troubles.

"I said who's there. I have a knife and I will use it." She said, alarmed, but for some reason it sounded funny, and I couldn't help myself... I giggled. "You freak, I can hear you giggling, so why don't you deliver my precious time and present yourself so I can transport you straight to the ER."

My eyes inspected the floor finding minuscule silver ring openings and closing at a low rate. Fuck. It was really happening. This woman was probably living in this loft, years ago. What should I do first? I do not have the necessary equipment to break up the energy.

"Um." I said and she screamed. "I-I am sorry to trouble you, ma'am." My voice was shaky, unsure of letting out the incorrect words to the stranger.

"Who's there, I will cut your ass."

It took me a few seconds to process what was happening. Was I ready to enable a conversation with a person from the past? I can lose my job; certainly, I was breaking a few codes, just to respond at her question. I sighed and replied. "I work for the Department of Time Anomalies and-

"I could care less who you work for." I arched my brow, shifting my eyes from left to right in the empty loft. *"What are you doing at my home? Why can I hear you? Where are you?"* She emphasized her last word. *"Who are you?"*

"I am not at your home. Before this afternoon there was energy in our neighbor's loft and some might have fleshed out through here. The energy causes merges in time. I am afraid that you are merging into a place in the future."

"What are you talking about?"

"Listen, this is my loft. My name is Quinn and I work for the DTA. I just need to get my equipment and expand the energy. You'll be back and have your privacy again."

"Wait." She said. *"Is this true?"* I experienced a feeling that this was no good.

"Yes, I am afraid so." Why am I still talking to her? "I truly apologize for the inconvenience ma'am. This could be dangerous; I will call and get this fixed as soon as possible." I grabbed my phone calling Frannie; however, she did not pick up the phone. I sighed, calling the office and Mark answered. "Hey Mark, is Agent Fabray."

"Hello, Miss. How may I help you?" I need to think fast, what I could say. Frannie must have connected the condenser to charge by now and I need to acquire it so I can close the portal.

"Um- I need to calibrate my watch with the condenser. Can you assign me to one? I can pick it up in an hour." I could hear him typing on the computer. I hope this works.

"Sure, no problem."

"Okay, thanks." I sigh in relief and hang up.

"So this is real?" The woman said close to me and I leaped. Her voice was right behind me. I did not know if I could keep talking to her. I will be violating more codes. *"Are you there?"* She asked again and I took a deep breath. I only need to get the condenser, release the energy and that it. *"I know you are here."*

"I am not permitted to speak with *time zoners*."

"That's how you call us?"

"Yes."

"Pathetic." She said sarcastically. "Now that you are interrupting my peace and practically standing in my living room, may I ask you something?"

"I am not allowed to-"

"You have said enough, Agent. Simply answer one question, okay?" I rub my forehead responding with a yes. "Do you live here? In the future?"

"Yes, this is my place."

"When did you move?"

"I can't give any information that might have an effect on your future. It's illegal for me to —"

"Would you quit being a professional and answer me? I don't see the time police here." I shook my head; certainly, she was a lovely person.

I stand still in the empty loft, phone in hand, and blanket pooling on the floor next to me. There's nothing dissimilar in the outsized area. The merge is only occurring within her presence. I glance forward to the kitchen, examining any possible alteration in the space. Every artifact was where it belongs. Nothing was different. My loft was as I always remembered. My eyes traveled once again to the circles on the floor, the size increased by an inch causing her voice to be loud and clean.

"Look, I've stressed myself for months. Thinking of a proper way to sell the loft. It's not easy once you need to get the right person who will assist you through the procedure. I cannot sleep; I cannot make out anything else but think if all I am doing is starting to compensate off. Now you appeared out of nowhere, allegedly implying that you live here, in the future. How can I forget this? I just—"

She stopped talking. My eyes set on silver circles on the base. She moved back and I heard her mumbling something then laughing.

"*Thank you.*" I did not know what to say. "*You sure you live here, right? Loft 216?*" She asked and I could not help but chuckle. What was up with this girl?

"Yes, I live here. Moved four months ago."

She sighed; however, her sigh wasn't expressing tiredness, or any negative response. Her sigh was pure relief. "Well, I will not cut you." I laughed. "This is weird. I've stressed and thinking that this whole process of selling the loft was worth it and not a complete wasteland of my valued time. I couldn't be with the uncertainty, what if no one actually wanted to buy the loft in time? Now that the pressure in my head is non-existing, there is nothing else for me to think about. Fuck, it feels good."

"In reality, I didn't buy the loft. My company did."

"*I simply don't care who bought it.*" She states in between giggles. "*Nothing else matters.*"

I smiled at my empty loft. The silver rings were growing with every conversation with the stranger woman. The energy was flowing about her, as if she was exhausting her own felicity and the energy was receiving her positivism. The spheres slowly move in the direction to the sofa. I heard the cushions adjusting at her weigh and I followed the circles sitting in front of them on the coffee table. She was two feet away from me.

"Hey, you there?" She said.

"Yes, I'm here."

"*What year is it?*" I scrunch my nose, thinking if I should respond. "*Come on. I am not asking you for the lottery number.*"

I shook my head and smiled. "It's December 26, 2018."

"Whoa, so just a year ahead. You said four months ago. That means I will sell it soon. When I say soon I mean in a few months." She laughed softly. "Did your company buy it furnished?"

"Yes."

"Really?" Her voice playfully. "So you are slumbering in my bed and using my stuff?"

I arched my brow in curiosity. "They are mine now." I said, folding my arm as if she was in front of me. I quickly noted what I did and unfold them.

"Of course, and I am glad they are with you and not with an irrational man."

We both laughed for a moment. What was I doing here? Laughing at my empty couch. Noting how the silver circles dance under her. Talking with a *time* zoner.

"Nice to meet you. My name is Santana and I'm from the past." She said nonchalantly and I couldn't help but grin.

"Hello, I'm Quinn."

"*From the future?*" She demands.

"From the future." I repeat and she giggles.

"I would shake hands with you, but I don't even know where you are."

"Don't worry."

"Well, Stranger, it was a nice visit. Thanks again for, you know. Letting me know about all these impossible and mysterious matters. I won't report any of this with your boss."

"Thank you, I guess." I said, looking at my empty couch. Why I was smiling? "Um, well. I need to go to the office and get the equipment to close the portal. Nice meeting you, Santana." I said, standing from the coffee table and walking to lay my jacket and scarf along.

"*Thanks for this stress relieve, Q.*" I stopped on my tracks, hand in the door and look back to the empty loft. I saw how the circles left the couch and made their way over to the kitchen. I took a deep breath at how comfortable I felt with her presence. Weird.

"Glad I could help you." I close the door and left.

I was back with the condenser in hand. My free hand opened the entryway. I inspected the loft, nothing was different and my watch was not buzzing. I placed the machine on the floor, directing myself to the kitchen. I could not see the silver circles. My device was not directing me to any energy source.

"Santana?" I call her walking around my loft.

She did not respond. There is literally nothing in here. I removed my watch, placing it on my dresser. Maybe the energy dissipates itself. I removed my jacket and scarf placing it on the bed. I walked to the bathroom, turning on the shower and waiting for the warm water to appear. I removed my clothes, staring at my reflection in the mirror. I slowly caress my locks, fixing my short hair in a messy bun. My stomach squirmed in hunger, so I sent myself back to the room and pick up my phone to call the Chinese eating place from across the street, and set up a delivery. It was the perfect timing; the food would be ready by the time I come out of the shower.

The accumulated steam on the mirror, indicated to me the water was at the proper temperature. I slid my hand through the steamed mirror and jump in the shower. It was not a bad day after all. I move my neck, allowing the warm water refresh my body. My muscles were warm leaving me comfortable and refreshing. I smiled, this morning I thought I was going to face a hell of a day; however, a portal opens and it was nice to feel I could help someone get out of her stress... *I guess*. Even though I broke like twenty codes. It was harmless, right. There is no sign of accumulated energy dancing through the loft. The energy dissipated and with any luck, I will not know anything about her again. It was a safe process.

A few more minutes under the warm water, I startled out. The delivery person could be here any moment now. I walked out of the restroom wrapped in a towel. Immediately, a sturdy smell of food hit my nose. I groaned at how delicious the smell was. I cannot decipher the origin of it; probably Mrs. Susan was baking something delicious. I smelled the air, rubbing my stomach. I am officially starving now.

I heard a rap on the doorway and hollered at the delivery person while I end up dressing myself. Once ready, I paid and walked back in the direction to the kitchen. I stopped in my tracks; the smell of food was stronger, as if it was coming from my kitchen. I smelled the bag in my hands, determining if the smell was emanating from the paper bag. However, the smell wasn't hoarded in paper; it was all over the area. It was pure and strong.

I continued walking to the kitchen, when I heard a female voice. The stranger was singing.

Your love is bright as ever

Even in the shadows.

I stopped there looking at my empty kitchen with a smile on my face. I found silver circles in front of the stove. I grinned, filling my lungs with the delicious smell. Santana was cooking.

Baby kiss me, before they turn the lights out.

I noticed how the circles sway to the left and then to the right, and this brought a leer on my face.

Your heart is glowing

And I'm crashing into you

Baby kiss me, before they turn the lights out

Before they turn the lights out

"You sing beautifully." I said and she screamed. "Sorry. I didn't mean to startle you."

"It's okay. I forgot you could be there, stalker." She said chuckling.

"Not stalking. You are the one who is invading my place with delicious smells and a beautiful voice."

"Thank you." She said after a few seconds. "It's nothing. Sorry, did you get the thing?"

"Yes, I can close it after I eat something if you don't mind. I'm starving, and let me say whatever you are cooking; it's not helping with my hunger."

"What can I say? I'm a great cook."

I laughed. "Cocky much?"

"You'll get used to it, Q." I looked at the empty stove smiling.

"Do you mind if I eat at my table?" I said, placing the bag on the table.

"Nope, do you mind if I eat at my table?" I laughed, noticing her silver circles moving toward the table. The circles stopped just in front of me and I study what was happening next. Can she merge in my time if she gets too close?

"I like your laugh." She says and I lift my head, awaiting at my empty front. *"You sound cute."*

"Oh, you are charming as well. How do you know that?"

"I just know." I shook my head and I could hear her plates over the table, then the sound of the chair dragging on the wooden floor. The chair in front of me didn't move and everything felt weird for a second.

The silence was comfortable and I started to gather my food out the bag. "So, Santana, what you cook?"

"Steamed broccoli with cheese and steak. What about you?"

"Broccoli chicken from the Chinese place across the street."

"Really? Oh my God, that's my favorite place. Ever."

"Really?"

"*Yeah, there are a few things I will miss from this place. That small Chinese place and Mrs. Susan.*" I laughed at the similarity. Those are one of the best things about living in this building, and the view in the morning of course. "*Love the view too.*" She said and laughed.

"What's funny?"

"Nothing. I agree with everything you said. The view is beautiful indeed."

"Do you sleep with the curtains close?" She said from across the table.

"Yes, the light bothers me a little. But I open them early in the morning to admire the beautiful view."

"I never close them. Try it one day, even the dark night will amaze you."

"Okay."

"Of course there are a few things I don't like about this place. Like that freaking parking spot that I deserve but never get." I chuckled.

"Or waiting for the water to heat." I said after I end up chewing my food.

"The water." She expressed joy. "How could I forget the water?"

We laughed together.

"Is this weird for you?" She stated.

"I would be lying if I said no, but it's comfortable."

"I get what you are trying to say, Q." She replies.

"You are calling me Q now. Should I call you S?"

"If you want to."

We finish eating. We spoke about work, and silly stuffs. I learned she is an aspiring singer, but not a Broadway one. That her family lives in Ohio, that she likes bread sticks and she used to be a cheerleader. After we finished eating, the energy disappeared once again. Losing any communication with her.

A few hours passed. I put down in my bed, counting at the ceiling with the closed curtains and dim room. I smiled to myself wrapping my body in warm sheets. Today it was nice. Speaking with Santana felt normal, felt right. I don't recall feeling that comfortable with someone, besides my sister. It felt so good to speak to somebody else.

On the spur of the moment, a drawer slammed closed in the room. I jumped abruptly and sat on the bed. A few drawers opened once again and I stared at my dresser.

"S?"

"Shit, you scared me." She says.

"I scared you? You are slamming drawers when I'm trying to sleep."

"Hey, you are the one who hasn't closed the portal, Missy." She laughed. "I'm not complaining, I enjoy your voice."

"That was creepy." I said chuckling.

"You think that is creepy? We have talked to the air for a few hours now. We are alone in our lofts. What do you think people will think if they see us talking to no one? Yeah, I'm the creepy one." Her voice clearly dripping with sarcasm.

"I would throw you with a pillow if I could, Santana. I don't appreciate your sarcasm." I said mocking her voice.

"It's not sarcasm, just facts."

Her laugh became stronger and nearer to me. "Where are you?" I said, shifting in the bed.

"Now?"

"Mmhum."

"*Resting in bed.*" I quickly rose, taking hold of my phone and turning the light on. I scanned my phone on the bed sheets, I could see small circles on the mattress. She was next to me, and I didn't know why I was nervous. "*Where are you?*"

"Right next to you."

"Oh, really. It's been a while since I had a girl in bed with me. Wanky."

I laughed. "I can second that."

"Really? Never though of you being gay?"

"Super gay."

"*How gay?*" She asked laughing.

I chuckled. "Just normal, I guess."

"You don't sound gay."

"I dint know there was a way to sound, Santana."

"Don't mind me. I just think you have a sexy voice. A sexy straight voice."

"Nowadays you can differentiate voices as well?"

"My gaydar is accurate. I have to admit it didn't work with you. However, I haven't seen you so that's invalid."

"I'm normal. I guess if you look at me, you wouldn't be able to tell I like girls."

"So you are a lipstick lesbian." I laughed. "Interesting."

"Why is it interesting?"

"It just is."

Conversation was fluent. She told me she has been single for a two years now and I explained how horrible my date was with my co-worker, she was amused.

"And after all that, she wanted to kiss me goodnight." I said.

"Did you kiss her?"

"Nope."

"Good, I would've woo you differently." I smiled. "She just lacks of charm."

"And you don't?"

"*I'm covered in charm.*" She laughed, followed by a yawn. I turned to look at the clock next to me. It reads twelve-thirty. "*Oh shit, sorry. I'm rambling. You work early tomorrow and I have to get up and meet with my realtor.*"

"It's okay. I had fun." I said yawning.

"Thank you, Q. Thanks for everything."

"I didn't do anything."

"Yeah, you didn't close the portal. I haven't had fun in a while."

I smiled. "No problems, I can close the portal later."

"*Sure you can.*" I looked at the dark ceiling. Do I want to close the portal? "*Well, stranger, have yourself a lovely day tomorrow.*"

"Thanks, you as well."

"Oh, and..." She said after a few minutes. "The merge will happen again? Will I be able to talk with you again?" I smiled, I could feel my cheeks warm.

"There is a possibility; it all depends on the energy."

"Okay, then. I'll see you tomorrow." She laughed. "Well, not see, hear you? I'll hear you tomorrow? That's just plain stupid." She laughed louder. "Okay, that's my call, I need to sleep. Night, Q."

I giggled at how adorable she was. "Night, S."

What was I doing? I closed my eyes and with a smug grin on my face I fall asleep.

A bright light gets into my room, waking me up. The curtains were rolled already. I notice silver circles on the wall and some on the floor. I stretch my torso, rubbing the sleep out my eyes. Santana must have left the curtains open this morning and her place merged with mine. I directed myself to the restroom. I brushed my teeth and washed my face. Today it was a slow

day; I don't have to wake up early at five in the morning. It was eight something, however, waking up late means, getting home late.

Once I was almost ready. I walked to the kitchen. I cannot detect any silver circle there. I checked my watch, but nothing clicked. The energy wasn't strong enough. I grabbed my laptop from my desk and place it on the kitchen table. I needed to check on my emails and verify everything was ready for me to start working.

Once the computer was loading, I grabbed a bowl, the cereal and milk and sat on the table. I checked my watch again. Why am I looking if there is any energy left from last night? Do I want to hear her? It felt so good last night, having a normal conversation with someone who gets you. I sighed, what I was going to do? I certainly needed to shut down the portal before I get in trouble.

I shook my head, taking a spoonful of cereal and eating. Stop thinking about her. This is no good. You need to close this merge, Quinn. You'll get in trouble. Ugh, this was going to give me a headache. I kept eating when I heard steps on the wooden floor.

I kept looking at my bowl, focusing on where the sound was coming. I couldn't see any circles and my watch didn't click. *You are imaging things now, Quinn.*

"What in the hell? Where is the milk?" I heard Santana's voice strong and clear. I raised my head and the spoon fell from my hand, hitting the crystal bowl. This alarmed Santana and she turns abruptly facing me. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

Her hair was beautiful, her eyes a stunning dark brown. I took a deep breath while I admire the stranger in my kitchen. Her plump lips look so soft and inviting. Her big white shouldered shirt exposed beautiful tan skin and I got lost for a few minutes on her stunning posture.

"Whoa." She whispered, taking a deep breath. I could feel her eyes scanning every inch of my face. "You are stunning."

A Name with a Side of B, by KatieMacLove

"Hey, what can I get cha?" A feisty Latina walks towards to booth, stopping as she clicks her pen and flicks open a new tab. I scan over her features and am surprised at the captivating beautify I've never seen in another woman before. Her long, raven locks curl, accenting her high cheek bones. Full lips and perfectly plucked eyebrows entice me. I don't know if it's because I'm gay or because she's just hot, but something makes me want to know and be near her.

"Don't I get a name?" I ask with a smile. She raises an unimpressed brow and pops her gum. I try again. "I'm Quinn. Nice to meet you... Or halfway meet because I still don't know your name. May you please tell me who you are?" I blink multiple times with an all-American smile.

"You can tell me your order." She says with boredom sided with hint of bite in her voice.

"Okay, maybe next time," I pick up the menu filled with sticky finger prints and ketchup. "Uuuuummmmmmmmmmmmm. I don't know." I look up at her with wide, playful eyes. She lets out a heavy sigh and shifts to her right foot. "What do you like to eat here?"

"Are you asking if you want something that's been in the freezer for five years or if you want slimy eggs and greasy bacon so they can clog your arteries?" my eyes light up at the sound of bacon.

"Ooh! Bacon sounds good! Thank you, Nameless! I would like to order the BLT, minus the LT and extra B, please."

She narrows her eyes and looks at me with her hands on her hip as she leans against the booth. "So you just want a bacon sandwich?"

"Yes. But it sounded so much better the way I said it, don't cha think?" I grin at her as she takes my menu while rolling her eyes.

I saw a gleam in her eye and the smallest of quirks to her lips. She may not know it, but Fabrays go after what they want for however long it takes. I'll get her name one day and it may seem a little too sure on my part, but she'll have my name to her own one day as well.

I walk in every afternoon determined to get her name. I sit in the same booth each time and try to make small talk with her over my BLT minus the LT extra B. She always rolls her eyes, but I know she's trying not to smile. My Fabray charm is getting through to her!

It's Friday when I walk in and see her conversing with a guy with overly gelled hair and a bow tie added to his uniform. I look at my menu for a few minutes until someone walks over.

It's the boy with the gel. How and I going to politely decline is service? "Hello, my name is Blaine. How may I help you today?"

"Hello, Blaine. You may help me by getting another waitress. Emphasis on the *tress*" I say in a sugar sweet voice. I think the smile made him a little confused on if I was being rude or not. Judging by the way his eyebrow furrows and his neck shots back like the little gay diva he is, he knows I don't know how to be too nice. I admit; it's a working progress.

"May I ask why?" He asks with a cocked head.

"I'm afraid your hair will fall in my food and I won't be able to tell the difference from bacon fat and your over-gel-soaked hair follicles."

"Alright, I'll get a waitress out for you as soon as possible." He gives me a tight smile as he walks off.

I really need to be nicer but people just make it hard as fuck.

I grab two straws and start making a beat to Boss Ass Bitch in my head. I'm humming under my breath when a short girl walks over to me and gives me a 100 megawatt smile. It's fake as fuck but so am I.

"Hello, my name is Rachel Berry. How may I help you?" she grins. Ugh, they're making this really hard.

"Rachel... I need you to do me a favor." I let out a long sigh before I do my puppy dog eyes.

She looks skeptical, "Sure..."

"Great! I need you to get me that really hot Latina with the awesome rack to come over here so I can ask her a question. Can you do that?"

She looks over her shoulder towards my Latin goddess and turn back towards me, chewing on her lip.

"okay, but only because I am a true romantic. My girlfriend, Brittany, comes in here all the time meet her while I was applying for the job and ran into her in my haste to get here on time. I was late but, it was worth it. I'm sure you would get along great. She has amazing talent in the art of dance, music, and sex. Brit goes to NYU while I got to-"

I cut her off. "OKAY! Rachel! Go get her for me please! I don't want to know your life story, just hers. Okay?" She looks a little sad that I shouted at her and it makes me kinda feel bad that under that big nose, a pout is forming and it's fucking pitiful. "I didn't mean to make you feel bad, just I'm really excited and nervous to talk to her. Your story was actually cute; I would love to meet Brittany someday." I give her a genuine smile.

She beams and giggles before moving those long ass tiny legs towards my girl. She gestures towards me and my angel looked towards me and I smile through my blush as getting caught looking at her ass. Angel rolls her eyes but I see a hint of a smile as she walks up towards me.

Clicking her pen and flicking new tab open, she shakes her head. "What did you want to heckle me about so long that you have to insult Warbler and Midget?"

"Who?"

"My coworkers" She rolls her eyes. I'm not sure if it was at me or her though.

I laugh and run my hand through my choppy blonde hair sheepishly. "I wanted to ask you a question."

"It's not about my name is it?" She raises her eyebrow.

"What?! Pssh! No! I wanted to ask about.... The PIE! What does pie taste like."

She looks at me like I've officially hit the wall. "How do you not know what pie taste like at a diner? Aren't they, like, generic?" She looks at me though narrowed eyes and pursed lips.

"Well, what if I've never been in a diner? How would I know they're generic?"

"Jesus, Quinn! Just order your heart attack special and stop being difficult!" She says with a laugh. It's a gorgeous laugh.

"You should laugh and smile more. It's beautiful." I smile at her.

"My smile or my laugh?"

"Both." I answer without hesitation. She blushes and looks at the ceiling as though it would give her answers for some unknown question.

"Quinn?"

"Yes, Angel?" She blushes again.

"Why do you want to know my name so much?"

"Because knowing your name is the first step to knowing everything about you. I don't know if I'm gay and I don't know if you're gay. But what I do know is that I feel a pull to you and I don't want to resist it. Knowing your name could be the beginning of something beautiful. I want for someone to say your name and my heart nearly jump out my chest while butterflies tackle my inside."

She smiles at me with a gleam in her eye and leans against the booth. "My name is Santana. Santana Lopez."

I beam, "I'm Quinn Fabray. Nice to officially meet you." She laughs.

"Nice to meet you too, Dork. I have to get back to work. Give me fifteen minutes until I get off. We can talk then." She turns to walk away and I gently grab her wrist.

"Santana?"

"Yes, Quinn?" she asks with a slight smile and a shake of her head.

"I want a BLT, minus the LT. Extra B."

Here without you, by kurttanacedes

Dear Santana, It's been 8 months, 3 weeks and I lost count on how many days without you.

Somedays I feel numb thinking about us, how we met in high school, how I blatantly written myself off as anything but gay. Even though we started out as enemies, you were still my very best friend. It's hard here with you in the marines. Rachel even says that I shouldn't wait any longer, that you're probably not gonna come back. But I don't want to be the girl who can't hold on. I don't want to be the girl who leaves when things get rough. I look at pictures of us and see how happy we are, or were and I think, that's why I stay. This letter isn't one with bad intention. I'm just writing you to make sure you're okay, and to tell you that I miss you. I love you, Santana and I hope you come home soon.

Yours forever, Quinn Fabray.

After Quinn wrote it she neatly folded the lined paper and put it in an envelope. The blonde got up from the kitchen table, and went to go wash dishes. Rachel and Quinn had a girl's night last night and all Quinn could do was talk about Santana. Whenever she did Rachel would talk about Finn and the two friends would comfort each other. Even though the small brunette told Quinn she should think about moving on, Quinn shut her down. What her and Santana had was real. As real as anything could possibly be and just because Santana was away for so long, didn't mean she was going to give up on her or their love.

She was in her night gown, some days she couldn't even manage to get fully dressed. It was white, laced. One of Santana's favorites. Wearing it reminded Quinn of better times, before they had to make more grown up decisions about life. *ding dong* there's a knock on the door, but Quinn doesn't hear. She's too busy washing dishes and thinking about Santana. *ding dong* there's another few knocks, but the blonde ignores it once more. In that moment nothing is more important to Quinn than daydreaming, that Santana was home, she was okay. That everything was going to be alright. *ding dong* How much longer could she ignore the sound? Long enough for whoever is was to go away. Quinn didn't want visitors now. She wanted to be alone with a cup of tea and a reading book. She wanted to sleep bad thoughts of Santana being hurt away, she wanted to cure herself of heartache. That couldn't happen with a unexpected visitor.

The person came in and walked slowly over to her. Quinn was still so beautiful. She loved her long hair, but the short hair worked just as good too. She dropped her bags and then walked into the kitchen, first admiring her up and down. From her seemingly long legs to her beautiful ads, the contours of her back, the girl couldn't wait any longer, she walked up behind her. "You know... you don't know how to hide keys well." She breathed in Quinn's ear, smiling against her. "You're not here." Quinn whispered immediately closing her eyes. Was she hallucinating? Or was a different pair of tan hands on her body. "Q, turn around." Santana whispered in her ear. Quinn kept thinking this wasn't real, it couldn't be? She counted to three and exhaled turning around. "I can't believe it..Santana—" Quinn began to say, but she was cut off by kisses. "I missed you." Santana says, giving Quinn chaste pecks and small sweet kisses that were enlisting tiny moans out of Quinn. The blonde wrapped her arms around Santana, pressing her against

the kitchen counter. They said nothing, Santana just looked into Quinn's eyes as she undressed her. small fingers slipped under her night gown, watching as it cascaded down towards the floor. Quinn was exposed, naked. Santana eyed her hungrily, her lips attaching to Quinn's once more before her teeth sunk into her lovers neck, sucking on her pulse point. Santana growled under her breath, her lips now slowly propelling down Quinn's body, until they captured Quinn's nipples in her mouth.

As Santana sucked, Quinn moaned. The more she did, the louder Quinn gotten. Santana pulled her pretty pink nipples with her teeth then got on her knees, right in front of Quinn's seemingly soaking vagina. She tossed Quinn's leg over her shoulder, smiling up at her lover. "Say it Quinn. Say it." Santana demands looking up at whimpering Quinn. Hazel eyes are met with darkened brown ones, filled with lust and intense passion, she gulped knowing exactly what Santana wanted to hear. "I missed you too San." Quinn said, right before she had the biggest orgasm in 8 months, 3 weeks and how many ever days.

Slave to the Games (1), by lacksubstance

I can still hear the screams.

I can still see the fire burning wildly through the homes of my people and children being ripped from their mothers' arms; fathers being shot down or beaten to death till they became unrecognizable. I can still see the women being forced against their will to endure pain from a soldier—endless sobbing and fear coursing through their veins while being pushed into submission.

I was probably no more than ten—not yet a woman, but even then I knew that when he saw me he liked what he saw. I wasn't sobbing uncontrollably for my people nor for my family that lied dead beside me after they took advantage of my mother's lack of strength and yet maybe that is why he spared me. The emotion I felt was far deeper than sadness and utter disbelief; it was anger that was pulling me towards the truest of true.

I was not weak and I didn't deserve to be in the house catering to a woman's needs, helping her wash any filth she thought she had. Being not of age, I stood by my Domina's side till I grew older and stronger. When the sun hid its beauty, I would go out and train alone because no woman has ever stepped foot on the training sand as what this place trains the men to do—fight for their freedom while others fight for glory.

It was not till I reached the age of eighteen that I was serving my Domina one day, that it was brought to light that I have been learning to fight in the dead of the night. Everyone present was surprised beyond belief, yet they know by now that I'm anything but conventional, so my Dominus had me take the sands with a recruit Gladiator, so if I was to fail at least I can return to the house to his wife.

I proved to everyone that day that I had what it took to take the sands of a true arena and my Domina lost a noble house slave to the sands for good.

Twenty one—my age is progressing and so is my strength along with my skill. I am about to stand on the sands of the arena that most Gladiators meet their death in, but I do not dare to be one of them. I am aware of the words that have been circling Rome and other cities about me, most of which come back to my appendage.

I hear the whispers of her being a skilled Champion. She has beauty that is radiant, but fucks like a man.

Saving that part of me for someone special has always been something my mother taught me. She knew the world wasn't ready for me yet, but they were about to be today.

—

My name is announced by my Dominus and the crowd roars with excitement at the hope of blood being shed. Taking in my surroundings has always been important to me before I begin battle; it makes me aware of what exactly is around me and what isn't. I embrace the crowd's

yells for me, rejoicing in the appearance of having a person to the words. My eyes land on the box where my Dominus and Domina sit next to a few more nobles, but my eyes stay on her.

I never knew what love felt like before. My father told me it's something we just discover as humans, but when we do find it it's a beautiful thing that should not be wasted. She is the idyllic thought when you imagine the perfect woman. Her blonde hair shines brightly from the sun cascading down one side of her olive shoulder. Her eyes—her stunningly beautiful eyes I wish I could see, but cannot and her lips that I will never have.

It's only when I hear the screams grow deafening, that I realize the fight has begun and I need to regain focus. As our swords collide, I no longer can hear the crowd—its only my opponent and I and the thought that if I survive, I may get to see her once again. I know she must not care about me nor even crave me the way I crave her, but even if for a moment I can hope that she does to get me through, then that is alright for now.

I dodge his blow for blow and when I strike him, he blocks it then elbows me in the face. I could hear my nose crack and feel the warmth of my blood creeping down my face, but it's nothing but a scratch. He smirks wildly as I take in his stance before me. I take a few steps to the left and quickly change my position so diligently that I strike him right at his chest, creating a long scratch down his chest. The crowd screams for me and I only give him enough time to pay attention to the damage before I make large gashes at his ankles—he falls to his knees in pain.

I look up at the box as my Dominus looks on proudly—he gives me a nod; the sign of death I call it. Before doing so, I chance a look at her and I can tell she's faltering—she isn't fond of the arena. The blood is too much for her and the sport itself is just about death and who is inferior. It is sickening to be a part of such a grueling nature, but I chose this life. I could still be a house servant catering to my Domina, but I wanted more from this life—I wished for hope that one day I could be free from the confines of the walls I was forced in all those years ago.

I turn away from her, silently apologizing to her before grabbing the man by his hair baring his throat. “You fought well my brother,” I whisper to him and I can feel him nod in my grasp as I make a slice across his throat, sending blood spurting from his neck as he falls to the ground.

Men step on this sand to claim the glory and the wealth that comes with each winning fight and well that sounds wonderful, the ultimate prize is the one I'm pushing towards—freedom. I've won many fights since I started those three years ago. I showed great promise and am considered a Champion. I have defeated many, killed even more than I can count and shed much of my own blood that has gone almost unnoticed from the new stand concealing it from future eyes. This house has created monsters for sport and I am on top of the food chain. I am the first woman to do so and I will continue to do so.

“Santana, you have been summoned,” I sit in my private quarters on my bed as a guard addresses me. I stand up and begin walking with him to the main house. The blood is no longer visible on my face and my nose has been set back into place with minimal damage, which is better than what I had in the past.

I turn the corner into my Domina's quarters. I can hear her speaking happily to someone, laughing at something the other said till I see who the other voice belongs to. The talking ceases and there is nothing but silence though their smiles still remain. They stand from the bed and walk up to me as my heart begins to pound uncontrollably in my chest. She's even more beautiful up close and her eyes—her eyes are of green with brown hiding away within them and her lips shaped of utter perfection. I know I should not crave for someone so above me, but I'm intoxicated by her beauty, by her being so agonizingly close.

"Santana, this is Lady Quintina. Her father is the General of Rome, you may have seen her at the arena," my Domina introduces her—Quintina? To have a name to the beauty makes this worth all the money I receive in the arena.

"Your Grace it is a pleasure to be in your presence," I bow before her and she smiles politely, motioning me to get back up.

"As am I—watching you fight was quite remarkable. I am sure you've heard the talk about you, no?" She speaks her voice is something I would never grow bored of. She doesn't know the joy she's bringing me—she'll probably never know.

"Yes my Lady—I am aware," I've heard through the cells I once shared with the Gladiators, when they bathed one night. It was always a request to have me wait till they were done, but eventually the whispers were set to drive me mad that I stepped in the bathhouse nude and began to bathe. They nearly shit themselves if you ask me, mostly because they were in disbelief that I was bigger than most of them.

"Would you like to see?" My Domina steps in and asks Lady Quinn as I pray to the Gods to not make her command to have me disrobe. She turns her attention to her and shakes her head, holding her hand out.

"Oh no it's not necessary," she says almost frantically as my Domina insists that I should, but I am not entirely sure who to listen to. Though my Domina is in charge of me, I'd hate to make Lady Quintina uncomfortable.

"Santana does not mind, do you?" My Domina address me and I blink a little, letting out a deep sigh. I do mind more than anything in this world, but I cannot let her know such an act is anything but liberating.

"No Domina it would not offend me," I say much to my dismay, so my Domina holds her hand out gesturing me to disrobe in front of Lady Quintina who continues to look on almost sympathetic—she isn't like the rest. I can see the sadness in her eyes or is it embarrassment? Emotions have never been something I was very good at.

As I let the cloth fall to my feet, I stand there bare for the two of them to see. My Domina looks on proudly as Lady Quintina looks at me with disbelief. I knew she didn't think the words to be true, but now that she sees it in the flesh, words are no longer words.

"Do what you will my friend. She is at your will," my Domina says with a grin having Lady Quintina come closer to me. She stands before me raising her hand to my chest. My breath

hitches in my throat as her fingertips make a trail along my nipple, flicking it along the way down my breast to my stomach.

“She’s solid,” Lady Quintina comments as her hands dance across my every muscle I’ve built for strength. Her hands get lower till they’re cupping around my shaft and at the sudden invasion, it takes me a moment to recover. Her thumb rubs gently on my head and I know with a few more strokes I’ll be suffering consequences, but it doesn’t get there as her hands leave my shaft to cup my balls and I’m left feeling vulnerable again.

“She’s quite exquisite is she not?” My Domina says as Lady Quintina finally removes her hands and meets her eyes, nodding.

“Indeed she is—perhaps I can have a moment alone with her?” She asks and the thought of being alone with her is a cross between terrifying and gratifying for me, however I’m about to discover both as my Domina grants the chance, stepping out to leave us.

Lady Quintina turns to me and her smirk that was once there when my Domina was present is replaced with almost a distraught look. “My apologies for grabbing you in such a fashion,” she says as I stare at her in confusion for the sudden change and the admittance of an apology.

“You are a friend of my Domina, you are entitled to do what you’d like to me,” I reply though inwardly smiling that she’d apologize to a slave like me.

“But you are a human; one should not be allowed to touch you in such a way unless you allow it. You should be only allowed to be touched in such a way by a woman you love,” she says frantically and I’m not sure of how to react to her sudden graciousness. She isn’t like anyone I’ve ever met before.

“Has anyone ever taken your innocence away from you?” She asks and I assume she means if I’ve ever had myself inside a woman before, but I shake my head no because it’s the truth, but I feel it’ll be coming soon. At my age, you can only be a virgin for so long and with me being a Champion of the sands; I feel they would have nobles lining up at the doors to see me lose it.

“Why do you choose to fight? You could have stayed a house slave yet you decided to fight, why?” She asks motioning for me to pick up my robe, which I do as I’m told to place it back on.

As I fasten it back by the shoulder, I straighten my posture and meet her eyes, “I didn’t choose to fight,” I begin as I walk closer to her—enough so I can be chest to chest with her. “I chose freedom and if it means I have to shed blood of my own and others, then so be it. I will not give up till I am past these walls,” I tell her and she nods understandingly. “Pardon my forwardness, but why did you ask for me if you were so against how we’re being treated?”

Lady Quintina falters under the hardness of my gaze and I can do nothing more than hold it in place for a little longer, fearing I might lose that fight that once laid within them. It’s not until she sighs deeply, finally giving in to what I’ve been dreaming of since I set my eyes upon her striking beauty in those seats. “I loved the way you looked at me like I was the only one in that arena. I loved how you stared at me almost seeking my approval before you spilled the blood of your opponent. I know not that you can listen to me, but what you’re commanded of by your

Dominus, but I loved it enough that you cared to see how I felt,” she admits and turns around to face away from me, recollecting her thoughts.

“I’m a foolish girl who believes she could possibly be attracted to a Gladiator. My parents wouldn’t have it nor would any of the nobles we come across,” I can hear the sadness in her voice as she speaks of me. I too crave for the same desire as she, but I know this is forbidden.

“You are many things, but foolish isn’t one of them,” I say as she turns around slowly at my words. “You are beautiful—stunning even, you are intoxicating and exotic, you are strong and fearless,” I didn’t realize I was stepping towards her again till I stood mere inches away from her. The tears she shed are fresh and I chance the moment to graze my fingers along her skin to brush them away gently. She’s captivating and to see her so conflicted even though we only have just met, I know I’ve fallen for this noblewoman. I may not have experience in love, but I have always been told I’ll know love when I see it and looking at her, I see nothing but that.

“Do not be sad for me,” I whisper to her as I place my lips upon hers gently, then pull away before it even began. I knew that was far too forward even for I, but I needed to do it just once. Her lips were everything I imagined they’d be—soft like silk.

She lets out a deep breath as she clears her throat. “I should go,” she breaths out, walking around me to find my Domina and I wonder if me overstepping the space between slave and noblewoman is going to push her away and if it does, I’m not sure my heart will be able to withstand it.

On the Bus to Cheer Camp, by LazyWriterGirl

She sits at the front of the bus, only just wiping the scowl off of her face as her parents' reminders to "make friends, sweetheart!" sink in. Santana doesn't need friends, she thinks as the bus trundles along to the second stop, a house a little outside of her neighbourhood. She sees a blonde girl with pale skin and a snooty expression step onto the bus. Santana actively ignores the newcomer, silently offering up a word of thanks as the blonde's cheap, fruity perfume wafts past her nose. The girl practically squats over the bus seat, as if she can't believe that she has to put up with such a *common* means of transportation, and loudly smacks her gum. It's so loud that the sound of Santana's sighs is drowned out.

The next houses all offer up girls that seem like clones of the first, though two of the new girls are clearly brunettes; mustn't have had time to cover up their mousy roots, Santana thinks. She knows that she should be making an effort to socialize, but really it isn't as if her parents can tell when she's lying; she could say she made friends with everybody and their mothers and it wouldn't matter. The seat beside her stays blissfully empty, but soon the emptiness wears on her a little bit. She turns her head to the window. All of the other girls seem to be getting along swimmingly, and she can't help but feel like they're talking about why a Hispanic girl is headed to their "exclusive" cheer camp. My dad is the director of Lima General Hospital, bitches, Santana thinks, but she has the good sense not to say anything. No need to stoop down to such a petty level.

There's no way in hell that she could ever enjoy doing something as ridiculous as cheer camp. I mean, sure, Santana thinks as she scans the bus filled with cheerleader-hopefuls with individual back-stories and the same ugly hair, some of these girls are pretty cu—wait. Stop it Lopez. Anyway sure some of these girls aren't desperately unattractive, but there's nobody that even comes close to her. It actually unsettles the fourteen year old quite a bit. Like, it's completely a given that she'll be the hottest bitch her age at any particular time or place but this is weird. Maybe, she thinks as she chances a glance back to the rest of the girls filling up the back of the bus like the micro-clique they want to be, the reason why she can't understand it is because cute though some of these girls may be, they're not exactly *hot*. Aren't cheerleaders supposed to be hot? God, she thinks, though she's not really praying (she doesn't do so normally), God please, please let there be someone at cheer camp who's at least almost as attractive as me. It isn't even that ridiculous of a wish, she thinks; how can she be expected to be friends with people who aren't at her level?

Regardless, the bus ride to the cheer camp is a dull one, especially since her house was first on the route and there are still about ten empty seats, including the one next to her. The next couple of girls to get on the bus are the same as the rest of them, all loud gum-smacking and ugly hair and big, exaggerated lips with eye makeup that makes them look at least four years older, and not in a good way. They also do what most of the other girls have done and get on the bus haughtily, immediately swooping past Santana like they're better than her because they're white and she's so *ethnic*, she hears one of them whisper. She scoffs because bitch please, her house is at least four

times bigger and if the last name on one of those girls' nametags is correct, Santana's father is her father's boss. Like, calm down racist, she wants to say, but why should she say anything when, in a short time, her gymnastic ability will have all of them clamouring to be her best friend? Not that she'll care about any of that. She's not going to cheer camp to make friends.

Daydreams of what Santana, Queen of Lima Cheerleading-Champs Camp will be like as a ruler are a small comfort to the Latina as the incessant buzz of the girls at the back of the bus grows louder and louder. They're all just hemming and hawing and smacking their gum and trying to make themselves sound as "cool" as the others and it's sickening, really. Then, the prettiest girl she's ever seen gets onto the bus at the third house and suddenly, though the back-of-the-bus-socialites are finally silent, Santana's brain now refuses to shut up. The newcomer is white (duh) and blonde (double-duh), but that's pretty much where she stops being the exact same as everybody else on this damn bus (save for Santana of course). As she slowly walks down the now-moving-again bus, the stranger catches Santana's eye. She smiles softly and nods in acknowledgment, though she doesn't take the seat next to Santana, instead sitting at the back with the airheads that Santana hates already despite never having spoken to them. She feels her shoulders sag just a little, but at least the other girl had been nice enough to let her know she'd been noticed.

"You're like, so pretty," one of the gum-smackers compliments the new girl. Santana scoffs as she watches the reflection of the girls in the window. They're all fawning over the newbie as she sits there with her perfect smile and her perfect little sundress and her perfect hair and her perfect perfection. They've practically handed her a crown reading "Queen of Cheer Camp" but oddly enough Santana isn't jealous, not of perfect-girl, anyway. She kind of wants to be able to sit that close to her though... stop it, Lopez.

"Thank you," the new girl says politely, and Santana nearly shudders. Even the girl's fucking voice is perfect; it's all raspy and low, but with this mature kind of weight to it that Santana can't seem to figure out. It's beautiful.

"Hey, so your name's Quinn? That's like, such a cute name," one of the gum-smackers says. Santana takes another quick glance back at the blonde girl as a few more girls climb up the bus steps, taking up the last few seats at the back (more like the middle).

"Thanks...Kelly," Quinn says, taking a glance at the gum-smacker's name tag. Santana suppresses the urge to sigh because of *course* there'd be a Kelly. There are probably also a Barbie, Chelsea, and Skipper on this bus, she thinks. Santana actively ignores the girls at the back of the bus and tries to settle into her seat. Apparently the camp they're headed to is located on the other fucking side of the county, so the Latina digs her earphones out of her bag and plugs them into her iPod. She shuffles through random songs for a bit before settling on an Amy Winehouse track she hasn't listened to in forever. God, she loves Amy Winehouse.

He took no time to regret

Kept his dick wet

With his same old safe bet

Me and my head high

And my tears dry

Get on without my guy

"You're all being ridiculous, I'm sure she's perfectly nice!" Quinn's angry voice pierces through the smoky tones of Amy's voice, distracting Santana from the next line of the song. She turns back towards the gum-smackers and Quinn, surprised to find the beautiful blonde looking straight at her. "Hi!" the blonde smiles at her enthusiastically. "What's your name? I'm Quinn Fabray."

"Hello," Santana says, a little warily if she's being honest. It's a rare girl who's confident enough to treat Santana with such familiarity right off the bat. "My name is Santana, Santana Lopez."

"Well it's nice to meet you Santana Lopez. I see that the seat beside you is empty; would it be okay if I joined you? Conversation's getting to be insufferably bland back here," Quinn says. The gum-smackers all titter amusedly, but not in such a way that Santana worries that this could be a prank. The pretty girl with the amazing eyes (are they green or brown? Hazel?) seems genuine. And it's also a plus in her favour that she not-so-subtly just dissed all of those airheads without them noticing it. Must be that damn voice. She could probably convince people to do terrible things with a voice that wonderful. Santana wants to slap herself; she's turning into as big of a Quinn Fabray stan as the rest of them, something that she does *not* want to happen. She can tell that Quinn is uncomfortable with being the subject of such idolatry.

"Go for it," Santana says. She shuffles around a bit, pressing herself up against the window to give the blonde a lot of room. Again Santana turns, this time to watch as Quinn stands at the next stoplight and practically wrestles her duffel bag away from one of her new acolytes. The gum-smackers all train their eyes on Santana with an odd ferocity that she immediately dislikes. Not her fault that the blonde got sick of them; that's totally what happened, she thinks as she watches the blonde pack her duffel bag in tightly under the seat. Quinn's slim hands rummage through the bag for a while, and as the bus begins to move again she comes up with a large book.

"Hi again," Quinn says as she sits down, "Why are you all pressed up on the window? I won't bite you." Her teeth are all lovely little pearls, Santana notes without meaning to. A nervous laugh escapes her.

"Right... sorry, I just didn't want to invade your personal space or anything," she says as the blonde settles into the bus seat. The large book in her lap makes it difficult, but Santana doesn't know if she should ask Quinn if she needs help or not.

"Don't worry about it, Santana," Quinn says, and the Latina enjoys the sound of her name falling from the blonde's lips. "Feel free to sit as close as you want, but" and here she turns to the brunette with a coy smirk on her face, "I'll have you know that any drool on my shoulder will be cause for a practical joke or two as payback." Santana laughs again, a little more strongly this time.

"Likewise Fabray, likewise," she says. Quinn grins at her conspiratorially.

"I like you." The simple statement nearly smites Santana where she sits. "I wanted to sit with you from the start but those girls were giving me these looks, so I thought you might be... odd. Sorry," she says quickly as Santana's face tightens a little. "I should have never put any stock into anything they said or did, they're all morons." This makes the Latina feel much better.

"Oh, don't worry about it," she says. "What's important is you're now sitting with the coolest girl at cheer camp." Santana winks. "And the second cutest, too." She doesn't know why she's flirting, or even if she likes girls like that, but she can't help it.

"Second cutest? And who's the cutest?" Quinn asks as if she genuinely doesn't know. Her nose wrinkles up in this adorable little way that Santana can see herself growing extremely fond of in future...wait. What? She looks pointedly at the blonde before looking away, strangely pleased by the furious blush that spreads over Quinn's cheeks when she catches on. Minutes pass and the roads get bumpier, and Quinn seems not to know how to proceed. The blonde's head is hanging down, her gaze trained on the book in her lap; it's open to a page but Quinn clearly isn't reading. The Latina decides to throw the poor girl a bone; the blonde immediately begins to sputter whenever Santana looks in her direction.

"Whatcha reading there, Quinn?" The book in Quinn's lap is large, definitely thicker than most of the books Santana's read recently, not that that really means anything but still.

"Oh, this? Well right now I'm reading *The Magician's Nephew*, but in a couple more pages it will turn into the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe," Quinn says, seemingly grateful for the change of topic.

"C.S. Lewis? *The Chronicles of Narnia*, in his preferred order?"

"Yeah! You've read them?"

"Loads of times," Santana says, spurred on by how eager Quinn seems to be. "I didn't think to bring my copy with me though."

"You can share mine," Quinn says, "As long as you'll share your music with me? Daddy wouldn't let me bring my iPod to cheer camp; he thinks I'll lose it." Santana smiles slowly; somehow she doubts that Quinn is the type to lose things.

"You've got yourself a deal, Fabray," Santana says. "But first, tell me something about yourself; I don't share with strangers, you know." She sees the ghost of laughter just waiting to alight on the blonde's face.

"Well... I'm fifteen years old and my birthday is January 23rd. This coming September I'll be going to William McKinley High School as a freshman. I like all colours except for orange, but it can be okay sometimes, and I like white a lot even though it's not really a colour but rather a shade. I read books and like dancing and singing, even if I'm not very good, and I want to be popular, since I never was before." Quinn looks a little sad when the last few words leave her lips. They hang in the air between the two teens awkwardly for a short amount of time and Santana

looks away to give her seatmate a little privacy. She can't lie, she's shocked. How could Quinn not have ever been popular? But still... hey, Santana's going to William McKinley High School as well! She turns a smiling face to the blonde.

"I'm going to McKinley too! My birthday is in August, August 12th, so I'll be celebrating at cheer camp, which kind of sucks. I like any colour or shade that makes me look hot, except for puke green, though I think I could still rock it. I like to read and dance and sing too, and I'm pretty bomb at all three, I think...and I know I'm going to be popular. Just like how I know you will be too," she says sweetly. She doesn't see how Quinn could be anything but popular. The blonde, who has been listening with a smile on her face, suddenly adopts a more curious expression. It's soft, and so Santana knows that her new friend (they're friends, right?) isn't angry, but Quinn looks so serious and sad.

"You really think that I've got what it takes to be popular?"

"Yeah! You're smart, and you're cool, and you're probably a great cheerleader...and also, you're one of the prettiest girls I've ever seen," Santana admits that last part after a great deal of reluctance. She's really not supposed to be saying these things; this is so not Santana Lopez.

"T-thank you," Quinn stutters. Santana thinks that it may just be the cutest thing that she's ever heard. She wants to press a little more, find out how it could even be possible that Quinn was never popular, but the blonde looked so uncomfortable saying it that Santana thinks it may be a topic for another time. Maybe the bus ride back home.

"I'm just honest is all," she says instead, because she is, it's true. "It gets me into trouble most of the time but I'm not being myself if I'm not being a straight-up bitch." She chuckles a little at that; it's also true. Beside her Quinn giggles.

"I don't know Santana, you seem really nice to me!"

"Shh, don't go spreading that around. It's like my super-secret identity, this whole nice thing." She waggles her finger at her new friend jokingly, winning another giggle and a nod from the other girl. They ride in comfortable silence for a while, Santana pushing herself up every now and again. She doesn't know why she'd begged her mother to let her wear a thong, or why her mother had given in and allowed her to do so. The stupid thing keeps on getting...stuck, and it's uncomfortable as all hell, especially against the sticky plastic-whatever material of the bus seats. Quinn can't know what the problem is, but after about the tenth time watching Santana lift herself off the seat, stomach straining upwards against the seatbelt, the blonde's eyes take on a curious light. She bends down, impossibly flexible against the stupid seatbelt, and comes back up with a folded blanket.

"Here Santana, sit on this! I know we've only got about an hour left in the trip, but you don't look very comfortable, so please, take it." Santana reaches towards the blanket, a grateful smile on her face. The blonde suddenly pulls the blanket away, giggles chiming out as she notes the half-confused, half-unimpressed expression on her new friend's face. "Two conditions... first thing, read with me for the rest of the trip? Second thing...uh...share a bunk with me?" She's shy

all of a sudden, and as a pinkish tinge creeps over the blonde's face she hands the blanket back towards Santana.

"You've got yourself a deal, Fabray." After situating herself on the blanket (and praying nothing weird happens) Santana beckons Quinn closer to her. Together the pair begins to pore over Lewis' tale of Mr. Tumnus, the Pevensie children, and the mysterious wardrobe ("It's basically just a glorified closet," Quinn says at one point, making Santana giggle). They're sitting so close together, one caramel hand holding the pages back as one pale hand flips guides them through the words, and every so often Santana catches herself paying Quinn more attention than the story. She thinks, maybe, just maybe, one day she'll make her own journey out of a closet. Turning towards the pack of gum-smackers as Quinn's head brushes against hers softly, Santana makes her best bitchy-proud face. She may not want to get to know any of the rest of them, but if Quinn is her friend, she knows she'll get through cheer camp without killing anybody. It's only the beginning for them, she can just feel it.

Let's just stop keeping count, by lightblue-Nymphadora

It was about two weeks after the infamous Hotel Incident (at least, infamous in their minds - no one else knew). Santana had just finished up the dishes and settled down on the couch with her favorite Stephen King novel when the doorbell rang. Her overactive imagination had already come up with the names and murder weapons of the three serial killers who were obviously at the door when her phone buzzed.

Q: It's me, bitch. Open the door.

Santana grinned and ran over, sliding the apartment door open.

"Surprise, S," Quinn said. "Have you had dinner yet?"

"Uh, yeah."

"Good. Let's go make this a three-time thing."

It was a month later, and Santana hadn't seen Quinn again since. They'd texted though. Usually, it was just a once a day thing to say hi and make sure neither of them was in need of bail money. But occasionally, they'd hold a multi-text conversation. So when Santana's phone buzzed as she wrote her English paper, she didn't find it strange that it was from Quinn.

Q: *My roommate's leaving for Europe next Friday. Four-time thing? I'll show you around my school, too, if you want.*

Santana bit her lip, trying not to give away her smile to Kurt and Rachel.

S: *Sure. See you then - I'll bring booze.*

Quinn had been down a few times to see the NY Trio, as she called them. But she and Santana hadn't had any more "alone time". She was starting to go a little crazy, and had wondered more than once if you could get a sex addiction specific to one person. She decided to never raise the subject with Santana, but that didn't mean she wasn't going in for another hit (she'd giggled to herself for a while after thinking up that pun).

"Q?"

"S," she said. "We've progressed to phone calls now."

"One day, I might even get you to buy me dinner."

"You and your suitcase of wonders come up this weekend, and I'll *cook* dinner for you."

"...be there at five on Friday."

"Looks like five's the lucky number this week."

Santana didn't call her "Tubbers" anymore. It had long since ceased to even frustrate Quinn. The blonde knew it had been a term of endearment more than anything else. She'd never asked Santana to stop, but Santana had. Now she just called her Q, Quinn, or sometimes, due to a memorable first experience with Absinthe, Green Fairy. She wasn't sure the younger woman even consciously realized that she'd stopped with the nickname from high school – but Quinn had noticed. Quinn had noticed, and it worried her.

"Six-time thing, Satan?" she offered over the phone, purposefully using the old nickname to see what reaction it garnered.

"You're on, Green Fairy," Santana said. "It's your turn to travel again, by the way."

Quinn started packing once she hung up the phone, trying to ignore the butterflies in her stomach.

It had been a few months since their sixth time together. Neither girl's schedule was conducive to traveling at the moment. Quinn was in the middle of her sophomore research project, and Santana was working full time on top of a full time schedule at NYU. Both of them were going crazy, but it was Santana who broke first.

"I'm coming up there," she said over Skype. It was one in the morning and both of them had just gotten home. "Fuck the diner, I'll get someone to cover for me. I need – sex," she said, hoping Quinn hadn't noticed the hesitation.

Quinn, of course, had noticed. But she wasn't going to say anything if Santana wasn't. "Me too. Seven, and possibly eight-time thing, and we're not leaving the apartment all weekend."

"Sounds like a plan to me."

It was a rainy November afternoon when Quinn showed up to the apartment, sobbing.

"I... I'm sorry. I know – I should have called."

"Get in here, Q," Santana said, taking her by the hand and pulling her into the apartment. "What is it? What happened?"

"My dad was in a car wreck. He's fine, but...he drained my savings account to pay off his hospital bills."

"WHAT?" Santana bellowed. "He can't do that! It's illegal!"

Quinn gave a hollow laugh. "Well, it's not like I can afford a lawyer now, can I?"

Santana pulled her into a hug. "We'll figure something out, okay?" She felt Quinn nod, and was about to pull away when she felt the blonde's lips on her neck. "Q..."

"I know – we shouldn't. I'm upset, and you're pissed. But...I need this Santana. I need you."

Santana nodded, and led the way back to her room.

—

"You know something?"

"Hmmm?" Quinn asked, moving a little closer to Santana. They were both naked, after a night of marathon sex. The sun was just coming up, and Quinn was ignoring her rumbling stomach in favor of a few more minutes of rest with Santana.

"I think we should probably stop keeping count at this point."

Quinn couldn't help it – she laughed.

Beginnings, by Musicfreak810

It was a warm early summer morning when I met Santana Lopez. A duffel bag over one shoulder and a backpack over the other, all was left was boarding the shuttle bus to my first ever cheer camp. Tryouts for the Cheerios were two weeks before eighth grade graduation. Since I was from an outside district, I had to audition at McKinley during lunch just after Coach Sylvester was done with her supplement drink. She gave me five minutes, but apparently that was all I needed. Next thing I knew, I was signing away my summer to a three month long intensive cheer camp with the rest of the freshman cheerleading squads of the school district.

Standing before me was the shuttle bus that would be driving us 19 hours to Garland, Texas. When Coach Sylvester told me that we would be driving rather than flying I made the mistake of shooting her a quizzical look.

"I have twelve freshman girls who've never met before and are expected to be as tight as a virgin on prom night in three months. Nineteen hours on a bus should help speed up the process," she relented as she looked over some formal document.

"Understood, Coach Sylvester."

I handed my duffel bag to one of the parent volunteers loading up the luggage, handed Coach Sylvester my permission slip and made my way up the steps to the bus.

"ALL FRESHMEAT TO THE BACK OF THE BUS!" Coach Sylvester barked from her megaphone.

Well that settles that.

I chose the far back right window seat and placed my backpack under my seat. Nineteen hours on a bus sounded like the opportune time to get started on the summer reading assignments. I pulled out my copy of Lord of the Flies and started on the first chapter.

"Mind if we sit here?" asked a soft voice.

I looked up from the book I barely started and saw two girls, a blonde bright blue eyed tall girl and a shorter brunette with a deep russet skin tone and rich brown eyes. I couldn't place if she was hispanic or dominican, it didn't matter though. Regardless, she was beautiful.

"Blondie doesn't want to sit with us, let's find somewhere else," the brunette said in a hushed tone. The taller girl simply shrugged her off.

While I wasn't very interested in making friends, I was interested in being on top at this school. These two could make a formidable pair, the blonde with her innocent and aloof nature, and the brunette with her small but intimidating stature. "You both may."

"I'm Brittany, I would tell you my last name but I'm scared of being recognized." the blonde said as she made way for the brunette.

The same quizzical look I shot Coach Sylvester reappeared..

"Don't mind Britt, you'll start to catch on sooner or later," said the brunette as she took the middle seat. "Santana Lopez. And if you know what's best for you, you best stays out my way."

Santana took me off guard for a moment. Who did this girl think she was? My eyes wandered up and down, inspecting her frame, observing her body language. I really shouldn't underestimate this girl. She wasn't intimidated by me at all which really said something. Her dark eyes intrigued me, her guts had me sold though. I pursed my lips before responding, "Quinn. Quinn Fabray. I think the three of us could make a great team."

"Look, Blondie. I don't play well with others. With the exception of Brittany because she's my home girl. Aside from this bus ride, I wouldn't get too comfortable sitting next to me," Santana then placed a pair of earbuds into her ears and zoned out in her smartphone.

"Don't take Santana so personally. She's not as mean as she comes off. I think it's because she's cranky we had to get up so early this morning,"

"You know I needs my beauty z's," Santana said in a monotone as she put her sunglasses over her eyes and leaned back in her seat.

Brittany nodded enthusiastically as she prepared her iPod as well. The pair were incredibly close, there was no doubt about that. And the two would definitely be a formidable pair once we started school. Or, the three of us could dominate the entire school together. That was a compromise I was willing to make, Brittany was the most accessible of the three us. She was easily likable and fun. From what I had gathered from Santana was that she was tough and intimidating. Also, incredibly beautiful. She could catch anyone's eye and she would in the sinkhole that was Lima, Ohio. And I? The ice queen, with a smile that could send the cruelest frostbite and eyes as piercing as icicles. We would be legends at McKinley.

I laughed under my breath at the two of them, "There are three months of us stuck together, I think we'll all be making fast friends."

Every Princess Deserves Respect, by Nayanna Rivergron

Santana entered her class with a little trepidation; first grade was a lot different from kindergarten. You no longer had centers and naps were pretty much outlawed and the work was a lot harder. The work wasn't a problem for Santana though she was pretty intelligent for a six year old. She scanned the classroom and saw that there were only a few students in class already. She saw a little boy with a mohawk sitting next to a little blonde girl wearing glasses. There was an empty desk beside the other girl and decided to take it, to her delight her name was already on the desk in a name tag. She took off her back pack and put it on the back of the chair and sat down.

The little girl looked at the person next to her, "Hi my name is Quinn, and by you sitting next to me, you must be Santana." She gave the little girl with brunette hair next to her.

Santana reached out her hand to Quinn, "That's right. My name is Santana Lopez." She said proudly.

The little boy with the mohawk spoke up, "What kind of name is Santana? Are you related to Carlos Santana?"

Santana glared at the little boy next to Quinn, "The kind of name that is made of pure awesome! No I am not related to him for your information."

Quinn laughed at her new found friend next to her, she was really pretty and reminded her a little of Pocahontas. She was enchanted by the brunette girl next to her.

"Don't pay attention to Noah; he's just mad because he was named after someone from The Bible. You want to be friends?"

Santana smiled, "We can be the best of friends."

For the rest of the morning the two girls were inseparable glaring at anyone who would try to come between them.

Recess

Santana looked on the playground for her new friend she finally found her sitting underneath a tree reading a book. She didn't understand how someone could read a book during recess only nerds did that or so she thought.

"How come you're sitting by yourself?" Santana asked sitting next to her friend. She didn't understand why someone would want to read, when there was so much fun playing.

Quinn looked up from her book, "I don't like playing with the other kids they make fun of me."

Santana stood up and took Quinn by the hand and led her to the other kids, "Listen up!" She yelled out to the playground and everyone looked at her before she continued, "This is my friend

Quinn and if you mess with her, you will have to answer to me." She told them sweetly but with a little hint of aggression behind her voice.

Quinn looked at Santana, "You did that for me?" She asked shyly.

Santana gave her a million dollar smile, "Every princess deserves respect." She gave her a little wink.

15 Years Later

Quinn and Santana were surrounded by their friends and family as they celebrated their five year anniversary. The journey they took to get to where they are now was a rocky one, which led them both to unspeakable heartache and a whole lot of pain. Quinn got pregnant her sophomore year of high school knocking her down the ladder, which caused Santana to become top dog. Although, Quinn was struggling Santana made sure that Quinn stayed afloat. She had Quinn's back when her ultra conservative parents kicked her out of the house. She was there when Quinn had Beth and gave her up for adoption. Santana held Quinn every night as she cried for the loss of her daughter.

Quinn was there for Santana through her coming out debacle with Finn. Quinn was with her when she came out to her parents and she was there for Santana after she was disowned by her grandmother. She nursed Santana through her issues with Brittany and even put the other cheerleader in her place, because she didn't like the way Brittany was treating her. Quinn was all too aware of her growing feelings for Santana but knew she couldn't compete because all Santana saw was Brittany.

Between break-ups, breakdowns, car accidents and a one night stand at a failed wedding, Quinn and Santana's friendship was still going strong. They were a constant presence in each other's lives most people would label their friendship as toxic because of its push-me-pull-me mentality. It wasn't toxic to them it was just how they worked. It worked well for them because here they are celebrating their five year anniversary. It was a night filled with love, laughter, and joy. The happy couple made their way out to the dance floor as the soft strands of *We've Got Tonight* started playing in the background. That's their song the one song that began their journey of going from a two time thing, to a forever type thing.

"Who would have thought we would have made it to five years?" Quinn asked her wife.

Santana gave her a grin, "Remember when I told you that we always were two ends of the same bitch-goddess spectrum. Maybe that's why we love each other so much. And slap each other? We get each other Quinn; it's always been us against the world."

"And we took on the world and became a lot stronger for it. Do you regret anything that's happened with us in the past?" Quinn asked hazel eyes shimmering with unshed tears.

Santana continued looking at Quinn with deep devotion, "I don't regret anything because it finally led me to you."

Quinn tried not to bite her lip as they swayed along to the music, "Even though we are older am I still your Princess?"

Santana whispered against her wife's lips, "You are no longer my princess, you have been moved up to Queen." She captured her lips in a soft kiss.

Quinn broke the kiss and whispered against Santana's lips, "Every Queen deserves respect." She mimicked those words that Santana spoke to her that faithful day on the playground.

And they all lived Happily Ever After!

Quinntana Begins, by noiseinallthequietspaces

You've met her before - countless times in your dreams but you've met her physically before as well.

Once when you were both six years old at an afternoon school club. She sat with her bright hazel eyes focused on the floor, her lips marred with a saddened frown as her fingers clenched the soft fabric of her skirt. You remember the urge to press your fingers against her cheeks, to wipe away any evidence of her sadness with a soft smile and a playful joke. You remember the way that you nudged her shoulder, holding out a set of crayons to her hopefully before nodding your head towards a spare table with a large piece of paper laid out carefully. You remember the way that her lips curled upwards and she smiled - a sight that stole the air from your lungs and forced your heart to skip a beat. You remember the way that you took her hand, held her fingers tightly and tugged her towards the table. You remember her soft laughter.

The next time you met, you were both ten years old. You stood on the edge of a football pitch, your eyes taking in the sight of the parents crowded around the edge of the pitch - looking for your own parents when you saw the bright blonde hair and a flicker of deep hazel orbs. You remembered her laughter then, despite the years between your first meeting, and you felt your heart skip in hope. Standing on opposite sides of the pitch you caught her eyes and frowned at the sight of dull emotionless orbs staring back at you. You remembered her bright golden brown eyes perfectly - eyes that glistened with amusement and happiness. You knew that you wouldn't have forgotten those eyes.

At the end of the game, you stand with your team, disappointed at your defeat, but you watch as that blonde haired hazel-eyed girl walked slowly away from the pitch with her eyes downcast. You watched as her teammates yelled in celebration forgetting to include her in the victory despite her dogged defence of the goal line throughout the match. You watched as her eyes hardened despite her lip wobbling. You watched as she shouldered her bag, smiling at the teacher before beginning to walk away from the pitch and you frowned, because her parents didn't come to meet her and she walked on her own.

You met her again when you were twelve years old. The last proper meeting.

You stood at the front of a small classroom, shaking with nerves, introducing yourself to the class after transferring to a new school because of your father's job. You remember her eyes - dull golden brown orbs that barely lightened when she lifted her head to regard you before waving to the chair at her side. You wanted to cause her to smile, you wanted to cause her lips to curl upwards in contentment and you wanted to cause her eyes to lighten with happiness.

You remember the way that her voice wobbled when she introduced yourself to her and you remember the way that her eyes widened when you told her that you remembered her. You also remember the way that she apologised because she had forgotten you. You remember the way that she glanced away and bit her bottom lip.

You remember everything about your first meetings with Quinn Fabray - Lucy at the beginning.

You remember the sadness for the final meeting, one that didn't involve you introducing yourself but introducing her.

You remember the way that her eyes blinked open slowly, her hazel orbs dull and sightless for a long minute before focusing on your face. You remember the way that her lips pursed and her eyebrows furrowed before her mouth opened. No words left her lips at first; you remember the choked rasp of her voice before you lifted a small cup to her lips and helped her to swallow a mouthful of water. You remember the confused expression spreading across her face as she looked at you, connecting the space between your eyebrows with your lips and your eyes with your nose before her lips parted once again and she began to speak.

"Who are you?"

You remember your heart breaking as you force words passed your lips.

"I'm Santana." You pause, swallowing hard in order to speak around the lump in your throat. "I'm your wife."

What If, by ofendlesswonder (ConflictedCalypso)

The first time she meets Santana, she's fifteen, and it's her first day at her new high school, having transferred from her last mid-way through the year, after the winter break. She's not the same girl she used to be – her face is different, and so is she. She wears her clothes, clothes that wouldn't have had a chance in hell of fitting just six months ago, like armour, keeps her head held high as she strides through the halls of McKinley High for the very first time.

She doesn't know anyone here, and it's almost a relief, to not have to worry about who might be hiding around the next corner, ready to spit their acerbic words in her face – no, instead *she's* prepared to be the one firing the insults, anything to be on top here, to not feel the way she had at her last school.

She draws attention immediately, because she's the new girl, revels in it, as people turn to stare. She paints a self-satisfied smirk on her face, acting as if she couldn't care less, though feeling so many eyes on her, *appreciating* her, rather than searching for something to criticize, is exhilarating.

She's never felt anything like it, and she's still on cloud nine when she finds her first class of the day, settles into a seat in the centre of the back row, and scans the room, taking in her classmates. There aren't many people there – she's early, wanting to grab the best seat in the house, but she observes those there already carefully.

There's a dark-haired girl, in the front row, writing furiously in the notebook open on her desk in-front of her – Quinn dismisses her immediately, with a cruel callousness that she knows she must adopt if she is to be what she wants to be here, because this girl is not the type she needs by her side. Perhaps in another life, at her old school, they would have been friends, but not now.

Two boys enter the room, one with short dark hair, the other with a mohawk that looks ridiculous. Both are good looking, both are wearing football jerseys, proudly, as they laugh at a joke, high-fiving a few of their friends on the way to the back of the room, towards Quinn.

She knows that *these* are the people that she should be trying to integrate with, so she puts on a smile as they glance her way, noticing her for the first time, and watches them do a double-take. Mohawk-guy slides into the desk next to her with a grin, and his friend moves to sit beside him.

"Hey, new girl," Mohawk says, slinging an arm over the back of his chair as he turns to face her. "You got a name?"

"Quinn," she replies, still fixing a smile on her face, rest of the room ignored, for now, as she focuses on trying to worm her way into their social circle.

"I'm Puck, and this here is Finn," he nods towards the guy on his other side, who smiles sweetly, apparently not quite as confident as his friend, and Quinn warms to him immediately.

"And you're in my seat, Blondie." The voice comes from in-front of Quinn, and she turns to see a girl stood before her, hands on her hips, and wow, is she gorgeous. She's in a cheerleader's

uniform, with a sinfully high skirt, her dark hair pulled away from her face and back into a high ponytail.

"I didn't realise they were assigned," Quinn replies smartly, meeting the gaze of the other girl and staring back defiantly – her eyes are such a dark shade of brown that the blonde wonders whether it'd be possible to drown in them.

"They're not. But that one's *mine*." It's practically a growl, and Quinn glances to her side, to Puck, and realisation dawns and she smirks, because *now* it becomes obvious – she's staking her claim on this boy, warning Quinn away, but she knows how to play this game. And she's not interested in him, regardless.

"Should've gotten here earlier then, shouldn't you?" She watches a muscle in the girl's cheek twitch, holds her gaze, because she has to prove herself in this moment. *This* is someone that she needs by her side, rather than as an enemy, because she has a feeling that the brunette would be a formidable one.

"Santana," the voice comes from over the brunette's shoulder, and Quinn glances to see another cheerleader, this one blonde, appear at the brunette's side. "Just sit in my seat, and I'll move over one."

Santana mutters something that Quinn doesn't quite catch, but she's sure it isn't complementary as the brunette slides into the seat on Quinn's right, dragging the chair back as noisily as possible, and Quinn just rolls her eyes.

"I'm Brittany," the blonde announces, blue eyes sparkling with warmth as she smiles, and Quinn thinks that she'd rather have this girl sat next to her than Santana.

"Quinn," she smiles back, and Brittany nods before moving to her new seat.

"What kind of name is 'Quinn'?" Santana mutters with scorn, and when the blonde turns to face her she finds the brunette watching her with carefully guarded eyes.

"What kind of name is 'Santana'?" She counters, liking the way it flows off her tongue, and Santana glares at her for a second before her face transforms into a wicked smirk as she leans back on her chair.

"You know what, Q?" Quinn raises an eyebrow at the nickname, but she knows that nothing can ever be worse than her last – chants of Lucy Caboosey still ring in her ears, sometimes – and looks back at Santana with a neutral expression, expecting that what the brunette says next will be a make or break moment. "I think I'm gonna like you."

The first time they kiss – properly kiss, not one of those barely-there pecks on the lips that happen during the like of games like spin the bottle at high school parties – it's when Quinn is staying in New York during the summer after she finishes her first year at Yale.

Kurt and Blaine were off travelling, and Santana and Rachel had extended the invitation of moving in for a couple of months, probably so they had someone else there lest they try to

murder one another. She accepted immediately, because otherwise she'd just be staying at Yale for the summer, alone, trying to find a shitty job to occupy some of her time, or back in Lima, counting down the minutes until she could leave again.

She and Santana have never had an easy friendship, but she likes to think that spending some time apart, in different states, for a year has helped them become closer. And Rachel, particularly over the last few months, since Finn had passed away, has become one of her best friends.

It's when Rachel's out with her fellow cast-mates of *Funny Girl* that it happens, though. They're sat in the living room of the New York loft that had been Quinn's temporary home for the last two weeks, curled up on the couch with a bottle of wine.

Quinn has always thought that Santana was attractive, ever since that first day – how could she *not*? – but she thinks that the brunette looks best like this, dressed in baggy sweatpants and an oversized t-shirt, face make-up free and hair damp from the shower.

The blonde has to struggle to keep her gaze from roaming over Santana's body, inebriated as she is by the wine (she's had three glasses, already). Things have been... odd, between them, lately. Flirtatious, even, and Quinn isn't really sure where the shift has come from, but she doesn't really mind, either.

It's taken her a long time to become comfortable with who she is, and she thinks that a part of that person is probably attracted to women, and Santana is one of the most beautiful ones that she knows.

The brunette catches Quinn watching her, raises an eyebrow and smirks – she looks so predatory, leaning back against the arm of the couch, as she suddenly shifts so that she's just an inch or so away from the blonde, and Quinn wonders what the hell Santana is doing.

"See something you like, Q?" She teases, but there's an edge to her voice that lets Quinn know that she's interested in the answer. And two can play at this game – she's had plenty of practice perfecting her flirting, during high school, when she'd drawn first Finn, then Puck, then Sam into her arms.

"Wouldn't you like to know?" She catches Santana's eye, feels her gaze practically *smoulder*, and God, the way Santana is looking at her... it's almost like she's trying to hold herself back from lunging the short distance between them, and Quinn suddenly wants her to, with a desperation that she didn't realise she could feel.

It should scare her, to want to kiss her best friend, to want to rip off her clothes and claim every inch of her body with her lips, but it doesn't. It just brings a heat to her stomach, an ache between her legs, because she'd really *really* like to see Santana on her back, underneath her body, and it wasn't like it had to *mean* anything. They were young, she was curious, and she was sure Santana wasn't going to turn her down – Quinn knew she looked good, had caught Santana staring at her longingly on more than one occasion, even way back before she'd admitted to herself, and everyone else, that she was gay.

"I would, actually," Santana murmurs in reply, voice low, dangerous, and Quinn swallows, hard, because maybe they've gone too far. She feels the weight of the wine glass in her hand, glances down to see that it's still a quarter-full, and brings it to her lips, just to allow her a few moments to *think*.

It's cheap wine that tastes pretty fucking awful, but by this point she's had too much to really care, and downs the remainder in her glass in one easy gulp, before turning to shove the glass on the coffee table.

When she turns back, Santana is suddenly right *there*, in-front of her, so close that she's surrounded by the faint scent of the brunette's shampoo, and her breath catches in her throat. Their eyes meet, and Santana's are dark, darker than Quinn ever remembers seeing them before, and they're filled with a heat that makes her shiver.

And then there are warm, strong, hands sliding over her hips, pulling her closer until she's straddling Santana's waist. Her hands rest on the back of the couch, and her chest is heaving even though nothing's *happened* yet, but she feels the anticipation, the anticipation that's been building for so long, and it makes her quiver under the gentle stroking of Santana's thumbs over the sharp bone of her hips.

She's thought about what this would be like before. The first time had been when she'd first found out about Santana and Brittany – she'd lain in bed, later that same night, closed her eyes and wondered what it would be like, to be in Brittany's place. When she'd found her hand sliding down her stomach and under the material of her shorts without even thinking, to alleviate the sudden ache she'd felt at the apex of her thighs, she'd snatched it away, rolled over, and forced the thoughts away.

That didn't mean that it was the last time it happened, though. Once she'd walked in on the two of them going at it, Brittany's head working in-between Santana's legs, and the *sounds* she'd heard Santana making before she'd realised what she was doing and made a hasty escape... they'd haunted her for weeks, as had the look on the brunette's face.

And now... now Santana's underneath her, trapped in place by the blonde's legs around her waist, Quinn's hands on either side of her head. She's biting her lip, teeth pressing so hard that the skin underneath flashes white, and Quinn can feel herself still trembling beneath Santana's barely there touch, and she doesn't think she's ever wanted something as much as she wants Santana in this moment.

But she's scared to move, because she doesn't want things to change. She doesn't want to ruin the friendship that they've managed to strike up, now so much better than it had been in high school. But it's been charged with sexual tension for weeks now, ever since Quinn had offhandedly mentioned that she'd fooled around with a girl at Yale at a party when she'd had too much to drink, and enjoyed it.

She wonders what it was about that moment that had caused such a shift in their dynamic. Was it that Santana had never before considered Quinn in that way, because she thought she

hadn't a chance before? Or was it that now that she knew Quinn wasn't opposed to the idea, she really wanted to see what she was like in bed?

Quinn wasn't sure it really mattered why, though, as Santana's fingers dig into her hip, nails pressing against her skin in a possessive move, and she groans, low in her throat, because *God* it feels amazing.

She hears Santana's breath catch at the noise, opens her eyes from where they've fluttered closed, and almost stops breathing because the way Santana is looking at her... like she means *everything* – she just doesn't know how to deal with it.

She wonders if this would be happening if they hadn't opened that bottle of wine, but quickly pushes the doubt away – they've been building towards this moment for too long, it was an inevitability. They just might have sped things up a bit, taking away the inhibitions that had kept them cautious with one another so far.

It's hard to remember why they've waited for so long, though, as she lowers her head, mouth pressing against Santana's with a hesitancy that she hadn't meant to show. It's barely a kiss – just their lips ghosting over one another – but it's enough to set Quinn's every nerve aflame, her hands twisting into Santana's dark locks and just holding her place for a moment, absorbing just what, exactly, is happening.

They breathe the same air, eyes closed, for several heavy moments before it becomes too much, before Santana's touch starts to burn the skin of her waist, until she just *needs* to kiss her fully, properly, to taste her, and this time Santana meets her halfway.

Their first kiss was chaste, gentle, but the next is exactly the opposite, exactly what Quinn would have expected of Santana – all heat and passion and strength. When her tongue dips into Quinn's mouth for the first time the blonde moans, hands tightening into Santana's hair, which in turn makes the brunette pull Quinn tighter against her body, and she's surprised Santana can't feel the heat of her, even through her jeans, pressed against Santana's stomach.

They kiss for a long time, taking the time to explore, because who knows if they'll get this chance again? If they'll even be able to look one another in the eye tomorrow? Quinn is determined to take her time, because if this is the only chance, the only night that she ever gets to spend with Santana Lopez then she's damn well sure going to make it worth it.

Soon kissing just isn't *enough*, though, and her hands ghost down the brunette's sides, before she reaches the hem of her shirt and drags it upwards before she starts to second-guess herself, because okay, she's not a virgin, but she's had sex exactly once with Puck on *that* night, and while she's not inexperienced in other areas, she knows that Santana has more to work with than she does. It makes her feel nervous, a little inferior, even, but instead of letting it show she lifts the shirt over Santana's head and throws it over the back of the couch before crushing their mouths together again.

It's electrifying, to feel bare skin beneath her fingertips as she timidly runs them from Santana's stomach and up to the edge of her bra. She pauses there, uncertain once again, but

then a pair of hands are over the back of hers, curling so that she's cupping Santana's breasts and it's so *hot* that Santana's so in control of this that she groans low in the back of her throat, and again when Santana draws back, away from Quinn's mouth, nipping at her bottom lip in the process.

"I'm not going to break, Q," she murmurs, her breath ghosting against the blonde's ear, before her lips move down the side of Quinn's neck. "And if you think I don't want this as much as you, then you're an idiot."

The words are breathed against the juncture where her neck and shoulder meet, and when teeth close around the skin her hips buck forwards, and a hissed *fuck* leaves her lips, and she can practically feel Santana smirking against her skin as her hands release Quinn's to move to divest the blonde of her shirt, too.

Determined not to be outdone, as Santana's mouth continues to work at the same spot – it's always made her weak at the knees, but somehow Santana manages to make it feel a thousand times more intense – she slips one hand under the cup of the brunette's bra, finds the hardened bud underneath her palm and lets just the tip of her thumb graze over it, both feels and hears Santana's moan against her skin.

It's good, to know that she doesn't suck at this – she may have had that drunken night at Yale, but it had barely led to anything more than kissing before they'd both passed out, and to know that she's doing something *right* just spurs her on even more.

She's too distracted, by the sounds Santana makes when she rolls her nipple between her fingers harder than before, and she doesn't notice until it actually *happens* that Santana's hands are at the clasp of her bra, opening it with ease and then pulling at it impatiently until it's on the floor.

Quinn's hand drops from Santana's chest, move automatically to cover herself, because she's never felt quite this vulnerable, but the brunette just shakes her head vehemently, reaching for the blonde's arm and pulling it away.

She doesn't placate her with words like 'you're beautiful', because that's just not how they work. Instead, she shows her, her head dipping as she leans to take one of the blonde's nipples into her mouth.

"Oh, *God*," Quinn breathes, once hand scrabbling for purchase on the back of the couch as Santana's tongue swirls, and then her teeth graze lightly, because she just needs something to hold on to, to ground herself. Her other hand twists once more in Santana's hair, holding her close.

She can't help thinking, as Santana pays the same attention to her other breast, what it would be like to have that mouth working somewhere *else*, and even just the thought of it makes her moan, and suddenly her jeans are far too restricting, and she's pretty sure her underwear is already ruined from what Santana's doing to her – she doesn't want to wreck her pants, too.

She pulls Santana away from her chest with a gentle tug to her hair, soothes away the questioning expression with a brief kiss, before she makes a move to stand, pulling the brunette

up after her. Her knees ache from being in the same position for so long, and she winces as she makes to drag Santana toward her bedroom – Kurt's bedroom, technically, but Santana had stolen it while he was away, leaving Quinn with the brunette's old room, which was really just a mattress on the floor with some curtains around it for privacy.

Santana isn't content with keeping her hands off of Quinn for longer than two seconds, though, and she spins the blonde around to kiss her again, hands moving to grab at her ass roughly, yanking her closer, and Quinn gasps as Santana's thigh slips between her legs, hips automatically grinding down, because she just needed *some* kind of friction or she might actually explode.

Santana's hands find purchase on her hips as she's pressed against a wall – distantly, she hears things fall to the ground, wonders what they've managed to walk into and probably break, but she's too lost in Santana to really care – with the blonde braced against the wall, Santana's free to press her thigh upwards, rocking into Quinn's hips, and the blonde can only hold Santana closer, her nails sure to leave marks on the brunette's back.

It just feels so *good*, and she had no idea that it would be like this – if she had there was no way she would've been able to wait for so long. Already, she can feel herself growing close, wonders if she's going to come like this, against Santana's thigh, still half-dressed, pressed back against the wall in the main room of the loft, when Santana pulls back, resting her forehead against Quinn's, breaths coming in quick, sharp pants.

"You're going to be the death of me, Quinn Fabray," she whispers, and Quinn can only shake her head, because surely that was backwards. When she opens her eyes, Santana is looking at her like she's never seen her before, and she wonders if she looks as hot as the brunette does, flushed with her mussed hair and bruised lips; she was wrong, earlier, because like *this* – this is when Santana looks her best.

She steps back, then, takes Quinn's hand, and leads her forward, into her room, and suddenly things start to feel a lot more intimate than they had before. The gravity of what they were about to finally hit her, as she watches Santana shove her sweatpants down her hips, unclasp her bra and then step backwards so that she was sitting, perched on the edge of the bed, eyes assessing Quinn's face carefully.

Quinn knows what she's doing – she's letting her make the first move, like she had before they'd kissed, because out of the two of them, she's the more likely to regret this in the morning. But she doesn't think that she'll ever be able to live with herself if she lets this moment slip through her fingers, so she pushes all of her doubts and her insecurities away, and reaches for the button of her jeans, peeling them down her legs and tossing them to the side, revelling in the feeling of freedom when she's finally rid of them.

Santana's eyes leave her face to rake across the length of her body, and there's such desire on her face that it makes Quinn shudder, and then she's climbing onto the bed, pulling Santana ontop of her, losing herself in the feeling of skin against skin, of what it feels like to be so intimately pressed together with another woman.

She runs her hands through Santana's hair again as their mouths re-connect, as they rock into one another in a rhythm that starts off slow but quickly builds. When she feels one of Santana's hands drag across her skin, between their bodies, Quinn's breathing nearly stops, but she's just teasing – she scrapes her blunt nails across the taut skin of Quinn's stomach, feels her shudder beneath the touch, before she moves to the outside of the blonde's thighs, tracing the skin with feather-light touches.

It's enough to drive Quinn insane, and she tears her mouth away from Santana's, her head falling back against the pillow as she claws at the skin of the brunette's lower back, pulling her closer. Santana's lips trail down the outside of her neck, and then her hand is cupping Quinn's sex through her underwear and God she's going to die before Santana even touches her properly.

"Santana," she gasps out as her fingers press down, drawing absent circles around her clit through the damp material and her hips buck upwards. "I-I need..." she trails off, because to be honest, she doesn't know what she needs, aside from to alleviate the building pressure she can feel from the gentle touch of Santana's hand but she's not good at this, she doesn't know how to say what she wants but then Santana's slipping her fingers inside the flimsy lace of her panties and okay, yeah, she's *definitely* going to pass out.

She knows that there'll be time, later, to explore one another's bodies properly, to tease one another until they can barely stand it – but now's not that time, and Santana's touch is deliberate as she slides her fingers through wet heat. She finds the blonde's clit easily, flicks her thumb across it a few times until Quinn can barely even comprehend the noises she's making, and then Santana moves lower, circling around her entrance teasingly, until Quinn's hips press upwards, seeking *more* than what she's getting.

Santana pulls away from the skin of her neck – where she's undoubtedly left a mark, a stain on Quinn's skin to remind them both of what had happened on this night, for days to come – to watch the blonde's face as she slides one finger into her centre.

Quinn feels the weight of Santana's gaze on her, but can't keep her own eyes open – they slide shut as Santana begins to move her hand, pulling out completely before pressing back in, using the added pressure of her thigh against the back of her wrist, soon adding another finger.

Quinn's already close, has been pretty much since they first kissed. Her hands return to Santana's hair as the brunette dips down to take one of the blonde's nipples into her mouth once more, her tongue grazing the tip as her thumb flicks against her clit in time with the thrust of her fingers, and it's not much longer before Quinn comes undone – her back arches off the bed, and she holds Santana close against her chest as she rides out the waves the brunette coaxes from her, with her hand still moving between her thighs.

It's only when she stops shaking, her back returning back to bed, that Santana pulls away. Quinn feels her roll to the side, but doesn't open her eyes – she doesn't know if she can – as she tries in vain to catch her breath. She can hear the thundering of her heart in her ears, finally opens her eyes to see Santana watching her with dark eyes, and she feels a smile tug at her lips because *wow*.

She doesn't say anything as she shifts, throwing a leg over Santana's waist, using the momentum to roll them over so that she's straddling the brunette's waist. She doesn't think she needs to – they can talk about it, if they want to, if they're *brave* enough to, in the morning.

But for now?

For now she has a very naked, very *hot* Santana Lopez settled beneath her hips, her eyes dark with desire, and her skin flushed with want, and there was no way in hell that she was going to let this night go by without knowing what it felt like to feel Santana come undone beneath her touch.

Their relationship begins several weeks later. They'd been sleeping together ever since that first night – Quinn has lost count of how many times she's snuck into Santana's bedroom once Rachel had gone to bed, only to slink back out in the early hours of the morning, skin covered in a fine sheen of sweat, sated.

They steal moments whenever they can, be it when Rachel's out at rehearsals (which occurs with increasing regularity as her opening night looms), or when they're out in New York, be it a hasty kiss (and occasionally something more), in a bathroom, or teasing touches across skin when they're pressed together on the dancefloor of a bar.

They can barely keep their hands off of one another, and it's like nothing that Quinn has ever felt before. She still hasn't quite processed that it's *Santana* making her feel like this, but she feels like she's getting there.

It's just so *easy*, easier than she'd have ever thought. Sure, they still fight, because they always will, that's just how they are – just last night they'd had a blazing row, over something that Quinn can't even remember now, that had Rachel fleeing from the loft and ending up in Santana fucking her against the back of the couch.

They were sat on the couch, currently, Quinn sandwiched in-between Santana and Rachel, watching some shitty reality TV show and just enjoying spending some time together, keeping away from the blazing summer heat of the city outside.

It's nice, to be spending time with her friends. She's just *enjoying* this summer more than any other she's ever had in her life, because she's finally starting to feel like *herself*, and she's finally *doing* something just for herself, and it's... She's just *happy*.

Rachel rises to her feet in the ad break, disappearing to the kitchen to make some popcorn, and that's when Santana turns towards her, looking at her with an expression that Quinn can't quite place.

"What?" She asks, feeling suddenly self-conscious. She resists the urge to ask if she's got something on her face, because she knows she doesn't, and Santana just laughs at the look on her face, but doesn't say anything. So Quinn turns away, calling out to Rachel to bring her a drink back with her.

"Hey, Q," Santana finally says, and the blonde turns back to face her, one eyebrow raised in expectation. "Wanna be my girlfriend?"

"I – *what?*" Quinn gapes, because of all the things that she'd ever expected Santana to say, this was probably the last on her list. Sure, they've been fooling around, but she didn't necessarily want more (okay, that was a lie, she *totally* wanted more), but she'd never thought that Santana would want the same. She wasn't even entirely sure that the brunette was over Brittany, was definitely not sure that they'd work as anything more than friends that just had sex on occasion (okay, pretty fucking regularly, but who was counting?)

"It's just a question, Q, not the end of the world," Santana says, in a careful way that suggests she's choosing each word cautiously. "If you don't want to it's okay."

"No," she replies immediately, because she doesn't want Santana getting the wrong idea, it's just that it's been sprung on her so quickly that it's sent her into a spin. "I just – I wasn't expecting it."

"Okay. Think about it for a bit, then." Only Santana could react so coolly, and it was more than a little infuriating, but Quinn can't really say much else because Rachel returns to the couch, then, bowl of popcorn in one hand and two bottles of water in the other – she passes one to Quinn before settling back down, shooting the blonde a curious look, presumably at the expression on Quinn's face, but she just shakes her head and turns back to the TV, trying to focus on the show but failing miserably.

If she was being honest with herself, then yeah, Santana was kind of everything that she wanted – a fact that had just been driven home by her short time in New York, something that, deep down, she'd probably always known. But she'd never thought she had a chance, always though that, in the end, she and Brittany would be together forever.

Maybe they needed a conversation about that, she muses to herself, jumping when Santana's hand grazes across her thigh when she leant over the blonde to steal a handful of popcorn from Rachel. She glares at the side of the brunette's head when she sees her smirk, shoving at her shoulder so that she nearly tips onto the floor.

"Not cool, Q," the brunette pouts, popcorn spilling all over the place, but Quinn just laughs as the wounded expression on Santana's face. "Oh, you think this is funny?" She picks up a few kernels and tosses them towards the blonde's face, but she dodges them easily.

"Can we please *not* start throwing food?" Rachel asks with clear disapproval, clambering to her feet again and disappearing back to the kitchen, presumably to find something to clean up the mess with. Santana takes Quinn's distraction as an opportunity to lean over and run her fingers lightly up the blonde's sides – she's always been ticklish there, and she shrieks, twisting away but just managing to end up on her back, trapped by Santana's hands at her sides.

She pauses, looking up at the brunette looming above her, with a stupid smile across her stupid face, and she knows, in that moment, that she's well and truly done for – somewhere,

somehow, Quinn Fabray has managed to fall in love with her best friend, and even though the realisation should probably terrifying her, it sends a thrill through her body instead.

"Yes," she murmurs, the word barely louder than a whisper, and Santana cocks her head to one side, as if she didn't quite hear her. "Yes, I'll be your girlfriend." The grin that blossoms Santana's face is enough to smooth away any lingering doubts about Brittany – sure, they'd been in love, but they'd broken up and things were different now, out here in the real world – and when the brunette leans down to press their lips together in a searing kiss, she winds her hands through her hair, holding her close.

They're interrupted by someone clearing their throat, and Santana hastily scrambles backwards so that she's kneeling, and Quinn sits up quickly, flushing, to see Rachel staring down at them, blank expression on her face, arms folded across her chest. The three of them stand there, for a moment of heavy silence, each searching for the right thing to say, and it's Rachel who's the first to break it.

"*Finally.*"

"Uh, what?" Santana questions, frowning, but Rachel just rolls her eyes and turns away, bending to brush up the remaining popcorn kernels on the floor. "What do you mean finally?"

"Finally now I don't have to pretend that I don't know the two of you have been sneaking around together practically since Quinn got here, duh," she replies, and Quinn's mouth falls open, because though she hadn't really considered what reaction her friends would have, having never thought it would be anything she'd ever *need* to tell people about, casual indifference was surprising and how had she *known*?

"How did you...?" She trails off, asking the question after a few more moments of silence, when it became clear that Santana wasn't going to say anything else.

"Seriously?" Rachel asks, rising gracefully to her feet and resting her hands on her hips. "You realise we have no *walls* here, right? I've heard things. You're not exactly the quietest of people, you know."

Quinn is mortified, her face flaming red, but Santana just breaks into laughter when she catches her eye, so hard that Quinn thinks she might actually start crying, and she's just so *embarrassed* and it's Santana's *fault*, so she grabs the pillow lying next to her and socks her in the shoulder, effectively cutting her off.

"Rude," is all she says in response, but Quinn feels a little better, and then Rachel smiles encouragingly at her and slides back into her seat, and Santana takes her hand, twisting their fingers together and yeah, she thinks that right now, in this moment, that her life is pretty damn perfect.

Remake Me Over, by Onceforthefun

The first time Santana laid eyes on Lucy Quinn Fabray, there were no fireworks. Santana's heart didn't skip a beat. The earth didn't stop rotating on its axis, the stars didn't fall out of the sky, Eros didn't appear with an arrow to the chest. The ground didn't shift underneath her feet, yet Santana knew that the universe was telling her to shut up and listen. The first time her eyes fell on her, and Santana stood before the awkward, shy, chubby girl who looked as if it was just her against the world, Santana felt the anger slip away from her, and for a moment the world felt still. It was kind of ironic considering that it was Lucy's parents that were the cause of her anger in the first place. Well, Lucy's dad, anyway, but all the same, Lucy made it all go away.

It was on a Wednesday, a mere five days into her summer vacation, when her mom came home equally laden down with groceries and craft supplies, which should have been the first trigger, if Santana had been paying attention. Unfortunately, she was in the middle of coloring in Pooh Bear (her cousin, Tim, was only 6, and coloring with him reminded her of Brittany), and she was so immersed in finding the right shade of gold for him that she missed her mother's entrance. "Someone's moved into the old Carmichael Place!" Mrs. Lopez announced.

Santana froze, a goldenrod color pencil in her hand. Her mom was looking dead at her, so it was too late to sneak away, but she really, really wanted to try to make a break for it anyway and just face her mother's wrath afterwards. For some reason that Santana couldn't quite figure out, her mother had taken it upon herself to be the neighborhood welcome wagon, and because Maribel was all about family, Santana always got dragged along. Santana wasn't sure what it was about their neighborhood, but for some reason its sweeping manicured lawns, and overlarge houses weren't conducive to actually raising children her age. The last neighbors to move in who 'had a kid about her age', had a son that was three years younger, and the day turned into free child care on behalf of the new neighbors.

"Mija, get your jaw off the floor and help me with these bags. You two, sobrino. Vámonos!"

If her abuela hadn't shot her a glare from across the room, she would have taken her time getting up, but Santana had learned the hard way that you didn't mess with that mean old woman. She sat her colored pencils down on top of her coloring book, and jumped up to help her mother with the bags. "Mom, what *is* all this," Santana demanded, once everything was laid out on the table, the flour next to the craft glue and ribbon, wicker basket on the floor next to the cat food.

"You know I like to make a welcome basket whenever we get new neighbors."

Santana rolled her eyes, because yes *she knew* that her mother liked to do that, but she didn't understand why. She was sure that 85% of the stuff would end up in their trash can anyway. Tim, bless him, looked at all of the items taking over the kitchen, and turned to Mrs. Lopez. "Can I help, Tia Maribel?" Tim asked excitedly. The words were barely spoken before her abuela was hissing, "You better not have him playing in glitter or ribbons, Maribel, I'm not raising no sissy."

Sissy was code for gay, and to her abuela it was the worst thing in the world a man could be. As Santana watched her cousin's face fall a little, she bit her lip. She leaned in close to Tim's ear, "Playing with glitter doesn't make you a sissy; it makes you *fabulous*." Tim let out a little giggle, as Santana tapped him on the nose. "Te amo siempre, Tim," she added, just in case somewhere down the line it turned out that Tim was gay. Then he'd know, at least, that he'd always have Santana.

They quickly put the groceries away, and Maribel got started on making the brownies. Once those were in the oven, she and Santana got to work on composing the basket. Maribel was a basketeer, or whatever you call a woman who spends most of her time making baskets for other people. When someone at the church was sick, she made 'Get Well Soon' baskets, her teachers all got baskets on the first day of school, and the last, her coach got a basket, when they dined with the mayor, she got a basket, the crossing guard got a basket. The first thing people asked Maribel upon receipt of one of her famous baskets was when was she going to make this into a business, and to that she always asked, "How can I put a price on something that brings me so much joy?"

Mrs. Lopez liked making baskets so much, she even had a couple on standby in case a basket emergency came up. Once, Santana had mumbled that her mother was a basket case, and Maribel, upon hearing it beamed because she didn't realize her child had insulted her. Even worse, she had a t-shirt made up with those very words on it, and she had worn it when she dropped Santana off at school, and all of the kids had laughed, until Santana had growled at them. Thinking back on it, maybe her mother *had* known exactly how Santana had meant it.

Maribel had a formula for new to the neighborhood. In those baskets along with a few deserts, they got a folder that listed all of the important numbers in town. Not the numbers to the hospital, or the police and fire department, or anything mundane like that, but to the best Chinese take-out joint (as well as a coupon for free fried rice with purchase of entrée), the info line to the movie theatre where you could listen to the playing times, the golf course so you could schedule a tee time, and the numbers of the elementary, middle, and high schools. She also slipped in a calendar that was marked with little reminders of the best that Lima offered: the county fair, the Holiday light festival at the Botanical Gardens, the Fourth of July fireworks display. There was a self-made coupon book filled with coupons for just about everything imaginable, a sample kit from the Lima Day Spa which included slippers, a nail care kit from the good nail salon (with, of course, a coupon for a free nail polish on your first visit), toothpaste and toothbrushes (always two) complimentary from Dr. Jones' and family (and a coupon for a free teeth whitening), a packet of Homeowner's Association approved flowers, a Farmer's almanac, and of course Maribel's famous brownies complete with a list of ingredients in case you were allergic to anything.

Once everything was assembled, and neatly and delicately stacked into the basket, shrink wrap was put on, and Tim was giving the hair dryer to give it that bought in store look. He had done this so many times that he could do it just as perfectly as Maribel (Santana never had the patience for it), and then Maribel affixed the whole thing with a broad red ribbon, with white

curlicues. "Perfect," Maribel decided, looking at the finished product. She looked at her unfinished product and crinkled her nose. "Go change, please, mija," her mother instructed.

So while Tim got to go back into the living room to watch TV, Santana stomped upstairs to change into something 'more suitable'. When she came back down, she and Maribel crossed the street, and went three houses down to the Carmichael's old house, which happened to be one of the biggest on the block. Santana didn't know much about the Carmichael's except that they were old, they were unfriendly, and they smelled like cats. Mrs. Carmichael always had candy in her pocket that looked like she had found it in the attic and was on her way to throw it out whenever she offered it to Santana, and Santana still ran whenever she saw Mr. Carmichael lurking.

Anyone would have been an improvement on them, Santana was sure, but Santana didn't want to fuss about new neighbors. She wanted Brittany to be back from the Netherlands tomorrow, and she was still upset that Brittany's family had dared to take her best friend away from her for the *whole* summer. Santana had other friends, but they weren't the same as Britt, and really what was the point of having a pool if your best friend was thousands of miles away and wasn't there to tell you how hot you looked in your new swimsuits?

The movers were still unloading the moving van when they left the house, gift basket cradled proudly in her mother's arms. Maribel frowned slightly when she saw that the movers were Hispanic, but quickly smiled to cover over her displeasure. She said a quick hello to them as she continued up the walk to the front door. On the porch, Santana's mom took a slight moment to adjust her hair, to run a smoothing hand down her clothes, and to appraise Santana before she confidentially rang the doorbell. Santana counted to 30 before the door opened revealing a well-dressed but portly and unattractive man in his late 40s or early 50s with a mop of blonde hair that did nothing for him. His face was puckered, as if he didn't smile often, and red as if he actually had a hand in the moving though he clearly hadn't. He had the kind of neck that made him constantly seem ill fitted in the clothes that he wore...all in all he was just an unpleasant looking man.

He gave an unfriendly look as his gaze went from Santana to Mrs. Lopez. "We're not looking for a maid at this time," he said stiffly, starting to close the door.

Mrs. Lopez lifted the gift basket to his eye line. "I'm not help, my husband is Dr. Antonio Lopez at Lima General." Santana hated how it sounded like her mother said this to justify their existence in the neighborhood. "We're you're new neighbors, and we just wanted to say 'Welcome to Lima!'"

When the man didn't have the dignity to look embarrassed, Santana decided right then and there that she didn't like this man. She squeezed her mother's hand, trying to convey to her in that little gesture that they should go, that this tool wasn't worth their time, and that she didn't understand why she did this when they got this kind of reaction, in some form or the other time and time again. Yet, her mom steadily pretended that his calling her the help hadn't bothered her, but Santana knew her mom well enough to know that that wasn't the case.

She wanted to shout at this man for his assumptions, and for hurting her mom in this way, but out of respect for her mom, she said nothing, just quietly simmered with rage. "Oh," the man finally said. He stepped back a step. "Judy? You've got guests."

He discourteously invited them into the foyer. Santana got to thirty when footsteps joined them. "Who is it Russell? I wasn't expecting anyone."

"Neighbors. Mrs. Lopez and her daughter," he turned to Santana to acknowledge her for the first time.

"Santana," Maribel answered.

"Santana," Russell repeated, when Judy was standing beside him. Judy was a thin woman with pale skin, and blonde hair that was as perky and fake as the smile that she extended to Santana and her mom. Santana couldn't help thinking that she looked like a Stepford Wife. At the sight of her, she hid a little behind her mom, even though she was 13, and would be starting high school at the end of the summer.

"Well, I'll leave you to two hens to cluck. Where's Lucy?"

At the mention of her name, Lucy appeared shyly. Like Santana, she kind of peaked around her mother, even though she was the same age as Santana, and too old to be acting like that. The two girls just stared at each other for a full minute. Santana was by no means shy, but she hated meeting kids her age in front of adults because they automatically assumed that their shared age was enough to forge a friendship, and Santana didn't like most people. She was already certain that she wouldn't like this girl, either, based on her parentage alone.

But Lucy didn't seem to be anything like her parents. For one, she wasn't blonde. Her brown hair was over long, coming down to hang on her back, and it was brownish red. She wore glasses that covered a pair of the most beautifully sad eyes that Santana had ever seen, and looking at her Santana thought that was phrase was fitting for the girl in general. She was a sad masterpiece. Her clothes didn't fit well. She seemed almost scared of her own shadow. She was nervous and chewed on her bottom lip, something she was sure neither of her parents did, and she was right. Because as she looked the girl over, Judy snapped, "Lucy! Lip!"

Lucy opened her mouth, and her lip slipped out. "Sweetie, why don't you take Santana, is it, to the back yard, okay?"

Lucy nodded, and started heading away from her mother, gladly it seemed to Santana. Santana shot her own mother a pleading look, before she followed after the girl.

There was a swing set in the back yard, and this must have been where Lucy had been before their interruption because a book was perched carefully on the swing. This was where Lucy headed. "Our parents aren't out here. You don't have to talk to me if you don't want to," she said, picking up her book. "I don't care."

There was something about the way it was said, with a surprising hint of self-worth and importance that caught Santana's interest and drew her closer to the imperfectly perfect girl.

"What if I want to?" Santana demanded, sitting in the swing beside her. This earned her a smile.

"Well, then I can't stop you," Lucy returned.

"What are you reading?"

Lucy showed her the book. It was one that Santana had read before and had actually liked. Santana realized that there was a lot about Lucy to like, and they spent the rest of the afternoon just sitting on the swings, talking.

"This is my friend Noah, but everyone calls him Puck."

"Puck? Do they really? As in the fairy?"

"Fairy? Puck's not gay!"

"No," Lucy blushed and hurriedly explained, "in Greek mythology Puck's a fairy. Or a sprite."

"For real? Oh, I'm so going to tease him about that the next time I see him, but no Puck doesn't read. I don't think he even knows how. His last name's Puckerman and he thinks Noah is lame. Beside him is his best friend, Finn, the guy beside with the black hair and hat, that's Mike, and then their friend Matt."

"He's cute," Lucy whispered. Santana was sure it was because if her dad knew who she was talking about, he would probably disown her or something.

"Matt? You think Matt's cute?" Lucy nodded solemnly. Santana smiled. "He's my boyfriend."

Lucy's eyes widened. "You have a boyfriend?" she questioned in awe. Santana looked at Lucy like she was an alien. "Don't you?"

Lucy nodded quickly. "Oh yes, of course, but he's back home."

"Isn't this your home now?" Santana questioned, confused.

Lucy quickly nodded, ducking her eyes. "Yes."

"We don't hang out or anything outside of school, but Matt's cool. He's quiet, and he can dance. Not as good as Mike, Mike's a beast when it comes to dancing. He's like a dancing ninja or something, and I'm not saying that 'cause he's Asian. Well, I kind of am, but everyone else says that too."

Santana flipped a few pages. "And that's Britt!" Lucy could hear how Santana's voice changed when she said that, and she didn't like it. "Britt's s my best friend in the whole wide world. She's a bit of a ditz, but she's so much fun, and she can dance like really."

Lucy found herself staring at the picture. "She's pretty," Lucy mumbled.

Santana reacted to something in Lucy's voice. "You are too, Fabray." Lucy started to duck her head, but her father's stern voice brought her head back up. *A Fabray never bows their head like some*

lowly grazing animal. Her father was always quick to tell her what Fabrays didn't do, and she could tell, every time he scolded her that he clearly didn't think of her as a Fabray.

"Really?" Lucy questioned, a blush spreading profusely on her cheeks.

Santana smiled, blushing, too. "Yes, really, and don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise."

"No one's ever told me that before," Lucy whispered.

So far Santana's eyes had yet to leave her face. "Well, you are. Gorgeous, in fact, and if anyone ever says anything to the contrary, just tell me about it, and I'll beat them up, okay?"

Lucy nodded solemnly, even as she heard her father's voice telling her off for the gesture. She didn't care. Someone thought she was gorgeous! And not just any girl, but Santana, who was like the very definition of beauty, she actually thought that she was gorgeous!

From that moment on, the sun may as well have rose and set in Santana's eyes, as far as Lucy Fabray was concerned. Lucy had never met someone, certainly not any other girl, that was as self-possessed and assured of themselves as Santana was. Even though she'd only seen them in pictures, Santana had a ton of friends, yet it was to her house that she would come knocking on every morning, or would spend the night (when Russell was out of town), or it was over to her house which they would go. Santana had all the latest fashion magazines, and she would spend hours copying the glamorous models, trying out new lipsticks, eye liners, and mascara on Lucy, even though it all had to be wiped clean before she could go home.

Her big mission for the summer was the Cheerios. "The Cheerios?" Lucy questioned, the first time Santana brought it up. Santana started to roll her eyes, but then stopped. Lucy noticed that she did that a lot, not the eye roll, but the stopping when she looked over at Lucy.

"Yea, it's the name of the cheerleading squad. The name is kind of lame, I know, but it's like a big deal at McKinley High. It's the only acceptable sport for girls to play. It's really cool, though, because you get to wear these really short skirts to school, and everyone looks up to you and stays out of your way, and they compete in all these competitions all over the country. Sue's the cheerleading Coach, and people say that she's crazy, and she's half harpy, half banshee, but she's crazy good at what she does. McKinley's been number 1 in the nation as long as I can remember. Me and Brittney are both going to be Cheerios, so you have to be, too."

Lucy's lips pouted slightly at the mention of this other girl. She quickly covered up the reaction, but Santana hadn't noticed because she was busy talking about the team, and what it would be like when the two of them were on it together. And just that simply it became Santana's life goal to turn Lucy into a cheerleader.

Lucy didn't like the 'cheerleading practices' that Santana put her through, but she went along with it because if Santana was going to be a cheerleader, than she wanted to be one, too. So instead of complaining, she started getting up at 5:50 in the mornings, so she could be dressed by the time Santana showed up at 6:00 with a bottle of water and a banana, and they would jog together through the neighborhood. Lucy was sure that Santana could easily out distance her, but

not only did Santana never run ahead of her, she stayed right at her shoulder, or a little behind, but never in front.

To get Lucy to run faster, she found a method that worked better than her leading: Santana took the drill sergeant approach. She stayed by Lucy's side, and would yell things at the shy girl, using whatever it took to force Lucy to force herself for just that little bit more, even insults. On one day when Lucy was feeling miserable, and tired, and Santana had said one mean thing after another (but none about the things that Lucy was the most paranoid about), she had started to cry. Santana's look softened, but instead of apologizing she said, "Sue Sylvester is going to say things that are ten times worse, so if you can't handle an insult from your friend, you're not going to make it on the team."

The fact that Santana had called her her friend instantly made things better. Lucy hadn't had a friend before. And although Santana acted like she didn't care that she had made Lucy cry, she didn't say any other insults for the rest of the day, though she did make Lucy run an additional mile.

'Practices' didn't just consist of running. They did push-ups, sit ups, hand stands, cartwheels, handsprings, splits, pull-ups on a bar in the park, and anything else Santana could think of to get them into shape. They worked out first thing in the morning, took off the afternoons, and then did a lighter work-out in the evenings. Some nights Lucy had dinner with the Lopez's, and every now and then she got to spend the night. She and Santana would sneak out after Mr. and Mrs. Lopez were asleep, and they would camp out in the backyard and pick out constellations together. The first night they did this, Lucy accidentally let her head fall onto Santana's shoulder when she started to fall asleep.

When she panicked and quickly pulled away, Santana had only laughed, and pulled her back into her side. Santana, she learned, liked to cuddle. She didn't mind having Lucy close, either, which was a first for her because her parents didn't hug. They barely touched each other, much less her. In one summer, she was sure that Santana had touched her more than her parents had possibly done in her whole life.

As the summer wore on, Lucy began to change. The constant exercise Santana put her through, on top of the routine and change in diet that she had adopted for the past year, as well as an additional two inches in height slimmed her out considerably. On her next visit to the optometrist, she got contacts, and her glasses disappeared into a drawer in her closet. Although her new wardrobe consisted of the same clothes as before, they fit better on her smaller frame. It was Lucy's idea to dye her hair so that it matched her mom, dad's, and older sister's hair color.

Santana showed her how to walk with more confidence and swagger, and how to pretend that she was self-assured and in charge, even if she was filled with doubts. As long as Santana was beside her, she felt she could take over the world. Lucy felt so completely different from who she was at the start of the term, that she started wanting to be called by her middle name, Quinn, and her parents were eager to do so. Now when her father instructed her on the proper behavior of a Fabray, it actually sounded like he meant her as well.

Quinn woke up one morning, looked at herself in the mirror, and actually thought of herself as being beautiful. When Santana came over later that day, she actually said those exact words, before planting a kiss on Quinn's cheek. "What's that for?" Quinn demanded, blushing.

Santana only smiled shyly at her. "Because you rock, and when school starts we're going to rock the place together."

Quinn slyly touched the spot on her cheek that Santana had kissed, and wondered if it was possible for life to be this good. Santana was a godsend, and because she wasn't used to having good things in her life, she was certain that it wouldn't last.

It turns out she was right.

Two weeks after Lucy had fully become Quinn Fabray, Brittany Pierce returned home from her vacation. And at the very first sight of the smile that spread across Santana's lips when she saw her best friend again, Quinn realized that their magical summer together was officially over.

No, the world did not shift when Quinn and Santana met for the first time, no stars fell from the sky, but the very first time that Quinn met Brittany S. Pierce, she knew without a doubt that her world had ended.

Dry Cleaners, by PieAngel

"RACHEL!" The girl winces as she hears Santana yelling for her from inside her "room", which was basically just a corner of the loft curtained off. She breathes before responding, "Yes?" As hard as she tried, her voice still came out shaky and meek.

"WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS!?" Santana hollers, and Kurt sighs and puts on a pair of headphones, giving Rachel a mocking "good luck". She glares at him but is cut short by the sound of Santana demanding an answer.

"What are you talking about?" Rachel asks back, but she regrets it as soon as it leaves her mouth because she hears Santana growl and yank the curtain open, storming into their living space, skirt in hand.

She waves it vigorously in Rachel's face, "THIS, THIS IS WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT." The small brunette grimaces as she sees the orange stain on the otherwise white fabric.

"Oh...I...uh...that..." Rachel stutters, only further angering the already fired up Latina, who hardens her jaw, and speaks through clenched teeth, "What. The. Fuck. Is. This?" She repeats, and this time Rachel is smart enough to give her an actual answer.

"It's tanning spray..." Rachel mumbles. "I decide to be nice, for ONCE, and let you borrow my FAVORITE skirt. AND YOU GET TANNING SPRAY ON IT?!" Rachel shrugs, "UGH THAT WAS THE LAST TIME YOU EVER TOUCH ANY OF MY CLOTHES!"

Kurt makes a regretful sound, "Ooh girl, tanning spray does not, come out." The girls shoot him death glares, and if look could kill, he'd be dead by now.

Santana hastily grabs her purse and keys and storms out of the loft, slamming the door. Muttering Spanish profanities the whole time.

—

Santana's face is set in a scold the entire time that she is stomping to the dry-cleaners. Her skirt in a clenched shut, fist. If the people at this dry-cleaners can't get rid of the stupid stain...Rachel is a dead woman. Though she already is either way.

When she finally makes it to the place, she swings the door open and right away her mood changes. Because sitting behind the counter, is a gorgeous blonde, she looks up from her phone as the bell chimes and Santana notices her striking, hazel eyes.

The blonde smiles and Santana nearly melts. 'God, pull it together Lopez'. Santana walks up to the counter and sets her scold back in place. The girl frowns when she sees Santana scold.

"Someone's grouchy today," the girl teases, and normally Santana would be furious, but this time she just huffs. "So, what can we do for you?" She asks, smiling again, and Santana can't help but lose the scowl.

She drops her skirt onto the counter and the girl looks down at it, Santana notices that her name tag says Quinn. Hm, Quinn. A pretty name for a pretty girl.

Picking up the garment, Quinn inspects the orange stain, and raises an eyebrow at Santana, "Is this fake tan?" She asks, and Santana nods. Quinn hums, "You didn't strike me as the type who used those things." Santana doesn't miss the way Quinn's eyes scanned her, subtly, as she said that.

"I don't. My idiot roommate does." Quinn chuckles softly, and it gives Santana a light, feathery, feeling, "I'm guessing she's the one who stained it too?" Quinn muses, and Santana nods again.

"I am also guessing that you're gonna rip her head off?" This makes Santana smile, and Quinn looks back down at the skirt, "Well, she deserves whatever you plan on doing, this is a very nice skirt," she pauses, "though it would look even better with you in it."

Oh my god, she's flirting with me. Santana clears her throat and looks away from Quinn, "So, can you clean it or?..." Quinn bites her bottom lip, and Santana's eyes are trained on the lip. Damn, that's sexy...

"Well, a normal dry-cleaning won't, but I have a little something, something, that might." Santana smiles again, and Quinn smirks, "It's gonna cost you though..."

Santana sighs, of course, all she really wants is my money. Why didn't I suspect this. "How much?" She asks, as she looks through her purse, but Quinn places her hand on Santana's stopping her, and also sending sparks through Santana.

"Not money..." Santana eyes Quinn, puzzled. "If I get rid of the stain, then I want to see you in this skirt." Santana tilts her head slightly, confused, and Quinn replaces her smirk with a warm smile, "I want to see you in the skirt," Quinn continues, "when we go out on a date." Santana's smile returns. Maybe she won't have to kill Rachel after all...

You're such a saint, by quinnslopez

The first time Santana's world turned upside down, was when she just hit her sweet 16. Frankly, four days after her celebration, her parents announced they were getting a divorce and Maribel planned moving to Lima, Ohio with her daughter whether she liked it or not.

Staying at her dad's was out of question, since he worked days and nights and was hardly ever home, probably also leading to the split between her parents, however part of her wished she could stay back in New York with her father.

She was a sophomore at high school and has just been appointed to head-cheerleader by their coach, not only she was popular and had loads of friends at hand, ready to do whatever she ordered, also she was going "strong" with her current boyfriend Simon Nelson. Sure, he wasn't the biggest fish in the ocean and she just didn't find herself attracted to him, but he respected her boundaries and did good work for her reputation.

The feisty Latina worried about her friends, since she knew most of them would turn their back on her, once she left New York far behind.

Also, even if they did try to communicate with her, Santana wasn't quite sure if there was free wi-fi access in this small cow-town or if they even knew how to use technology.

—

Shortly before the Lopez family (excluding her dad) packed their stuff and left their dear old home, New York, in a rush (well not exactly, considering the traffic in New York City), the latina insisted on stopping by at Simon's during the ride.

She called him up earlier and told him to wait on his porch for her.

As Maribel slowed down the car next to the curb, the younger girl leaped out off the car, tagging towards the already waiting adolescent.

„Babe..." he took a step forward, trying to pull her into his arms. Santana slightly stretched her arm out, shoving him softly, yet firmly away from her body.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw her mother impatiently tapping her finger against the steering wheel.

„Look we need to talk. The long distance thing... It won't work. I need a warm boy underneath me, and clearly we both agree this relationship was only for social use."

The words sounded harsher than intended, especially since Santana didn't have time to pull a melodramatic break-up number. She wasn't even sure if he even had feelings for her or only used her like she did. The latter was more likely.

His shoulder sagged slightly.

„Yeah, I know, but I will still miss you" Lies. Why did boys always feel the urge to sugar-coat everything?

Santana finally allowed him to pull her in for a quick hug, before she hurriedly skipped back to the car, shouting „I'll text you" as she slammed the car-door shut.

"Are you ok?" Maribel asked, her hand lingering on the engine.
Santana glanced towards her mother, her lips pursed in a tight line.

"Do I look okay? I'm leaving fucking New York City for cow-town Lima"

Maribel chuckled at her daughter's determination.

"You'll like it, believe me"

—

Yes, it turned out Lima actually had access to wifi and no, not all of them were farmers.

People were generally friendly, yet more closeted minded and more stupid than for their own good.

On the first day of school, the girl was striding through the hallway alone, curious gazes lingering on her.

Santana was used to the attention and kept her chin up further than usual, her hips swaying and her eyes facing the prying glances with confidence.

The girl already knew she'd make it big in this school.

Alone the first day three guys asked for her number.

Even though many boys begged for Santana's affection, never as many asked her out the same day. Which was perhaps down to the fact, that she didn't uphold a reputation as the ice-queen yet and people actually dared talking to her.

Whilst lunch-break, she ended up in the cafeteria, poking mushy meat with her fork, until she finally pushed it away from herself, deciding she would skip lunch today. Or maybe she would just keep it for the next three years altogether.

She was not sure if she should try out for Cheerios this year, since the Coach seemed incredibly strict, forcing the girls to diet off nearly nothing 24/7. And Santana loved her food way too much to put up with this crap.

She was so caught up in her thoughts, she didn't even notice a tender person sitting down on the seat next to her.

Expecting one of those freaks from earlier, she prepared a series of insults, before she turned around.

The girl she faced took her breath away, immediately having forgotten the list of insults.

"Is it ok for me to sit next to you?" the girl asked, obviously having noticed the latina's expression.

Santana's heart pounded faster and her breath got caught in her throat.

Who was this girl of this incredible beauty? She looked almost angel alike, her hazel eyes piercing with determination, yet gentleness and long, wavy, blonde hair cascading down her thin shoulders.

"Yeah... sure" Santana's words came out more in a squeak than the expected casualty.

"Thanks" the girl calked, pondering her following words. „I'm Quinn" she said sticking her hand out in firm, yet cute way.

Santana arched her eyebrow, staring at the girl with hesitation, before she reached her hand out too and wrapped it around Quinn's.

The skin of the girl tingled on Santana's and she had to pull her hand away before she would make any embarrassing noises.

Partly Santana wondered, why a girl as beautiful and as gracious as Quinn preferred her company over the popular kids'. The blonde was easily the most beautiful girl in this room and still here she was, sitting next to the "newbie".

"I heard you're new here" The girl's eyes stayed glued on her meal, which she tentative moved up and down the plate.

"You know you don't have to eat that, right?" She chuckled, noticing the girl's distaste.

Hesitantly, the blonde looked up, meeting the latina's curious gaze.

"I know, but... I'm hungry" she blushed.

Why was admitting she was being hungry such a big deal to the skinny girl? Personally, Santana used the word hungry every second sentence.

"Well, I can understand, however I don't understand how you can eat chicken-shit like that" Cracking a joke, eases the mood, her mom said. (since she held a speech about how Santana'll make friends in no time)

"I don't know either, I guess it's just the circumstances making me eat nearly anything lately" Quinn half sighed, half smiled.

"What circumstances?" Santana was puzzled by the girl's choice of words. What did she imply? Did she have some sort of disease?

Quinn frowned, quickly glimpsing underneath the table, as if some sort of mystery was hidden underneath it. The blonde pinched her nose, her eyebrows furrowed and her expression blank.

"Nevermind" she shot Santana a sweet smile, which didn't quite reach her eyes.

"So, where do you come from?" Quinn changed the topic smoothly.

"Huh? What?" Santana asked, her mind still dwelling on Quinn's implications.

"You know... where your home was before you moved"

"Oh, I come from New York" Santana eventually caught on. She didn't know whether Quinn's slip up or her seemingly disinterest in a conversation was more awkward.

"New York?" Quinn's eyes nearly bulged out, as she rolled the r. In some weird twisted way, Santana was turned on by the girl's low-pitched voice.

"I always wanted to go there" It didn't take genius to tell half of Lima never has been to New York and probably never will, because of financial reasons.

If they were lucky they could pay for an extended vacation in Illinois on a farm.

The word "Lima Loser" made its way around the school and apparently inhabitants were not proud of their own town.

Sure, Santana was annoyed by the constant clamour in New York City as well, but it was not like she despised it or her biggest dream was to get out.

"Who knows? Maybe I could tag you along when I visit my dad's" Santana didn't know if it was the right thing to suggest, but with Quinn things moved faster than usual.

"You barely know me, Santana. Why'd you do that?" The blonde inquired warily. Seems like she could cross "Nice Strangers" of her list "Perks of Lima", too.

"I like you, Q" It took a lot of courage to choke out those words. She was not used to being nice and gentle (or forward with people she adored).

"Uh, thanks. I guess I like you too. But don't you thing this is taking thing a bit too far?" Quinn raised her eyebrow coyly.

"Nah, my mom told me to make friends today and I guess I did" Santana concluded.

"Your mom tells you what to do?" Quinn grinned sheepishly.

Oh god.

"Yeah, but shush, this is our little secret" The tan-skinned girl said cockily.

"I'm good at keeping secrets" Quinn pretended to seal her lips and throw away the key.

"You better be, blondie, cause I'm not going to ruin my reputation" Santana threatened jokingly.

"Or what? You'd cuddle me to death?" Quinn giggled and Santana could swear it was the most adorable thing she's ever seen.

"I'm way more badass than this" The brunette scowled, trying to look dangerous.

"You look like a chicken" The fair-haired girl screeched, her eyes watering with tears of laughter.

"Am not"

"Imma call you chicken-shit, from now on" Quinn proposed daringly.

"You wouldn't!" Santana tore her mouth open in faked shock.

"Anyways, I have AP History now and this teacher always wants us punctual" Quinn sighed, gathering her stuff slowly.

"Aw, I guess I'll see you later?" Santana pouted. Fucking Santana Lopez pouted. This was among the highest rarities in her life.

"I don't know, maybe tomorrow" Quinn glanced behind her back, towards the big wooden clock hanging across the cafeteria.

"Even worse" Santana protested.

"Bye, chicken shit" Quinn used the table as a support to pull her body up.

Once Quinn was fully stood and Santana's eyes attached to a certain buldge on Quinn's stomach.

No, no, no no.

Underneath the thick coats of Quinn's clothes, a small, yet visible baby bump was present.

Santana couldn't come up with any proper words to say to the girl.

How come I didn't notice it? Damn, that's what she meant with circumstances.

Santana's eyes followed Quinn, as she slowly made her way towards the exit.

The brunette didn't quite comprehend what just happened as she hurried out off the cafeteria, her face turned pale.

Quinntana Beginnings, by QuinntanaEndgame

Quinn Fabray sits at her vanity, looking in the mirror as she applies her makeup. It's Saturday, and like any other sixteen year old, Quinn is getting ready for a party. Being a cheerleader has its perks for the teen. Popularity, going to a seemingly endless amount of parties the football team love to have just about every weekend after a game. It also helps that her cheerleading coach is crazy. Quinn and her teammates may not be grateful during practice, but when it's comes to getting out of some of their classes, they're thankful for one Sue Sylvester.

She's been to plenty of parties already half way through the first semester. At the beginning of the year, when she and her best friend's Santana and Brittany got on the cheer team, they were excited to be going to the parties. And at first it was fun, but now she's not sure if she's enjoying herself anymore. It's the same thing every time she goes. They dance to loosen up with the help of some alcohol, then everyone gets drunk, then they play some drunk games, like beer pong, or even truth or dare. Someone will dare another person to kiss, and the night ends with drunk hook up, and in the morning she's sick.

So, Quinn isn't really looking forward to going, but Santana and Brittany are, and she's keeping up with appearances. It would be weird for the captain of the cheer squad not to be at the party, and come Monday morning it would be the talk of the school. It would even be a top discussion to the less cool kids who weren't invited. Everyone knows Quinn Fabray parties. She finishes the last of her makeup with some lip gloss, when her cell phone rings.

"Lucy Q, I'm on my way over. You ready?"

Quinn makes sure her hair is perfect, lightly spraying some hair spray to get rid of some fly a ways. She didn't do anything fancy with it, it's just left down and straightened, but again, she has to keep up with appearances.

"Yeah, I just finished." She frowns hearing a radio, remembering her friend only has her permit. "Is your mom dropping you off?" Santana scoffs.

"Hell no. I have my permit, we don't have to walk anymore, and there's no way I would ever let Mami drive me to Puckerman's party."

"San, and adult is supposed to be with you." She scolds.

"Relax, Lucy Q I'll only get in trouble if I get caught. Puck's house is only two blocks away." Quinn stands up, and walks over to her closet, to get a pair of shoes that matches her outfit.

"That's true. Just be careful, ok?" Santana chuckles.

"I swear, you're worse than Mami." She jokes. Quinn rolls her eyes, putting on a pair of heels.

"I just don't want my best friend getting hurt. Is Britt with you?" She asks at second thought.

"No, she's going with Mike, since they live closer. We'll meet her there. I'm in front of your house, get your ass down here." Santana hangs up before she could say anymore. She chuckles, rolling her eyes at her friend's antics. Then with one last check in the mirror, Quinn goes downstairs.

"Don't be out too late."

Her mother calls to her from the living room, hearing her jog down the stairs. She rolls her eyes. Her mother, Judy, is usually drunk on the weekends. By the time Quinn does get home she'll be passed out on the couch, or in her room, and the conversation will be long forgotten.

"OK." She says anyway, not wanting to start an argument. As she said, Santana is waiting for her in front of the house, with the radio blasting, and her singing along to a song she doesn't recognize. Spotting the blonde, Santana rolls down her window.

"It's about time." Quinn scoffs, walking around the car to the passenger side, and sliding inside. She turns then turns the volume down on the radio, so they can talk.

"It took me two minutes to get downstairs." Santana looks for traffic before pulling out on the road.

"Two more minutes we could have left already." Quinn rolls her eyes.

"Judy told me not to be home late, I would've left earlier." She explains. Santana scoffs.

"I don't know why she acts like she cares. Her drunk ass will be passed out later."

Quinn decides not to comment. She may not be looking forward to this party, but it does get her out of the house, and she'd rather spend the night with her friends, than her mother. Her father, Russell tends to work late, or so he says. One night Quinn and Santana had a sleepover at the Latina's house without Brittany. Both of her parents were working late, and so they decided to get drunk.

Antonio; Santana's father, had a lock on his liquor cabinet and neither girl could get it open. So, instead they went to a liquor store, and stayed in the parking lot, until they convinced someone to buy them alcohol. While they walked the fairly short distance back to Santana's house, they saw Russell making out with someone in the parking lot of a motel.

Santana turns into Puck's road, and it's already full of cars. The cheerleaders like to make an entrance, and they always plan together what time to arrive at a party. She finds a parking spot a few houses down from Puck, and again Quinn checks her hair and makeup in the mirror, while Santana does the same.

Before she was a cheerleader, she wasn't so vain and worried about her looks. *My how things have changed.* She thinks, as they both exit the car, and walk together to the house. It's filled with loud music, and even louder tipsy teenagers. Santana leans closer to Quinn to talk over the loud music.

"Do you wanna get a drink first?" She nods in response. Santana holds on to her hand as they weave through the crowd into the kitchen, so they don't lose each other. Puck always has a BYOB party. So, those who are able to get it, bring the alcohol with them, and tonight he has a table full.

Santana gets them their normal rum and coke to start them off. Across the room, said football player spots them and smirks, walking towards them. He stands behind Santana, and wraps his arms around her waist.

"It's about time you got here." He says in her ear.

Quinn takes a deep breath looking away. For some reason she doesn't like to see the couple be intimate with each other. She talked about it with Brittany once, and the other blonde suggested she probably has a crush on Puck, and is just jealous. She's not sure, but she defiantly doesn't like the feeling she gets whenever she sees them together. Santana gently pushes him further away so she can turn around.

"You know we like to make an entrance, stop complaining." He rolls his eyes.

"Yeah, whatever. Brittany got here an hour before, and she was looking for you. I think she's somewhere in the living room." He informs the Latina. She grabs on to Quinn's hand again, and goes to leave the room when Puck stops her. "She only asked for you, San. I'll keep Quinn company." Santana looks over to Quinn, silently asking if she's ok with it. Quinn reluctantly nods, not wanting to keep her friends from enjoying themselves.

"I think I know what it's about, so I won't be long."

Quinn watches as she leaves, then leans against the counter while she sips from her drink. She feels awkward without the brunette, or Brittany. They usually never leave each other's side. Even when Santana sneaks upstairs with Puck, Brittany and Quinn will dance or just hang around the house together. Puck takes another beer from the cooler someone brought, and leans against the counter next to Quinn, popping off the cap.

"Santana told me you guys were joining the Glee club." He says casually trying to start a conversation. Quinn just nods in response. "Why? That's like social suicide."

Quinn wants to roll her eyes, but doesn't. In the unwritten rule book, she's not supposed to like anyone from the club, but she does, she has no reason not to. No one knows it, but she also loves to sing, always has. So, she's also a little excited to be joining, but acts blasé with the football player.

"Coach Sue wants to destroy it from the inside or something, her words, not mine." Puck snorts, sipping from his beer.

"How long will that last?" Quinn takes a few sips from her own drink, looking around the house, wondering what's taking Santana so long.

"I don't know, and I don't care. Sue can be unpredictable, but she could also be very predictable. Either way, she's crazy." Puck chuckles, then drinks some more of his beer.

"I know you Santana and Brittany are usually attached to the hips." Quinn narrows her eyes, wondering where he's going with this. "I noticed you looking for them." He explains. She nods, lightly blushing.

"Since Santana is my girlfriend." Again, Quinn feels the same as she does when seeing Puck and Santana together in the pit of her stomach. "I figure, I should try to make friends with you and Brittany. So, if you find yourself getting bored, or get separated from them again, we could just drink together and chill." He offers. Quinn finds it suspicious though. Puck is usually only nice when he wants something. She may not know him that well, but that she knows for sure. He notices how skeptical she is, and puts his arms up in surrender.

"I'm not such a terrible guy." She huffs.

"Sure." He smirks. Santana finally arrives, holding Brittany's hand, dragging the tall blonde behind her.

"Come on, Lucy Q, we're gonna dance!" She yells over the music, taking the other blonde's hand. Quinn notes to herself to ask what took the girls so long. Again, they weave through the large crowd.

Santana tries to get Quinn to dance, since she's more hesitant than the other two. She maybe a cheerleader, but dancing freestyle, Quinn gets shy. Santana puts her hands on the blonde's hips to get her to move. Quinn's heartbeats faster, and she feels herself blush. Santana pulls her closer, so she can be heard over the music.

"Just loosen up. Don't worry if you're good or not, most of the people here are drunk." She says in her ear, making her shiver.

Brittany then pulls Santana away from her, so they could dance together instead. Quinn frowns at the loss. She stands around for a few uncomfortable minutes, watching her two best friends dance very close to each other, before she decides to get away from the crowd, and going upstairs instead.

There are still a few people who have migrated to the second floor, but it's nowhere near crowded as downstairs. She knocks on a few doors to find an empty one, and coincidentally finds Puck's room is the only one. She sits on the bottom of his bed with a bored sigh, then drinks the rest of her drink. She almost regrets going now, since she's considering doing anything with Puck of all people. Suddenly said football player walks in with one of the cheerleaders, Ashely. She's clearly drunk, and Puck is getting there.

"What the hell?" The pair jump apart from the make out session, not expecting anyone to be in the room. Puck squints his eyes.

"Q? When did you get here?" She rolls her eyes.

"I've been here the whole time, drunk." She walks over to him, crossing her arms. "Do you plan on sleeping with her?" She asks accusingly. Puck also rolls his eyes, annoyed.

"I was, until you showed up." Being drunk, Ashley hasn't heard any of their discussion.

"Are we gonna do this, or not?" She whines.

"Not with Quinn in the room, maybe next time." Ashley groans, leaving the room. Puck glares at Quinn. "Happy?" Quinn pushes his shoulder, making him stumble back.

"You're such an asshole. You're with Santana, why the hell were you with Ashley?!" Puck walks over to his bed, and drops himself onto it with a sigh.

"I'm not cheating." He argues. Quinn turns around, now angrier. "We have an open relationship, we agreed on it." Quinn narrows her eyes, confused.

"Why would Santana agree to that?" He shrugs.

"She has a thing with Brittany. She doesn't know I know, but I do." He confesses.

Quinn thinks about her friend's behavior for the last few weeks. There have been a few times they have sleepovers without her, they're always sneaking off at parties, like tonight and she has been feeling like the third wheel. There's nothing to actually prove it's true though, so for now she'll drop it. But she does know if it is true, she guesses Santana wouldn't want Puck to spreading that around. Quinn sits next to Puck on the bed.

"You shouldn't say that." He looks at her confused. "If Santana is doing anything with Brittany, I don't think she wants anyone to know. So, don't say anything." She explains. Puck doesn't say anything, she assumes it's because he's getting drunk, and might not remember their conversation anyway.

"So, why are you in here, anyway?" He finally speaks up. She shrugs.

"Brittany and Santana were dancing together, it's not my thing. I came up here to get some space." Puck hums in response, then leans over his bed to reach for something on the floor. He picks up a pack of wine coolers on the floor, then holds one out to Quinn.

"We could just drink together, and chill, like I said." She sighs, and reluctantly takes one. Puck grabs his own, and doesn't wait anytime drinking it. Quinn takes a few gulps from her own. "Finn really likes you." Puck suddenly confesses. Quinn shrugs.

"Could have fooled me." Puck scratches his head.

"Rachel is pretty, but he's only trying to get you jealous." She looks skeptical. Quinn thinks she might have a crush on the other football player, but lately he has been showing interest in one of the Glee kids.

"Has he told you this?" He frowns.

"No." Quinn scoffs.

"His loss then. You're hot." Quinn snorts, then drinks a few more gulps of her drink.

"Are you sure you're not the one who has a crush on me." She jokes. Puck just stares at her.

"I don't know, but I do know that I'm almost drunk, I'm horny, and you're hot." She scoffs, but doesn't say more than that. Puck holds out another bottle. Quinn looks down at her own, and realizes she drank it all already. She accepts the new one, and takes a few gulps from it. "I didn't realize you were such a drunk." Quinn only chuckles in response.

—

The next morning, Quinn groans at the sun hitting her face. She rolls over, and puts a pillow over her head. She has a migraine, and she feels nauseous. Suddenly she hears snoring next to her, so she lifts the pillow enough to see who it's coming from. It's then that she realizes she's still in Puck's room. Quinn gasps, taking the pillow off completely. Puck is still asleep next to her, and he almost looks naked. Connecting the dots, she looks down at herself, and realizes she is also naked.

"Holy shit." She whispers to herself.

As best as she can with a hangover, Quinn collects her clothes from the floor, gets dressed, then faces the walk of shame out of the house. She passes a few hung-over football players, and the house is a mess, but nothing for her to worry about, until she's standing by the road. Quinn remembers she got a ride from Santana, and there were no signs of the Latina inside the Puckerman residence.

"You have got to be fucking kidding me." She says, running her hand through her hair. Quinn remembers her phone, and calls the one person she knows is sober to drive. Rachel Berry. The diva programmed her number in each of the new members' phones, as an offering of her friendship. She never thought she would use it until now.

"Hello, this is Rachel. May I ask whose calling?" Quinn rolls her eyes. She has no problem with the other girl, she's very nice, but the way she talks can't be tolerated by someone who is hung-over.

"It's Quinn."

"Oh, Hi, Quinn. I didn't expect to get a call from you."

"I know, um, I need a favor. I'm still at Puck's. Santana was my ride to the party last night, but she left without me. Could you drive me back to my place?" She asks hopefully.

"I'm sorry you couldn't rely on your friend. I have no problem driving you, but you're going to have to give me directions, as I don't know where you live." Quinn breathes a sigh of relief.

"Thank you. Yeah, that's fine. I'm waiting outside the house."

"I'll be there in a few." Rachel hangs up, so Quinn puts her phone back into her pocket, and sits on the curb. She can't believe she just had a one night stand with her best friend's boyfriend. Quinn gasps, realizing what she just did.

"Oh god, I'm a terrible friend." Quinn puts her face in her hands, crying. *Santana won't forgive me for this.* She thinks, feeling guilty and regrets ever going into Puck's room. She hears a car pull up in front of her, so Quinn quickly wipes her eyes before getting in the vehicle. Rachel looks at her concerned.

"I don't mean to sound rude, but you look terrible." Quinn groans in response, holding her head as she leans on the door. "Did something happen?" She quickly looks over at the brunette, internally panicking.

"No, why?" Rachel shrugs.

"I can see that you've been crying." She says carefully. Quinn closes her eyes, leaning her head against the seat.

"I really don't wanna talk about it, Berry. Please just take me home. I'm sure my lovely mother will be very happy to see me." She says bitterly. Without another word, Rachel looks for traffic before pulling out on to the street. With Quinn's help, she's able to take her home.

"Quinn, I know we haven't known each other for very long, but I'm a good listener." She offers as they sit in front of the Fabray house. Quinn sighs, then flashes a weak smile.

"I'll keep that in mind. I'll see you in Glee club." Rachel smiles back, and waves as Quinn gets out of the car. The brunette waits until Quinn is inside before she leaves.

"Quinn, is that you?" Judy calls out from the kitchen. Quinn curses under her breath.

"Yeah." Judy walks into the foyer with a displeased look on her face.

"You were out all night, and you have a hangover." She says, observing her daughters appearance.

"Yeah, I didn't plan on getting drunk. I just wasn't in the best mood last night, it won't happen again." She promises. "I'm going to take a shower, then take a nap." She tries to go upstairs but Judy blocks her path to the steps.

"We have church, you won't be taking a nap." She reminds her daughter. "We've been waiting for you. Hurry up, I don't want to be late." Judy steps aside so Quinn can go to her room. As she climbs the stairs, she rolls her eyes. Ever since she was a little girl her parents have been forcing her to go to church. Not that she didn't like it then, but now she doesn't care for it. Her church's beliefs don't match her own anymore.

The drive to church was awkward. Russell kept giving Quinn disappointed glances, and they didn't stop during the service either. As soon as they arrived home, Quinn went to her room, got out of her church clothes, and into her pajamas before taking a nap. Or at least she tried. A few minutes after her head hit the pillow, her cell phone rings. She groans, blindly reaching over to her nightstand to grab it.

"What?" She hears a snort from the other end.

"Someone is still hung-over." Quinn moans, aggravated and annoyed.

"What do you want, Santana?" There's a short pause.

"I'm sorry." Quinn opens her eyes, shocked her friend is apologizing. Santana doesn't apologize.

"W-Why did you leave?" She stutters, surprised, and a little hurt.

"I was drunk, Q. I didn't know where you were, and I didn't feel like looking for you anymore, so I left with Britt." Quinn sighs.

"Of course you did." She says bitterly.

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?" She closes her eyes again, taking a deep breath. One thing they each have in common is, they don't handle their feelings well, especially in front of others.

"Nothing, forget it. I'm tired, San. I'm gonna go back to sleep." Quinn doesn't give Santana any time to respond back. She drops her phone on the floor, then rolls over and sleeps.

—

The next day, Russell still glares at Quinn during breakfast, and even as he leaves for work. Judy most defiantly informed him of her behavior from the party, and how she hung-over she arrived from Puck's. Judy gets drunk all the time, but she does in the privacy of their home. Russell doesn't approve public misbehavior from any of the Fabray's. But she ignores it, and continues off to school.

Walking into the school, Quinn is hoping she could avoid Santana. The Latina has been calling her since yesterday morning, but she didn't want to talk anymore, and she still doesn't. She feels too guilty, and she's afraid she blurt out to the brunette what happened at the party. But luck isn't on her side. As she retrieves her morning books from her locker, Puck approaches her.

"I've been trying to call you." Quinn closes her locker, and looks at him confused.

"Then you must have the wrong number, because the only person whose been calling me is Santana." Puck also gets confused, and checks his phone, then shows Quinn.

"This isn't your number?" She rolls her eyes.

"You idiot, you don't even have enough numbers. You're missing a four at the end of that." She informs him. Then begins to walk to homeroom. Puck adds the number, then follows her.

"Why would Santana be calling you? Does she know?" Quinn stops in the middle of the hall, then turns around glaring at the football player.

"She's calling me because she's my best friend." She glances around to make sure no one is paying attention to them. "Don't talk about that here. No one knows but us, and it's going to stay that way."

"Ok." He agrees. Quinn starts to walk off again, but then remembers something. She turns around, and pushes Puck into an empty art room. "What the hell?" Quinn locks the door.

"Do you remember our conversation last night?" Puck purses his lips, and hums as he thinks. Then a light bulb goes off in his head.

"I won't say anything." He promises. Quinn strides forward, and pokes Puck's chest.

"You better not, or I swear to god you'll regret it. If Santana really is gay, she's going to come out on her terms, got it?" She threatens. He nods.

"Yeah, I got it. Look, I may be an asshole, but my heart isn't made of ice. It's already been a few weeks since I caught them sneaking off in the locker room to make out." Quinn feels it again in the pit of her stomach, but brushes it off.

"You have?"

"Yeah. I wouldn't do that to her, Q. I've actually been waiting for her to admit it to me. Even if I am just her beard, she should tell someone so they're on her side. She needs to get it off her chest." He confesses. Quinn takes a step back, shocked.

"Wow. That was actually really nice, and smart." He shrugs.

"I'm not book smart, but I am street smart." She snorts.

"You're right, though. But I think she has Brittany, so maybe that's why she hasn't said anything." He shakes his head.

"I don't think she even admitted it to her." Quinn narrows her eyes, skeptically.

"How do you know?"

"We got drunk one night, ya know before we." She nods, not wanting him to finish. "Anyway, she slipped that she hooked up with Brittany once, but I already knew. She said she only did it, cause I wasn't around and she was horny, and told Brittany the same." Quinn sighs, feeling bad for her best friend. The warning bell rings, indicating they should get to homeroom before the morning announcements.

"Shit." Quinn curses. "Homeroom is the one class Sue can't get us out of. Just make sure you don't slip this to someone when you're drunk, because you had no problem telling me." She says over her shoulder as she leaves to get to homeroom. Puck rushes to follow her.

"I was drunk, but I knew enough to trust you." He says as he catches up to the cheerleader. She nods in response, then enters her homeroom class she shares with Rachel Berry. The teacher takes attendance, and the students listen to morning announcements before going off to their first class.

—

Quinn is able to avoid Santana for most of the day. She's thankful for not having cheer practice that morning, or that would have been impossible. But as she enters the cafeteria, she's met with a not so happy cheerleader. Santana walks up to her with her arms crossed, and glaring.

"Why have you been avoiding me, and ignoring my calls?" Quinn avoids her intense gaze.

"I slept most of the day Sunday, and I haven't been avoiding you." She lies. Santana takes another step forward.

"Bullshit. What did you mean on the phone?" Quinn sighs.

"Nothing. You and Brittany just have been hanging out more together, so it was no surprise to me that you left together, it's no big deal, San." She hopes Santana senses the double meaning, but if she does, the Latina doesn't show any signs of it.

"So, what happened to you at the party? We were dancing and having a good time, then you were gone." She bites her lip.

"You know I don't like to dance. You and Brittany looked like you were having fun without me, so I just drank with Finn. We just hung out the rest of the night outside, and he drove me home." She lies. Santana seems to buy it too.

"Why couldn't you tell me that on the phone?" She asks, a little hurt.

"I just wasn't feeling well, and wanted to sleep. I'm sorry." Santana nods.

"It's ok, I forgive you. I know what it's like having a hangover." Santana gestures to the cheerios regular table with her head. "Britt and I saved a seat for you." Quinn feels so guilty she lied, but she also can't tell her the truth just yet. As they drink their shakes Coach Sue makes them drink to keep their weight down, Quinn makes a mental note to talk to Finn after Glee.

—

A few weeks pass, and Quinn is still unable to tell Santana the truth. Finn agreed to lie about them being together a lot easier than she thought he would, and guesses Puck was right about his feelings for her. Other than that, her friendship with both Santana and Brittany have been good, and things have been fine up until recently. Quinn has been feeling sick. Certain foods make her want to throw up, and even when it's not the smell of food, she constantly feels nauseous.

It's starting to affect her performance during cheer practice. Sue has been a lot harder on them team because of it, and even harder on her. Right now Quinn has just gotten out of the shower after another long, and hard practice. The team isn't very happy with their caption, including Santana.

"What the hell is your problem, Fabray?!" She barks as they dry off. Quinn closes her eyes, taking a deep breath.

"I'm sorry, San. I'm not doing this on purpose." She defends herself. Brittany pouts.

"Stop fighting, guys." Santana sighs, aggravated.

"You better figure out what's wrong then, I'm getting bruises, Q. It's not attractive." She continues as they change into a clean uniform. Brittany looks at Quinn closely, and notices how pale she is.

"You look sick." She notes. "Are you feeling sick, is that why you're messing up the routines?" Santana frowns, and observes Quinn's appearance. Quinn avoids her gaze, as she ties her shoe.

"Britt, I'll meet you in class."

"You'll tell me later, right?" She nods.

"Yeah, don't worry. She probably just has a stomach bug or something, or it's probably just that time of the month." She reassures the taller blonde. Brittany nods, then gives Quinn a hug.

"I hope you feel better." Quinn flashes a weak smile. She's internally freaking out though, trying to remember the last time she had her period. Santana makes sure Brittany is gone, along with a few other girls before sitting next to Quinn on the bench.

"Is it just a stomach bug?" Quinn takes another deep breath, as her eyes fill with tears.

"I-I don't think so, San." She whispers. Santana slides closer to her, and wraps her arm around her shoulders, pouting.

"You think you might be pregnant?" Quinn covers her mouth, choking a sob. Santana gently guides the blonde into a hug, and rubs her back.

"Thi-is can't h-happen, San. M-My parents are g-going to k-kill me." Santana rocks them back and forth, not knowing how else to comfort her best friend.

"You're not even one hundred percent sure you're pregnant. You'd have to take a test to be sure. And if you are, I'll help you deal with your asshole parents." Quinn sobs harder on the Latina's shoulder.

"W-Will you come w-with me?" She manages to get out.

"Of course I will. You need to calm down first, sweetie. I'll buy your test, and you can take it at my house." She offers. Quinn hold on Santana tightens.

"Thank you." Now she feels even guiltier. Santana is being such a good friend, and she doesn't even deserve it. She knows Santana won't really be upset over who it was she slept with, but she won't be happy that she lied, even if she denies it.

After Quinn calms down, and cleans herself up, Santana drives her to the drug store, and pays for a few pregnancy tests. Quinn offered to do it herself, but the brunette reminds her how fast rumors spread in her town, and she would rather someone see her buying the test instead.

Santana's mother, Maribel is a realtor, and her father, Marcos is a doctor. So, neither are home for now. They rush up to the brunette's room, then into her bathroom. Santana fills a cup she uses to brush her teeth full of water, and passes it to the blonde. She looks at it confused.

"Q, I bought like five tests, and I doubt you actually have to pee. You're gonna have to drink a lot of this." Quinn sighs taking the cup, then chugs the water down.

"Can I at least drink something with flavor?" She asks, grimacing from the water.

"Do you want soda or ice tea?"

"Ice tea." She nods.

"I'll be right back."

—

After about ten cups of ice tea, Quinn finally has to pee. Santana stays with her the whole time, passing her a test since drinking so much, made her have to pee so much. Then Santana puts lines the tests up on her counter, and they wait. Quinn paces the room, while Santana sits on the counter, casually filing her nails.

"If I'm pregnant, they're going to kick me out." Quinn thinks out loud. Santana sighs.

"Then you could always live with me." She offers. Quinn stops in her tracks.

"Would your parents allow that?" Santana shrugs.

"I think so. We do have a guest room." Quinn nods, then continues to pace.

"I don't know if I'm going to keep it. I can't take care of a baby." Santana sets her nail file aside, and leans against the wall behind her.

"Are you one hundred percent positive?" She nods, still pacing. "Then the next question is abortion or adoption." Quinn stops.

"Won't I need permission to abort?" Santana shrugs.

"I think so. If that's something you want to do, we'd have to look into it." Quinn bites her lip, then shakes her head.

"I don't think I could do that."

"Ok, adoption it is." The timer on Santana's cell phone goes off, making them both jump. Santana turns it off. "Do you want me to look?" Quinn bites her nail, and nods. Santana slides off the counter, and looks at the first test. She doesn't give any clue to what it says, and just moves on to the other.

"What is it, San?" She asks, getting impatient. Santana takes a deep breath, turning around.

"I-I'm sorry, Q. They're all positive." Quinn breaks down again in the brunette's arms. She slides down, so they're sitting on the floor. They sit like that for a while, until Quinn stops crying.

"Please don't tell anyone yet, San. I have to figure out how I'm going to do it first, and I can't not be on the cheerios. I need to be on the team for as long as I can." She pleads.

"Not even Brittany?" Quinn sighs.

"If you want. No one else though." Santana continues to rub Quinn's back.

"Who's the father?" She carefully asks. Quinn squeezes her eyes shut. "It's Finn, isn't it? You weren't telling me the truth when you said you just hung out at Puck's party." She breathes out a sigh of relief, but then bites her lip. Now is the perfect time to tell Santana the real truth, but she just can't bring herself to say the words.

"Yeah." She whispers.

"Why did you lie to me?" She just shrugs. "Ok, I'll keep this quiet for as long as I can, and I'll tell Britt to do the same. But you have to tell Finn, Q. He has the right to know." She silently

nods, thinking she also has to tell the real father. She did the math in her head, and only time she had sex in weeks was with Puck.

"Mija, you home?!" Maribel yells out from the first floor. Quinn starts to panic, picking her head up from Santana's chest.

"San, she can't know." Santana nods.

"It's ok, she won't come up here. I'll throw away all the tests, relax. Everything is going to be ok." She coaxes. Santana stands up, then throws the tests away in the garbage under the sink. "Mija?!" Maribel calls again.

"Yeah, I'm home, Mami. Quinn is here too!" She responds back.

"Will you be staying for dinner?!" Quinn stands up, and brushes off her uniform. Santana gives her some tissues to wipe her eyes.

"No, I should be going now, thank you for the offer!" She says, keeping her eyes on Santana. "Can you take me home?" Santana nods.

—

It takes Quinn two days to get the courage to tell Puck about the baby. She already told Finn, and convinced him it was what they did in his hot tub a week before she found out she was pregnant. She can't decide if she should laugh that he believed her, or feel sorry for him.

Santana continues to be very supportive. They have a lot of sleepovers at the brunette's house, and she holds her hair when she gets sick from something, and even accommodates to her weird food cravings. Quinn couldn't be more thankful, and guiltier all at once. Puck is at his locker, talking with Dave, another football player. Quinn takes a deep breath before walking up to the pair. She bites her lip, then taps on Puck's shoulder. He turns around and smiles.

"Hey. What's up?" Quinn glances at Dave.

"I need to talk to you, in private." She adds. Puck turns to Dave.

"I'll talk to you later, man." He nods, then pats Puck's shoulder before leaving. Puck turns back towards her and sighs. "I think I know what this is about." Quinn looks surprised.

"You do?" He nods, looking around the hall, making sure no one is watching them.

"Yeah, let's talk somewhere else." He takes Quinn's arm and leads them in the direction of the weight room in the gym. He locks the door. "Finn told me about the baby." She rolls her eyes. She made him swear not to tell anyone. She should have known not to trust him.

"Of course he did."

"I know it's not his. It's impossible, and Finn's an idiot to believe it." Quinn just nods. "Does Santana know?" She sighs.

"She knows I'm pregnant. She bought the tests for me. She doesn't know it's yours." He nods.

"I didn't think so. When do you plan on telling her?" Quinn silently starts to cry.

"I don't know. I already feel so guilty, and I know the longer I wait, the worse it'll be." He shrugs.

"I doubt she'll care. We know she's not really into to me." Quinn sniffles, wiping her eyes.

"She'll try to convince me that's why she's mad, but it'll really be because I didn't tell her the truth from the beginning. She'll feel betrayed." Puck sighs.

"So, what are we going to do?"

"I'm giving it up, I can't take care of a baby. It deserves a nice family." Puck glares at her.

"I have no say in this? What if I want to keep it?" Quinn narrows her eyes.

"I'm the one giving birth to this baby. And how are you going to take care of it, Puck? Do you think you can live on the money you get for cleaning pools? What will you do in the winter?" He huffs.

"I could get another job." He argues.

"If we keep this baby, who will it live with? Me or you?" He shrugs.

"We can take turns." She scoffs.

"My parents are going to kick me out once I tell them, Puck. Image is everything to them, and I ruined our family name, they're going to disown me." She argues back. "I'm going to be homeless and pregnant." Puck takes a step forward.

"You can live with me." He offers. She shakes her head.

"Santana already said I could live with her. There's just no guarantee it'll happen." At this point, Quinn is crying again.

"Then where will you live?" He asks in concern.

"I don't know, that's the problem. We can't keep this baby, Puck. It deserves a better home, and better parents." He groans. The warning bell rings, and Quinn wipes her eyes, making herself presentable. "Just drop it, and don't tell anyone. I'll do it when I'm ready." And with that she leaves to her next class.

—

Another few weeks pass. Quinn is standing in front of her full length mirror, staring at her bump. Her stomach is growing. Though she's still able to hide it under her clothes, including her uniform, she knows that won't last. Finn is sitting at the bottom of her bed, watching her. The football player has been asking her to date him since she told him about the baby, and she finally gave in. Tonight they plan on telling her parents, but agreed to keep her pregnancy a secret.

"Are you sure you don't want to keep it?" She sighs. "I think you'd be a great mom."

"No, I wouldn't. Adoption is better."

"When are you going to tell them, before or after dessert?" Quinn glares at him in the mirror.

"I told you already, we're not going to. You're only here to meet them as my boyfriend, that's it."

"You have to tell them sometime." He argues.

"And tonight isn't the time." She argues back. Finn deflates in defeat. Judy walks into the room without knocking, causing Quinn to jump and quickly hide her stomach.

"I just came up to let you know Dinner is ready." She nods, then follows Judy to the dining room. Quinn and Finn sit across from her mother, while Russell sits at the head of the table, like always. They hold hands while he says a prayer before eating.

"Quinn told me you're on the football team." Russell says. Finn nods, with a nervous smile.

"Yes, sir."

"Do plan on getting a scholarship with it?" Finn scratches the back of his neck.

"I don't think I'm good enough for a scholarship, but I do try." Quinn holds her breath. She knows how important going to college is to both her parents.

"How are your grades?" Finn looks down ashamed.

"Not as good as they should be, sir." He admits. Russell grunts.

"Then how do you plan on going to college? I want my daughter dating someone who has a future." Quinn can't help but feel bad for the football player. If she just told the truth about the baby's father, he wouldn't be caught in the middle of this.

"My back up plan is the army, sir. My father was enlisted, and I'd like to serve too." Russell raises his brows, surprised by the teens answer.

"That's brave of you." Just finally speaks up. Finn politely smiles in return.

"Thank you, ma'am."

"What school do you to attend after you serve?" Russell asks. Finn nervously clears his throat.

"I haven't thought that far yet." He admits. Russell looks disappointed.

"He has plenty of time to figure that out." Judy says, surprising Quinn.

"But it's always better to know that now." They continue to eat in silence. Quinn notices Finn is dying to say something, and she knows exactly what it is. She kicks his leg under the table, and mouths "don't you dare." Finn sighs.

Ever since Quinn told him about the baby, he's been freaking out. Then just tonight he learns Quinn wants to give it up for adoption. In his mind, if he told her parents they would convince Quinn to keep the baby, and would help them raise it. He doesn't want his child not knowing who their real parents are, and doesn't like the idea of never being able to see them again.

"I'm sorry, but I have to say something." Quinn shakes her head, and pleads with her eyes for him not to say anything. It almost makes him change his mind.

"Well, speak up." Russell says. Finn mouths "I'm sorry" to Quinn.

"We're gonna have a baby." He blurts out. Russell glares at the pair. Judy doesn't look surprised, she looks guilty instead. Quinn wants to crawl in a hole and die.

"Who's going to have a baby?" Russell asks.

"M-Me and Quinn, sir." Russell glares at Quinn. If looks could kill.

"You're pregnant." She starts to silently cry, and slowly nods. "You have fifteen minutes to get out of this house." Quinn chokes a sob.

"Please, don't do this. I'm sorry, but please don't kick me out." She pleads.

"You're a disgrace, you're not my daughter anymore, and I want you out of this house." Finn is feeling guilty, but is also relieved he got it off his chest. Quinn turns to her mother.

"Please, don't let him do this. Stick up for yourself for once." Judy doesn't say a word. Russell suddenly stands, slamming his hands on the table.

"I said, get out of my house!"

Finn jumps up from his seat, and helps Quinn out of hers. He walks them up to her room, and while Quinn cries on her bed, he packs most of her clothes into a luggage bag. Then when he's finished, Finn kneels in front of her.

"I'm sorry. I just thought they would help us. I didn't think your dad would kick you out." Quinn runs her fingers through her hair, sniffing.

"Can you take me to Santana?" She asks, ignoring his apology. Finn looks at her confused.

"Why Santana? You could just come to my house, it's my baby too." She shakes her head.

"No, I want to go to Santana's. If you won't take me, I'll walk." He sighs in defeat.

"Fine."

On the drive there, Finn tries to get Quinn to answer his question, but she doesn't say a word until he pulls up in front of the house.

"She's my best friend. She was the first person to know about the pregnancy, and she offered me to stay with her." She explains. Finn sighs.

"I should be with you through this, not Santana." Quinn could tell him right now, but she's had enough drama for one night.

"I'm not going to change my mind, Finn. Thanks for taking me, I'll see you later." Quinn opens the door, and Finn jumps out of the car to help her carry her bag to the door. He gives it to her, then kisses her cheek.

"We're gonna get through this." Quinn only nods in response.

She waits until Finn leaves, before knocking on the door. For a second she's afraid it will be either of Santana's parents, and she would have to explain why she's there on a school night with her luggage, but this time luck is on her side, and it's Santana who opens the door. Before the brunette can ask why she's there, Quinn falls into her arms, sobbing.

"The-ey kicked m-me out." Santana sighs, rubbing Quinn's back.

"Let's go inside, ok?"

Santana pulls out of the embrace, but takes Quinn's hand as they walk inside. It's then that Quinn sees Maribel and Marcos sitting in the living room. It looks like Santana had been watching a movie with them, and they have it on pause, so the brunette doesn't miss it. Maribel frowns, seeing Quinn has been crying, and holding her luggage. She gets out of her seat, and checks if the blonde is ok.

"What happened, honey?" She asks, hugging the teen. Quinn pleads with Santana for her to explain so she doesn't have to.

"Mami, Los padres de Quinn la echaron. Está embarazada. Por favor, que se quede." Maribel rubs Quinn's back then steps out of the embrace.

"You can stay here for as long as you need to. We can discuss everything another time."

"Santana, take her upstairs, while I talk to our mother." She nods, then has Quinn follow her to the guest room.

"His not mad, is he?" Quinn asks, worried Maribel agreed to something without talking to Marcos first. Santana shakes her head, taking Quinn's luggage from her.

"No, they're probably just talking about what they want to discuss with you tomorrow." Santana puts Quinn's bag on the bed. She pulls out a pair of pajamas, then puts the bag inside the closet.

"You think it'll be that soon?" Santana sits on the bed with a sigh.

"Yeah, probably after they both come back from work." Quinn nods.

"Thank you." Santana smiles. "Thanks for everything. You're more of a father to this baby than Finn is." She jokes to lighten the mood, and so she doesn't feel so guilty. Santana just laughs.

"You're welcome." She pauses, looking at the time. "It's getting late. I'm gonna let you sleep." She says getting off the bed. "There's an extra toothbrush in the bathroom across the hall." Quinn gives her another hug before she leaves.

—

In Glee the next day, Mr. Shue has them rehearsing their choreography for Sectionals. Some of the teammates aren't getting it, so Mike and Brittany are helping them with the steps. They have already taken a few breaks to rehydrate.

No one noticed someone spilled some water until Quinn slips on it. Puck quickly rushes over from the other side of the room to catch her, with Santana right behind him. Finn also tries to help. He understands why Santana would rush over to her friend, but he glares at Puck.

"Get your hands off my girlfriend!" He shouts at him. Puck rolls his eyes, holding his hands up in surrender.

"Finn, there's no need to yell, Puck was just trying to help." Mr. Shue steps in. Mercedes looks between them, confused.

"Why are you all trying to jump in to help her anyway? Y'all are acting like she's glass about to break on the floor." Puck, Quinn, and Santana don't say a word.

"She's pregnant, and I'm the father." The other three glare at the football player.

"Finn, you need to learn how to keep your mouth shut. I was going to tell them when I was ready." Santana stand beside her, and rubs her back. Everyone else looks shocked, until a light bulb goes off in Rachel's head.

"Oh my god. It was at Puck's party wasn't it?" Not only Finn, but Santana and Puck are confused.

"How do you know that?" Finn asks.

"Well, I wasn't there, but Quinn called me asking if I could take her home the next day. Santana was her ride, but she left with Brittany." She explains. Santana glares at Quinn.

"You lied to me?"

"I-I'm so sorry, San." She shakes her head.

"Did you lie about who the father is too?" Finn glares at the Latina.

"What are you talking about? I'm the father." Again, Puck rolls his eyes.

"Dude, you're such an idiot. Do you really think you got her pregnant arriving too early in a hot tub? You didn't even have sex." Finn strides forward and shoves Puck. Mike, Mr. Shue and Matt pull him back.

"Tell him the truth, Quinn!" The cheerleader starts to cry, shaking her head.

"Puck is the father." She whispers. "I'm so sorry." She tells Finn.

He pushes out of the other guys' arms, and storms out of the room. Quinn looks over at Santana. The cheerleader looks very hurt, but then quickly covers it by glaring at the blonde.

"I'm so sorry, San." Santana also storms out, and Brittany follows. Puck stands beside Quinn, and rubs her arm.

"Do you wanna leave? I can take you to my place." He offers. "You should give her some space." She nods. Puck wraps his arm around her shoulders as they leave.

—

At the Puckerman house, Quinn is crying on Puck's bed, while he tries to comfort her.

"I'm sure she won't stay mad forever." He reassures her.

"I should've just told her the truth." Puck sighs. He hasn't been able to help the blonde, and he feels useless. "Most of my stuff are at her house. Her parents told me I could stay with them for as long as I need to."

"My offer still stands." She sighs. She doesn't want to live with Puck, she'd rather make up with Santana, and live with her. "I think you should give this mom thing another try. We could live here for a while, just until we get our own place. I'll get another job." Quinn cuts him off, getting out of the bed, shaking her head.

"I already made up my mind, Puck. I'm giving the baby up for an adoption, so they'll have a better family than what we could give them." He groans.

"Who says they'll be better? How do we know they're not crazy or something?" She rolls her eyes.

"I'll be able to choose you adopts the baby." He sighs, defeated.

"My father was a dead beat. I just want the chance to be better." He admits.

"You will, by giving it up for adoption." Suddenly Santana walks in, still upset, but not angry. "San, what are you doing here?" Quinn asks, confused.

"I came to pick you up. Berry told me you would be here."

"How did you?" Puck starts to ask. Santana cuts him off.

"I have my ways."

"I didn't think you would want me to live with you anymore." Santana sighs.

"I wouldn't do that. You're my best friend." Quinn flashes a weak smile. "Why did you do it, Q? Why did you lie?" She shrugs.

"He's your boyfriend." Santana nods.

"You don't look very upset." Puck notes. Santana glares at him.

"What are you talking about? You cheated on me, of course I'm upset." He shrugs.

"Then where's Snix? Why aren't you yelling at me in Spanish?" She sighs.

"I'm dealing with one thing at a time." She lies.

"San, come on." Santana narrows her eyes.

"What?" Quinn shakes her head.

"She doesn't have to say anything, Puck." Santana looks between them confused.

"One of you tell me what the hell you're talking about." She demands. Puck opens his mouth to say something, but Quinn cuts in before he can.

"No, just drop it." Puck rolls his eyes.

"Q, it's just us. It's ok if she says it." She shakes her head again.

"Not if she's not ready." She reminds him. Santana groans.

"Just tell me what you're talking about already." Puck steps forward, while Quinn looks away.

"W-We know about you and Brittany." She narrows her eyes.

"What about me and Brittany." He huffs.

"San, stop." He gently says. "I've seen you two sneak off in the locker room to make out, and you've said her name when we had sex before." Santana looks down at the floor, while Quinn looks surprised at the new information.

"I was drunk, but I still remember." There's a short silence, until Santana finally speaks up.

"I-I'm not gay, we just fool around."

"It's ok if you are. You're still a bad ass, nothing will change that." Puck reassures her. Quinn nods in agreement.

"Your sexuality doesn't define you, San." Quinn finally speaks up. "You'll always be my best friend. Love is love." Santana sighs.

"I-I don't love her. I like what we do, but I'm not in love with her." She admits. Puck shrugs.

"Then you'll find another hot chick." Santana flashes a weak smirk.

"You don't have to tell anyone else right away if you don't want to." Quinn says.

"Yeah, I'll be your beard for as long as you need." Puck offers. Not wanting to talk about it any further, Santana changes the subject.

"We better go home. Mami and Papi will be home soon." Quinn says goodbye to Puck before they leave.

When Quinn and Santana arrive at the house, Maribel and Marcos are already waiting for them, and they have a long discussion about what Quinn will do with the baby after it's born, answering all of their questions. And they even offer to look into adoption for her, so all she'll have to worry about is school.

—

As Quinn goes through each phase of her pregnancy, she and Santana only get closer. Santana has talked a little more on her relationship with Brittany, and also when she realized she was gay. It wasn't until she went shopping with Santana and Brittany, that the other blonde suggested Quinn has more than friendly feelings for the Latina.

Quinn, Santana and Brittany are looking for more cute maternity clothes for the blonde, since her stomach doesn't seem to stop growing. The week before, Santana went with Quinn to her doctor's appointment and they

found out the sex of the baby. It's a girl. So Brittany also suggested they look for some clothes, but Santana had to remind their friend Quinn will be giving the baby to another family.

"Lucy Q, how about this shirt?" Santana asks, holding up a pink, short sleeve shirt against her. Quinn nods.

"Yeah, it's not as bad as the others." Santana puts it in the cart.

"How much clothes are you going to get?" Brittany asks looking through the rack. Quinn looks in the cart at the clothes they already chosen and shrugs.

"I just need a pair of jeans. Then we can go to another store so you guys can shop for something "

Santana picks out more than one pair of jeans for her, and both argue until Quinn finally gives in. Quinn pays it with the allowance Santana's parents give her for the chores she does around the house. Nothing she can't handle, like doing the dishes, and taking out the trash.

While Santana and Brittany shop for clothes, the two girls try on a few outfits, and Quinn just lets them know what looks good. Now Santana is still trying on clothes, while Brittany and Quinn wait for her.

"Will you still be able to name the baby?" Quinn shrugs.

"Puck is still trying to convince me we should keep her." Brittany snorts.

"Why aren't you dating him?" Quinn looks at her confused.

"Because we're having a baby, you think we should date?"

"No. I can tell he likes you, maybe that's why he wants to keep the baby." She guesses.

"He already told me why. His father left him, and he just wants to be a better dad than him."

"Do you like him?" Quinn shakes her head. Santana walks out of the dressing room, modeling a possible new dress. It's skin tight, and very short, a very "Santana dress." Santana has a smug smile, knowing she looks good, and puts her hand on her hip.

"What do you think?" Brittany smirks.

"Hot." Quinn glares at her, then softens when turning to Santana.

"You look very beautiful, San." She blushes.

"Thank you."

A random couple their age walks by. The girl's boyfriend clearly doesn't look happy to be shopping with her, until he sees Santana, and smirks.

"Looking good." Quinn glares at him.

"Hey, honey." She calls out to the girl, getting her attention. "You should keep a short leash on him, he's hitting on other girls literally behind your back." They watch the couple start to fight as they walk away. Brittany shakes her head with a knowing smile.

"Well, I'm defiantly getting this dress. Let me change, then we'll pay for our stuff and leave." Once Santana is back in the dressing room, Brittany starts to laugh, confusing Quinn.

"What's so funny?" She shrugs.

"You're so in love with Santana. It's cute." Quinn narrows her eyes.

"I'm not in love with Santana." She poorly argues back.

"Yes are. You just got so jealous that guy was checking her out." Quinn huffs crossing her arms.

"I was looking out for my best friend." Brittany snorts.

"From what, a cute guy?"

"She's gay, Britt. She doesn't need jerks hitting on her." She just continues to laugh.

"Santana and Quinn sitting in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g." She sings, teasing the other blonde.

"Britt, stop. I'm not in love with her, ok?" She shrugs.

"Fine. Then would it be ok if I asked her out?" Quinn glares at her, making the taller blonde laugh. "L, is for the way you look at her." She sings again. Quinn rolls her eyes with a sigh in defeat.

"I love her." She finally admits. Brittany pats her knee.

"I know."

Since Quinn has moved in with the Lopez's, she hasn't slept in the guest room. She feels more comfortable with Santana, and her parents were ok with it. The girls are in the middle of watching a movie on a Thursday night. Quinn is rubbing her stomach.

"San, how long do you think your parents will really let me stay here for?" Santana turns the volume down, then faces her friend.

"They won't kick you out, if that's what you're worried about."

"How can you be so sure?" She shrugs.

"They're my parents, Q. And they really like you, so they would never throw you out like your folks." Quinn slowly nods, biting her lip.

"Russell kicked me out." She confesses. "Judy didn't say anything, she's such a coward. She'll never stick up for herself." Santana takes Quinn's hand, and rubs the back of it with her thumb.

"Are you worried about her?" Quinn shakes her head.

"She never worried about me." Santana doesn't know what to say to comfort her friend, so she changes the subject.

"Has Puck still been bothering you about keeping the baby?" Quinn sighs.

"No, that ship has finally sailed."

"Good." Santana goes back to watching their movie, but continues to hold Quinn's hand.

"Are you nervous about Sectionals tomorrow?"

"No. We're just singing back up to Rachel Berry anyway. What's there to be nervous about?" She looks away from the TV. "Are you nervous?"

"A little. Singing on stage makes me nervous, and I'm going to look like an idiot trying to dance with this giant stomach." Santana shakes her head.

"I've seen you in rehearsal, you don't look like an idiot. It's impossible." Quinn blushes, but Santana doesn't see it, going back to the movie. She suddenly feels the urge to blurt out to the Latina about her feelings to her, but the words don't come out.

"I think I'm gonna go to sleep. I'm tired."

Quinn carefully gets out of bed to brush her teeth and wash her face, before returning. With Santana's help, she surrounds herself with a few pillows to get comfortable. It's getting closer to her due date, and without them it's uncomfortable for her to sleep.

"Goodnight, San." Santana leans down and kisses her forehead.

"Night, Lucy Q." Then she leans down further to kiss her stomach. "Night, princesa."

Quinn smiles, closing her eyes. Santana loves talking to the baby, and Quinn finds it to be the cutest thing she has ever witnessed. She hasn't told Santana that though.

—

Since Glee club had sectionals to attend, everyone is excused from school. Maribel and Marcos drive the pair to another school where it's being held. Mr. Shue meets them in the lobby to take them to their dressing room. The girls change into one bathroom, and the boys in another.

One of the other Glee clubs, and a very good one at that, Vocal Adrenaline is also competing. They're New Directions' rival, and everyone is determined to beat them. Especially Rachel Berry, and Mr. Shue. They entertain each other while they wait for their turn. When the time finally does arrive, the lights in their room flicker.

"Alright, guys. This is it. Don't let Vocal Adrenaline play mind tricks on you, just focus on the routines and what we rehearsed for months, and you'll do fine. I'll be watching in the wings." He gives them a mini pep talk before they go out on stage.

They start off with Rachel's solo, *Don't Rain on my Parade*, while the others are on stage, but behind the curtain. Quinn and Santana are standing next to each other, and the brunette notices how nervous Quinn is. Santana holds on to her hand, getting her attention.

"You're going to be ok." She whispers.

"I feel like I'm going to be sick. My stomach hurts." Santana steps out of her position, taking Quinn's other hand.

"Just take a deep breath." She pauses until Quinn does as she tells her. "And remember what Mr. Shue said. Focus on what we rehearsed. We know the dance and the song like the back of our hand. If you're nervous about the crowd, don't even look at them, ok?"

Quinn nods. They hear Rachel sing the last note of the song, so Santana kisses Quinn's cheek catching her off guard, before going back to her position. The curtain rises and they start the group number. Everything starts off ok. Quinn quickly forgets about her nerves, but can't stop thinking about the kiss. Then half way through the number, she feels sharp pain in her stomach.

The judges or the audience don't notice her poker face, but her best friend does, and she starts to worry. Mr. Shue peaks out from behind the stage, and sees how much everyone is enjoying their performance. They make it through the whole song though without a problem.

It isn't until they return to their dressing room, that everything falls apart. Judy is standing outside their room. Quinn hasn't spoken to her since her father kicked her out. The others continue on into the room, but as Santana passes, she glares at the woman, and asks Quinn if she wants her to stay. She declines but thanks her anyway. Santana stays close by.

"What are you doing here?" Judy shrugs.

"I came to see you perform. I was cleaning your room, and saw your competition on the calendar." Quinn slowly nods, still not understanding why she just showed up, and is acting like she never let her father kick her out.

"Dad kicked me out." She reminds her mother. Judy nods, guilty. "And you let him."

"I know, I know." Quinn starts to cry, her hormones making her more emotional.

"I just wanted my mom, and you said nothing." Santana hears her crying, and stands beside her to comfort her friend.

"I'm sorry, I should have said something. But I'm not with Russell anymore. I caught him cheating, and I kicked him out. I know it's a little too late, but, better late than never, right?" Quinn is surprised, and so is Santana.

"Quinn, I would love it if you came home. I can help you raise the baby while you're at school." She offers. Quinn shakes her head, getting over the shock.

"I-I decided not to keep her. Santana's parents helped me get in touch with a good adoption agency, and I already picked out a family for her. She's going to have an older sister and brother, and she's going to live far away from here." She wants to say more, but a shooting pain in her stomach stops her. At the same time, her water breaks.

"Q, what's wrong?" Santana asks, holing her hand. Judy looks on the floor, and sees what happened.

"Her water broke, she needs to go to the hospital."

The Glee club follow Quinn to the hospital, not caring about their win anymore, but it was voted Rachel should stay in case they did win. They split into different cars, following Maribel and Marcos in their vehicle, holding Quinn and Santana with them. When they do reach the hospital, Marcos gets them her doctor. Maribel and Santana help her in a wheel chair, before Maribel wheels her off to the delivery room with the doctor and Puck.

"Wait." Quinn says, stopping them from going any further. She reaches out to Santana. "I want Santana with me too." She smiles down at the blonde, taking her hand, then follows them to her room.

They give Quinn some medicine, and it's not long before she's dilated and can deliver the baby. Santana and Puck are both holding her hands, while Maribel is by her feet, giving her some encouragement along with the nurse. In the waiting room, Marcos has called the couple the baby will be going to, and the social worker.

"Two more pushes, and the head will be out." The doctor informs her. Quinn screams out in pain, pushing as best she can.

"Good girl." Maribel praises. "Next is her shoulders, and then she'll slide right out, you can do this, honey." She encourages. She yells even more, trying to push out the baby's shoulders. Santana strokes her hair, giving her encouraging words.

"You're doing really well, Quinn." The nurse tells her. "The hard part is almost over.

"Ugh, I just want her out of me!" She screams in pain.

"She will, keep pushing." Puck says.

Quinn groans, pushing the rest of the baby's shoulders out. Then the doctor pulls her out completely. Quinn lays back with a content sigh. The room is filled with the baby's crying, as the cord is cut, and the nurse cleans her off. Santana leans down, and kisses Quinn's forehead, making the blonde blush.

"You were amazing, Lucy Q. I'm so proud of you." Quinn smiles in return. The nurse brings over a now bundled newborn in her arms. Puck looks at the baby, and smiles.

"I know her parents are outside in the waiting room, but you can still hold her if you like." Quinn takes a deep breath.

"You might regret it, if you don't" Santana tells her. She nods, and the nurse carefully puts the newborn on her chest. They look at each other, examining each other's features. "She looks like you." Says Santana. Puck reaches over and strokes the newborns head.

"She's beautiful, like her mommy. Her real mommy." He says. Maribel sneaks a photo on her phone.

"I'm sorry, sweetie. I have to take her now." The nurse apologizes, as she takes the newborn from her. It may have been her decision to not keep the baby, but it's still hard on Quinn, and she breaks down. Santana wraps her arms around her in attempt to comfort her.

"Mija, I'm going to meet these people, and maybe arrange something with them, and the social worker." Santana nods. Quinn is still crying, and doesn't hear her. Puck stands awkwardly on the other side of the bed.

"I guess I'll go too. Looks like you have everything under control." Santana climbs into the bed with Quinn, and has the blonde lay on her chest.

Two weeks later, Quinn is still missing her baby, but she's gotten better with the help of her friends, Maribel and Marcos, and especially Santana. She has also been having trouble with her body after the pregnancy. She's been working out, but for her she hasn't lost enough weight, and sometimes she doesn't think she's very attractive anymore.

Quinn hides her body as much as she can now. She still hasn't given up her maternity clothes. Santana has been trying to convince the blonde she doesn't need them to no avail. So, one night she comes up with a plan.

The girls are having a movie marathon in Santana's room, while her parents are working. Quinn has decided to continue living with them, until her relationship with her mother is fixed. They're sitting on Santana's bed, with a big bowl of popcorn between them. But Santana has noticed throughout the movie, that she's been eating most of it.

"Q, you're making me feel like a pig here. I'm eating most of the popcorn, and I made it for the both of us. Have some more." She jokes. Quinn looks down at the food with a sigh.

"I'm just not that hungry." She says, turning back to the TV.

Santana sighs. She's had it with Quinn's behavior now. She's beautiful, and it's about time she not only believe it, but feel it as well. Santana puts the bowl of popcorn on her night stand, then slides closer to Quinn. She hooks her fingers under the blonde's chin, turning her head towards her.

"You're beautiful, Q." She blushes. Santana bites her lip, suddenly getting nervous. "I-Is it ok if I kiss you?" Quinn's hear is beating against her chest.

"W-Why would you want to do that?" Santana creases her cheek.

"Britt and I stopped our relationship weeks ago." Quinn nods.

"I know, I remember."

"I didn't tell you the real reason."

Quinn is confused, until Santana leans closer, and connects their lips together. She doesn't respond right away, but then quickly recovers from the shock, and kisses Santana back. Santana slides her hand down the back of the blonde's neck, deepening the kiss. Quinn moans, feeling Santana's warm tongue slide in her mouth. They slowly pull away, needing to breath.

"I wa-ant to show y-you how much I lo-ove you, and I want you to show y-you ho-ow beautiful you a-are." Santana says out of breath from the kiss. Quinn nods, and with her permission, Santana slowly lays her friend on the bed. She straddles the blonde, then leans down for another kiss. To make her feel comfortable, they make out for a while, until Quinn moans, bucking her hips as Santana's hand slides down to her hip.

"San." She whispers. Santana smiles down at her.

"What do you want, beautiful?" Again, Quinn bucks her hips.

"Touch me, please."

Santana gives her another kiss, then trails her lips down her body. She stops at her neck, sucking and nibbling on her pulse point. Then she continues down to her chest, kissing her boob over her shirt. Quinn groans in frustration, making her smile.

She sits up, then has Quinn do the same, before taking off the blonde's shirt, and throwing it on the floor. She reconnects their lips, while running her hands down her back. Santana unhooks her bra, and breaking the kiss, she takes it off and putting it with her shirt. Quinn looks away, but Santana gently makes her look into her eyes and smiles.

"Don't be ashamed. You're beautiful." Quinn shakes her head.

"I don't feel it." Santana leans their foreheads together, and kisses the tip of her nose.

"You will."

She turns her head for a proper kiss. Quinn moans. They make out some more, then Santana has Quinn lay back down. She leans down to kiss her body again, starting at her chest, sucking on her nipples, then going down to her stomach.

They are a few very faint stretch marks left, so she takes the time to kiss them too. Quinn holds on to the back of Santana's head, gripping on to her hair, as she gets closer to where she needs her most. Santana bites and sucks on Quinn's hip. She moans in response.

"Ugh, you're driving me crazy." Santana smiles against her skin.

"I love you more than you know." Quinn grunts.

"Yes I do."

Santana continues to Quinn's thighs, then she spreads Quinn's legs further, and grazes her lips against Quinn's clit. She bucks her hips with a loud moan, looking for friction and a release.

"Oh god San. Please." Santana sucks and licks Quinn's clit with a moan.

"You're so wet." Quinn moans in response. Santana wraps her lips around Quinn's throbbing bud, giving it more attention to build her up. Then she uses her finger to collect some of her arousal, and circles her opening.

"Ugh, shit." She moans. Santana teases her, only sliding the tip of her finger in first. "San, please." She begs.

Santana hums against her clit, then slides the rest of her finger inside her. Santana starts with a slow pace, then adds another finger. Quinn pucks her hips to match Santana's thrusts. Then she lets go of Santana's hair, and tugs on her arm. "Up here, San." Santana crawls back up on Quinn's body, never pulling out of her.

"Take your clothes off." Santana is confused.

"I thought." Quinn nods.

"You can, but I want to, too."

Santana temporarily slides out of Quinn to take her clothes off, then goes back to her position on top, and slides back in her. Quinn sneaks her hand in between them, and without any warning, enters Santana with two digits.

"Ugh, fuck." She moans, bucking her hips. Quinn uses her thumb to rub Santana's clit, and matches her thrusts. Santana leans their foreheads together, panting in each other's face. A thin layer of sweat covers their bodies.

"I love you so much." Quinn moans. Santana kisses her in response, and she feels Quinn's walls tightening around her fingers.

"It's ok, let go Q" Quinn shakes her head.

"I want to with you." She pumps faster, and with her other hand, spreads Santana's legs further, so she can go in deeper. Santana moans in response.

"Ugh, shit. Curl your fingers." Quinn curls her fingers hitting Santana's "G" spot. "Oh yeah." Quinn finds it harder to pump inside the Latina, and guesses it means she's close to reaching her climax. Santana does something with her fingers too, hitting her in just the right spot to send her over the edge.

"I-I'm sorry, I can't" Hearing Quinn, Santana shortly follows her, with Quinn's name on her lips. Out of breath, she collapses on the blonde, and kisses her neck. When she catches her breath, Santana picks up her head, and cups Quinn's cheek.

"I've been dying to tell you that for a long time." Quinn smiles.

"What stopped you? I would've loved to hear it." Santana brushes some hair sticking to her forehead, behind her ear.

"I thought you were straight, but then I saw you checking me out when we went shopping with Brittany that one time, when you were still pregnant." She explains. "Then I didn't think me confessing my love in the mix of everything else, would be good timing." Quinn leans up and connects their lips in a tender kiss.

"Better late than never."

Kindergarten, by SCWritings

"Lucy Fabray?"

"I like to be called Quinn." Little five year old Quinn raises her hand, and then returns it to her side.

"Alright sweetie," Mrs. Pinkson writes on her roster. "David Karofsky?"

"I go by Dave," the little brown haired boy smiles.

"Alright, Dave," the teacher smiles and makes a note on her classroom roster again. "Santana Lopez?"

"Here."

Quinn's eyes catch a tiny tan arm in the air, and follows it down to the little girl's face. *She's so pretty*, Little Quinn thinks to herself. She's too busy admiring the other girl to hear what the teacher says, and before she knows it, all of the other kids are getting up and walking around. Santana glances at Quinn, and the blonde quickly looks away, getting up and walking to the teacher.

The little girl puts on a puppy face, as she approaches the teacher, "Mrs. Pink?" The little kids that she teaches can't really pronounce her name, so she told them to call her 'Mrs. P' or 'Mrs. Pink'. "I'm really nervous about my first day and I missed what you said."

"Aw, that's okay, dear, I was just telling everyone to go draw a picture of your family for me, and then I want you to tell me all about them," Mrs. Pink says in a high pitched voice only reserved for the four and five year olds she works with.

"Thanks, Mrs. Pink." Quinn walks away towards the shelves with the crayons and spare sheets of paper. She pulls down a crayon box, and takes a sheet of paper, then heads to her assigned seat. She sits on the aisle seat and on her right is Dave Karofsky.

Quinn is just starting to draw her big sister Frannie, when Dave pulls the black crayon out of her hand and starts drawing. Quinn reaches over to take the crayon back, but Dave won't let it go. Quinn pulls harder, but she only pulls his hand closer and he still won't let go.

"Dave, give it back!" Quinn whines. Dave only laughs and pulls the crayon, which in turn pulls Quinn towards him. Dave leans over and pecks Quinn on the cheek, and continues to laugh.

Quinn pulls Dave's hand toward her and bites down on his finger, making him squeal and release the crayon. Dave gets up and runs to tell the teacher. The little blonde follows him with her eyes, before looking back and realizing that Santana was watching her.

"You went Lima Heights on him." Santana says with a smile. Quinn giggles and see's the teacher coming over with Dave crying, tears rolling down his cheek. Santana hears her gulp loudly, and the little Latina whispers, "Don't worry, I got you."

"Quinn, honey, did you bite David?" Mrs. Pink asks.

Before Quinn can even respond, Santana is speaking up, "She only bit him 'cause he kissed her." Quinn looks over at Santana and the little girl is glaring lasers at David.

"David, is this true?" the teacher asks with her arms crossed. The small boy nods. "David, that is very rude. You need to go and sit in the time out chair." David sulks off to the chair, and the teacher looks back towards Santana. "Santana, would you mind switching with David, and sitting next to Quinn instead? I don't want him to cause more trouble."

Santana must have seen it coming, because she was sitting next to Quinn with all of her stuff switched around before Mrs. Pink could even finish the whole sentence. Santana smirks at the teacher's back when she walks away, then she looks at Quinn. "Hi, I'm Santana."

"San-Sant... I'm Quinn." Quinn blushes with embarrassment at being unable to pronounce Santana's name.

Santana giggles. "Hi, Quinn, you can just call me Tana."

"Okay, Tana." Quinn smiles proudly at the nickname, and looks over at Santana's drawing. "Is that your family?" Santana nods. "What are they like?"

Santana stares at her drawing, and then looks up at Quinn. "I'll tell you mine if you tell me yours." Quinn seems to think it over, but then nods. Santana points to the drawing of a tall man. "This is my papi. He's a doctor. A brain doctor." The little girl then points to the tall woman. "This is my mami. She argues a lot, but she gets money for it. She's really good at telling me to go to bed." Quinn laughs a little bit. Santana then points to a smaller woman. "This is my abuela. Abuela says she's sarcastic. I think she can be mean sometimes though, most of the time she's a good abuela."

"What's an abuela?" Quinn once again smiles proudly at her words.

"Abuela means grandmother in Spanish. I'm Puerto Rican," Santana says. Then looks at Quinn's drawing, which is really good for a five year old. "Tell me about yours."

Quinn points to the man. "This is my daddy. He takes trips to Washington D.C. a lot." The blonde points to the taller woman in the picture. "This is my mommy. She's a drawer. She draws everything!" Now Santana sees where Quinn gets her skills. Last, Quinn points to the smaller girl in the picture. "This is my sister, Frannie. She's in fourth grade and she's really smart, and really nice to me."

Santana smiles at the other girl's family. "They all sound really cool."

Quinn nods. "Yeah, except my dad. He's never really there, but when he is, he is a little mean, but at night, he gets really mean."

Santana's smile drops and she wraps her arms around Quinn. "I'm sorry. That sucks."

Quinn returns Santana's hug, and she's about to ask Santana about herself when the teacher calls for everyone's presentations. The two girls get up from their seats and sit next to each other on the floor, waiting for their turn.

After every one has presented, Mrs. Pink announces that it's time for recess. The kindergarteners get recess early since they only go to school for half days. Santana and Quinn both head to the small field by the playground and they sit under a tree for some shade since it's July.

"So what do you like to do?" Quinn asks once they both got settled on the ground.

"Well, mami says I like to argue, but I really like to sing." Santana smiles a toothy grin. "What do you like to do?"

"Well, I like drawing like my mom, but I like dancing too. My sister likes to dance, and she teaches me sometimes even though I'm only five." Quinn gets up and pulls Santana up with her. "I have an idea! Why don't you sing and I can teach you to dance!"

Santana thinks for a moment before opening her mouth and singing softly, but still on key. Her mami likes to listen to popular music and there's one particular song that she has deemed 'her song' because her mami would always sing it with her in the car.

*"Kiss me, out of the bearded barley
Nightly, beside the green, green grass"*

Quinn puts her hand in Santana's and then places her other hand on Santana's waist, leaving Santana to place her free hand onto Quinn's shoulder. Quinn leads Santana in a slow circle with the tempo of the little Latina's singing.

*"Swing, swing, swing the spinning step
You wear those shoes, and I will wear that dress"*

After getting the hang of it, and getting sick of being lead around, Santana switches the hand placement and starts to lead Quinn in faster circles as the tempo picks up.

*"Oh, kiss me beneath the milky twilight
Lead me out on the moonlit floor
Lift your open hand
Strike up the band and make those fireflies dance
Silver moon's sparkling
So, kiss me"*

By the end of the song, the two girls were laughing like crazy and Santana could barely get the last three words out. After the girls were able to control their laughter, Quinn talks, "I love that song!"

"My mami and I sing it together all the time," Santana responds.

Just then, Dave comes up to the two girls. "You got me in trouble!" Dave stomps over to Santana.

Santana stands up and squares herself up to Dave. "You got yourself in time out."

Dave pokes Santana in the shoulder hard enough to make her stumble back. "It's your fault! You tattletaled on me!"

"I bet you ride the short bus!" Santana screams back, getting defensive over being called a tattletale.

"Hey!" The two kids turn around to see Quinn with her little fists on her hips. "Leave my best friend alone!"

Dave steps closer to Quinn. "Or what?"

"I'll bite you again." Quinn bares her teeth at the boy. "And the teacher will believe us over you."

Dave grumbles and stalks away slowly. "Best friend, huh?" Quinn looks away from Dave and is met with a smirk on her friend's lips.

Quinn looks down a little and blushes. "I mean if you wanna be best friends."

"Yeah! We can be best friends!"

The two little kids laugh happily at each other and then they hear the whistle being blown in the distance. Santana grabs Quinn's tiny hand and pulls her so they can be first in line. The most important thing in kindergarten. After everyone lines up behind the two girls, they all head inside and back into their classroom.

"Okay, kids, sit down on the floor and remember, criss-cross applesauce," Mrs. Pink says. "We are going to have story time."

The kids all gather around, Quinn and Santana sitting next to each other of course. Dave saunters over and sits behind Quinn. The story starts, and Dave pokes her in the back. She turns around, but Dave acts like nothing happened, so Quinn turns back around. The little blonde feels a poke again, and she's about to say something when Santana speaks up, "Dave, can you please stop poking us?" There's a sickly sweet tone to Santana's voice that makes the teacher look up.

"David, Can you go take a seat next to Brady?" Mrs. Pink asks, watching Dave get up and sit across the room.

The rest of story time goes on without a problem and when the clock strikes 12:30pm, the parents start showing up to pick up their kids. Judy Fabray walks into the classroom, spotting her little girl instantly.

"Hey, baby, are you ready to go?" Judy bends down to ask her child.

"Mommy! I want you to meet my best friend!" Quinn pulls her mom towards the little Hispanic girl. "This is Tana."

"Well, hello there! Is Tana short for something?" Judy asks.

Santana, trying to make a good impression on her best friend's mom, says, "Yes, ma'am, it's short for Santana."

Judy smiles, and just then, a Latina woman walks up to Santana. "Hey, sweetie, how was your day?" Maribel Lopez bends down to give her daughter a hug and kiss on the cheek.

"It was good, mami. I made a best friend." Santana is practically jumping up and down with excitement.

Maribel smiles and stands up straight. "Oh yeah?" Maribel turns towards Quinn, who is standing close to Santana. "Is this your best friend?" Santana nods happily. "Hi there, what's your name?"

"I'm Quinn, and this is my mommy." Quinn pulls at her mom's pants to get her attention. "Mommy, can Santana come over this weekend?"

Judy looks up at Maribel and the woman nods. "Well I don't see why not," Judy says.

The two women exchange phone numbers, and as it turns out, Santana lives within walking distance of the Fabrays.

When their parents say it's time to go, Santana turns to Quinn. "I'll see you tomorrow!"

"Yeah!" Quinn pulls her friend into a hug.

When the girls pull away, Santana pecks Quinn's cheek before catching up to her mom. Quinn stares after the girl. She didn't have the urge to bite her.

Quinntana Begins, by seemenopeu

Santana smiled as she threw her bag over her shoulder. The camp seemed to smile back at her and if she didn't detest the outdoors, she would have took a deep smell of the opportunity in front of her.

Who would have thought that Santana Lopez would be going to cheerleading camp? A year ago, not her. But once she found out that the high school that she was going to had the top cheerleading team in the state and the only way she would be able to get on that team freshmen year would be to get on the good side of the head coach at this camp, she saved the date.

Santana never really wanted to be a cheerleader, but she appreciated the easy popularity that came with it. Sure, it took a lot of effort into bribing to her parents to convince them to let her go here and sure her older brothers were going to tease her about it for weeks but apparently it was going to be worth it.

She walked confidently through the camp, eyeing up each of the girls and seeing which one would be competition.

Santana laughed to herself as she passed the seventh girl who could barely walk by herself. She was about to rock this camp.

A loud voice called everyone over and Santana tried to get as far as possible to the front. In the middle, stood a tough looking blonde woman yelling through a megaphone, "Welcome! This is the official cheerleading camp of the Cheerios! Some of you will prove something of yourselves while the others will have to embrace the losers that you truly are!"

"Now before we begin," she continued, "I want to weed out the weaklings. I want you to do a few tumbles and such. This current Cheerio, whose name I forgot but I remembered enough to ask her to come do labor for me, will give you an example of what I want. Commence!"

A girl in a red and white cheerleading outfit stepped from out of the crowd and started to do a round off followed by an arial and then finished with a triple backwards handspring. It was quite simple really, Santana could do it in her sleep, but she didn't want to be the person who had to go first.

The woman pointed to a small red headed girl and commanded her to go. The girl cowered in fear before starting her tumbles and didn't do half bad. The woman commanded her to stand over to the side and gave her an congratulations that sounded more like an insult than anything.

The next girl wasn't so lucky and failed to land the handspring correctly. The woman pointed her to the other side and didn't try to hide her insults.

The next set of girls went by and it was hit or missed really. A lot of them came with no experience at all and Santana almost caught second-hand embarrassment every time the woman yelled at them and sent them over to the "loser" side.

Only a few had impressed Santana so far, like a lanky blonde who had done a warm up dance before completely acing the whole thing. She didn't consider her to be competition, but just a breath of fresh air after all the nervousness from the other girls.

"You!" The woman pointed to Santana, "You're next."

Santana smirked, because it was her time to shine and she strutted her way to place to start. She took a deep breath before beginning and leaped. It took a while but as her hands left the grass for the final time, she had known that she had owned it. She stuck it and turned to the woman, who just nodded her head and pointed her finger towards the "winner" side.

Honestly Santana wanted a bit more, but she's glad that she even made it. She walked over to the group and watched as the next girl took to the starting place.

This girl stood up straight as she tightened her blonde pony tail. She had no expression on her face and it immediately intrigued Santana. Was she nervous? Excited? Did she not care? Then the girl started to move and it startled the Latina. She was flawless in every toss and turn. Her jumps were perfect enough for her not to over do any flip and- Was she going in slow motion? As the girl tucked passed Santana, she swore that she felt the air from her pony tail whip her in the face.

Then she landed the last step and Santana felt herself get dizzy. The girl was gorgeous. Perfect in every way and Santana's face got warm as she scanned her perfectly sculptured face.

Santana didn't know if she was gaga over this girl or what, but what she did know was that she was pissed off. She had felt things for girls before but if there had been more girls like this around she probably wouldn't have been able to keep her feelings under control for so long. Who the hell did this girl think she was? Being all this?

"Good," the woman said, "Winner's side."

Good? Santana almost laughed. That girl was more than "good," she was amazing.

The girl walked over to the side and stood next to Santana. It took all of the dark haired girl's might not to look at the blonde next to her, so she turned away and folded her arms. Maybe if she could pull off being a bitch, then maybe no one will know that she about died over that girl.

"Okay ladies," the woman said after the final girl finished her tumbles, "Now that you're split up, I'll have an easier time. Winner side, go and pick out cabins and be ready for vigorous work outs tomorrow so that we can lose some of that baby fat!"

She turned to the other side, "For the rest of you, call home and a ride. You've been cut!"

Lots of groans and cries filled the air and Santana started walking toward the bunkers before she could get a eye full of that perfect girl again.

She walked into the first bunker and met her roommate for the next couple of weeks, that lanky blonde from earlier whose real name was Brittany.

The week had passed by in a flash and vigorous work out was the key word for everyday. It was horrible, but it wasn't the only thing that Santana complained about everyday. It was usually about the perfect girl, whom was actually called Quinn Fabray she soon learned, and how she was good at everything. Not just tumbling, but running and cheers and everything. It was exhausting.

Brittany, who was like the best friend that Santana had never had, had guessed Santana's crush by the next day of camp. She promised not to tell anyone, but teased Santana every chance that she got. In return, she got an earful of Santana complaining about Quinn in the middle of the nights or in the middle of the days or in the earliest of mornings.

The thing that made it worse was the fact that Santana didn't know if she wanted to jump on her or actually jump her. Quinn was competition no matter what, and so Santana would try to as work as hard as she could to get as good as Quinn. Or run harder so that she could get in front of Quinn. Or practice routines over and over so that she could dance with Quinn.

It was the middle of the second week when they were all having a race hosted by that Cheerio girl that Santana had yet to try to find out the name of. Sue, the cheerleading coach, had not known about it, so they were all having way more fun than usual. Win or lose, they were all having more fun than they have been having for the past week.

Santana didn't plan to participate, the whole thing sounded stupid if no one was going to get anything for winning. That was until she found out that Quinn was going to race next. Something in her mind thought that it may be a good idea to race against her, just to see if she could beat her. Brittany gave her a knowing smirk as she volunteered to go against the perfect blonde.

They got into starting positions and Santana sneaked a peak at the girl next to her. Yet again, Quinn had no expression on her face, way too focused to peak a slight emotion. Santana quickly turned away, feeling her face get warm again.

The signal was set off and they both tore at the ground at a set speed. Santana was surprised that Quinn was already going so fast, but kept up with her. They ran, neck and neck with on another and Santana swore she saw Quinn panic a look at her. They never lost speed as they quickly approached the finish line and Santana finally took a breath as they crossed it.

It was a tie. Santana rolled her eyes as she sat down on the ground and tried to catch her breath.

"Santana!" A voice that she had never heard before called. She looked up to see a angry Quinn yelling at her breathlessly. Santana's eyes went wide, because not only was Quinn talking to her, but the girl knew her name.

"Are you listening to me?!" Quinn snapped and woke up Santana.

"Uh. No," Santana said honestly because she wasn't even sure if she was listening to her at this moment.

"Then I'll repeat myself," Quinn leaned closer down to Santana, "Do you think you're better than me?!"

Santana blinked her eyes, "What?"

"Are you mental?" Quinn stood up straight and shook her head.

Santana scrunched up her face and tried to process that the girl was trying to insult her, "Seriously?"

"Well you don't seem to be responding properly," Quinn raised an eyebrow.

Though that eyebrow thing was completely adorable, Santana can't let just anybody come at her like this. Not even if they're perfect Fabray, so she stood up and put on her game face, "Look here, Fabray. Don't come up to me and ask if I think I'm better than you because *you'd* have to be mental not to think that."

"I actually came over here to tell you that you're not even close to being as good as me, no matter how hard you try over practice," Quinn teased and Santana mentally kicked herself for making it that obvious that she was trying hard to be as good as Quinn.

Santana recovered quickly and gave her shit eating smile, "Wow, are you that self conscious that you can't even focus on yourself during practice. Surprise surprise, the fake blonde has self confidence problems!"

Santana was just pulling stuff out of her ass, but it seemed to work as Quinn's face flashed emotions before she turned and walked away.

Santana watched her walk away before kicking the dirt under her shoe for messing up any possible relationship she could have had with this girl. She looked up to the sky and whined.

Days had passed by and Quinn steered clear of Santana no matter what they were doing. Sure, since their skill level was pretty equal they were placed in a few things together, but afterwards there would be no words, no glances, no anything. By the third and final week, Santana had given up, not like she had tried that hard in the first place.

It was the final day and everyone was hanging out and celebrating that they were all in good views with Sue, and if they were going to McKinley high like Santana then they had a spot on the Cheerios for sure.

Sure, after the first cuts there wasn't many girls left over, but everyone thought it wasn't short of a miracle that they got on the team.

Santana was busy looking for Brittany, who said to meet her at the docks that no one was ever allowed to go to. Santana walked onto the wooden dock, seeing the blonde sitting at the edge with her feet in the water but stopped once she noticed that it wasn't the blonde she was looking for.

Quinn looked over her shoulder, having heard Santana walk up behind her and sighed once she saw her, "Santana."

"Quinn," Santana stood on the spot next to the girl, "Can I sit?"

"Whatever." Quinn shrugged as she looked back to the water.

Santana sat next to her and dipped her toes in the lake, "So, uh, do you like the water?"

"Do you hate me?" Quinn asked suddenly.

"No," Santana responded just as quickly, because how could she ever?

"It's just that you been trying to out do me on everything and I just thought," she looked down, "I thought that maybe you might hate me."

Santana watched her for a moment considering what to say. If Quinn had been anybody else she would have made up a lie to make them feel better but that wasn't how this was going to work. This has been the girl that she's been falling all over the place for half a month, she deserved more than that. Plus, it's not like she'll see her again after this or anything. These girls all come from places all over the state, it would be a miracle if she did.

So, Santana took a deep breath and readied herself for feelings, "I don't hate you. It's more the opposite."

Quinn looked up to her, "What do you mean?"

"I've, uh, had a crush on you for like three weeks now, Quinn," Santana brought her knees to her chest, getting ready to protect herself from putting herself out like this.

Quinn stayed quiet for a moment before saying, "That's not funny."

"Am I laughing?"

Quinn blinked her eyes and turned away, "Oh. I guess that explains somethings."

"Please do not put that into detail," Santana was more than embarrassed now.

Quinn turned back to Santana, a genuine smile on her face, "No one's ever had a crush on me before."

Santana rolled her eyes, "Yeah right."

"Seriously though. Especially not girls," Quinn added. She reached out and grasped Santana's hand, "Especially not beautiful girls like you."

Santana went rigid before using her free arm to put her face in the crook of her elbow, "I should have never told you."

Quinn giggled and Santana felt her insides twist, "I wish I would have known that you weren't out to get me earlier. We could have been holding hands a lot sooner."

Santana peaked over, "What do you mean?"

"Santana," Quinn shook her head like it was obvious, "You're like the most gorgeous girl I've ever seen."

Santana moved her arm from her face to smile at the blonde, "I know."

"Of course you know," Quinn giggled again.

They talked and talked before it was time to go and promised to keep in touch. Santana didn't believe that they would though, because it's easier said than done. She slugged around her house for the rest of the summer.

If only she knew that a month later, on her first day of school at McKinley High, she would bump into the blonde again as a start of a new routine between the two.

Alphas & Betas, by solvethebomb

Santana was nervous, an emotion she had carefully tucked away on a restricted list of things she was not allowed to feel. The feeling itself was unsettling, at the very least, but the fact that she could not push it away was even more so. Today, of all days, she needed to harness the bitch-goddess energy she'd built up lording over the middle school herd for three years.

"Freshmen! 99.99% of you will not make this squad. Most of you should probably quit now to save yourself the shame and embarrassment of wetting yourself in fear. Be forewarned that your tears provide the only sustenance I allow myself during summer months, so I will be working extra hard to see you whiny, sloppy little babies bawl your eyes out."

"*What in the sweet hell...?*" Santana thought, cringing at the screech of her hopefully future coach's voice through the megaphone. She had heard the rumors of Sue Sylvester, how could she not? But this shit seemed absolutely unreal.

She watched as first one, then another, then girls in groups of 3 and 4 started to get up and retreat from the field, evidently too scared to brave the torture required to become a Cheerio. For the first time, doubt began to seep into her bones, but she didn't move from her seated position on the grass.

"That's what I like to see! Weed out the weak before we even get started. How many freshmen do we have left?"

Santana raised her hand, her eyes darting around to count her remaining classmates.

Ten, maybe.

"Wow, this might be the biggest class of quitters we've ever had. Maybe you 2012ers should all just abandon ship, seems like something in the water made you weaker than the average teenager. All of you stand up."

Santana Lopez scrambled to her feet at the command, wanting to be the first one up, wanting to show that she wasn't afraid. Somehow a girl slightly behind her off to the right seemed to be on her feet first, and Santana cursed herself for being slow to the draw.

Not surprisingly, Coach Sylvester's eyes were drawn to the first girl on her feet. Santana canted her head, trying to catch a glimpse, curious as to who had the balls to best her on day one. She knew her classmates. They were all sheep, sad, weak little sheep.

"What's your name?"

"Quinn Fabray."

"*Who? We don't have a Quinn Fabray in our class. Great some fucking wild card just showed up.*" Santana rolled her eyes in frustration. All of her hard work was being impeded upon by some random.

"Well, Quinn Fabray, you are now in charge of your few remaining classmates. Get them warmed up and stretched while I talk to the upperclassmen."

"Yes, Coach. Freshmen, follow me!"

Santana followed, as begrudgingly as humanly possible. When she got to where her classmates were circling up she finally got a good view of her brand new nemesis and felt her breath catch in her throat for an instant.

"A fucking Disney princess. Of course. Great."

"Umm, pair up and hit the track, and then we'll stretch."

Without looking around, Santana knew she'd be paired up with Quinnderella, simply because her classmates were rightly terrified of her and were certainly going to be no less terrified of the apparent new queen bitch.

With a sigh she stepped forward and crossed her arms.

"Looks like it's you and me. Let's go."

Quinn looked at girl in front of her and felt the familiar chill of terror flash through her insides. This was the kind of girl who had made Lucy into an outcast. In Quinn's experience, the prettier the girl, the harsher the treatment they doled out, and this girl was a certified 10. An immediate sense of defensiveness crept up on her, and she simply gave a curt nod before walking onto the track and picking up a steady, moderate pace.

"So what's your deal, New Girl Barbie? Where'd you come from?"

Santana glanced over and was surprised to see an immediate reaction from the new class leader. There was a hesitation, an exposed gap in her bitch armor.

Quinn felt her stomach turn and then caught herself.

"Bitches aren't scared, they're mean," she reminded herself for the hundredth time that day.

"Belleville. What's your story? Are you from here?"

Santana's laugh made Quinn nervous.

"I own this town, Fabray. So yeah, you could say that I'm from here. I'm actually from the shitty part of Lima, but I'm sure you don't know anything about that, do you, Pretty Princess?"

Quinn rolled her eyes at the blatant chest beating going on.

"So far I've caught that you think I look like Barbie and am pretty. Your insults are really heartbreaking...whatever your name is."

Santana sped up slightly before answering. She was on a personal mission now to burn this little out of town wannabe.

"Lopez. Santana Lopez. And I'll see you on the other side of the field, because I just can't run this slow anymore."

With that, she kicked her legs out and started to really push, surprised when the new girl stayed with her for even a moment. Irritated, she pushed even harder, until she could no longer feel Quinn Fabray on her heels.

Quinn watched her go, slightly amused and slightly impressed. The girl was fast, and also for some reason seemed to dislike her already. It wasn't much of a stretch to imagine Santana Lopez as a formidable enemy, which clarified Quinn's priorities greatly.

"Friends close, enemies closer, just like Daddy always says."

When she got back to Santana she held her hands up in surrender.

"You're fast. That was pretty impressive."

"Yeah, I know. Now let's stretch before crazy Sue has us doing God knows what."

Santana felt immediately wary at the compliment Quinn paid her. She knew ulterior motives better than anyone. It seemed like half the time she was doing things just to be able to *eventually* do things she actually wanted to do. That annoying thought had planted itself in her brain sometime towards the end of the last school year, and she hadn't been able to banish it yet. She shook her head slightly and returned her attention to the 5'6" blonde threat before her.

They stretched silently, studying each other surreptitiously. Santana could feel Quinn's eyes on her whenever she wasn't looking and it drove her crazy. She found it annoying that this new obstacle in her life seemed so damn perfect. She looked like the All-American cheerleader, without a doubt.

Quinn, on the other hand, felt her natural curiosity getting the best of her, and did her absolute best to tamp it down. Santana had an exotic, older air about her. She seemed worldlier than any girl their age that Quinn had ever met. The questions bubbled up until she finally just had to ask Santana *something*.

"So-"

"OKAY! All of you pathetic hopefuls get your cheerful butts over here. We're going to start today off by building my pyramid."

Quinn and Santana hopped up and ran over, trying to hustle without seeming overeager, but also determined not to let the other ahead of them. Santana gave Quinn a quick glare when they arrived in front of Sylvester well ahead of everyone else, their personal competition pushing them to move much faster than the crowd.

"Perfect. You two will be on top. Quinn Fabray you will take the high point, Latin Heat, you can take her right hand spot."

"Her name is Santana," Quinn informed Sue politely, gaining a more pointed glare from her stretching partner.

Sue looked at them both, bemused, before addressing Quinn quietly.

"Her name is whatever I say it is. Your name, however, will be very well known from here on out. You are my new Head Cheerio. Congratulations, Quinn. Everyone else on this field now hates you."

Quinn felt frozen in place, trying desperately to keep her face blank. She couldn't believe that she had already made herself a target in a brand new school. Her eyes darted quickly over to Santana, who raised her eyebrows and gave her a smug smirk as if to say, "sucks to be you."

"Listen up, Cheerios! Freshman Quinn Fabray is your new Head Cheerio, and her right hand woman is Santana...what's your last name?"

"Lopez," Santana responded automatically, stunned to now be grouped in with the team pariah.

"Santana Lopez. These two are going to lead this team to a national championship. You all are going to listen to them. This is not up for discussion. Start building my pyramid."

All of the girls hustled off to do as they were told, Santana and Quinn trailing behind.

"What the hell, new girl? We've been here for less than an hour and you've already screwed us in terms of making friends on this team."

"Look, sure, this isn't ideal, but it is what it is. Stop whining. We can't give these girls an inch on us."

Santana gave Quinn an irritated sneer before walking towards the pyramid, deftly climbing to her position and standing ramrod straight.

The new Head Cheerio felt the hesitation inside of her even as her body moved forward and she experienced pure relief that she was a pro at hiding her feelings. She joined this team to make friends, she joined this team to be a part of something. Now the only girl who would ever talk to her as an equal hated her guts.

By the time she reached the top, Quinn felt the expansive weight of sheer loneliness and nearly laughed out loud at the symbolism of it all. She stood, wearing the biggest, fakest smile possible, and waited for the endless critiques she knew were coming.

Instead, she felt someone shift violently beneath her, pitching her forward just far enough to send her off her perch. Quinn fought to center herself, but realized it was too late and gave herself up to the fall just as a strong hand grabbed her upper arm and firmly pulled her back to a steady position.

"Everyone down!" A voice next to her announced with authority.

The team scrambled down from the pyramid, and Quinn watched in surprise as Santana grabbed up an upperclassman and carted her off to the side. It was clear that her new 2nd was beyond irate and that she made no attempt to keep their conversation private.

Everyone, including Sue, watched, completely intrigued.

"If you have a problem, you better say it right now, because if you can't hack it on the pyramid then you can't hack it on this team. You could have really hurt her, and I don't give a flying fuck if your feelings are hurt because she already beat you out for Head Cheerio. She's in charge. I'm her back up. If you don't like it, you can get the fuck off this field. Am I even remotely unclear on this?"

The upperclass girl shook her head slightly, and Santana turned her ear to the girl to get a verbal response.

"No," the response was tinged with hate, but the tone went ignored.

"Good, then get that pyramid built back up in a freaking hurry. And know that if Quinn Fabray ever takes a dive off the top, you will reap her injuries ten-fold. Go."

Santana watched the girl run back to the team and took a minute to gather herself. She did anger much better these days, but it wasn't always easy to harness it into simple words. In Lima Heights, anger almost always meant fighting. The Latina put her hands on top of her head and took a deep breath before heading back towards the rising pyramid.

"Thank you," Quinn said softly, her eyes on the ground.

"Don't mention it."

"I-"

"No, seriously. Don't mention it," Santana insisted.

Quinn raised her eyes to study her enemy/competition/defender. Santana was watching the pyramid go up, her gaze attentive and focused. Suddenly, she rolled her eyes and shot a confused smile towards her captain, shaking her head as she began her rapid ascent of the pyramid just like before.

Santana waited for Quinn to follow her up, but her mind was on the odd butterflies in her stomach. The soft "thank you," the careful, guarded eyes studying her—it felt better than it should to defend this girl that she barely even knew, let alone *liked*.

Finally perched back at the top, Quinn locked her muscles in place and tried not to look over at Santana. Watching this girl come to her defense so vehemently had changed something. She wanted to prove herself in general, all the time, but this was different. She wanted to prove herself worthy specifically *to Santana*. Her tight fists grew clammy at the realization, and she prayed fervently for Sue to let them down from this damn pyramid, but to no avail.

They stayed in their positions even as their muscles began to quake from exhaustion. Sue took her time critiquing each level, tearing girls down for individual failures, then deriding the group for letting their teammates fail. Apparently, on day one, they should have already been working as a single unit.

Santana did an internal eye roll, the whole thing becoming kind of ridiculous by the time Sue reached her.

"Cha Cha, I'm going to need you to stop looking so damn perfect up there. Same for you Fabray. You're making your teammates look absolutely terrible. That's not very fair of you."

Santana and Quinn both internally flinched at the non-criticism. They were being held up at the very top, no weight on their shoulders, and they'd been left unscathed. Every single girl in the bunch had been personally mocked, and yet Sue had chosen to *compliment* them.

"Get down and hit the showers. Lopez, Fabray, come see me."

They scrambled down and hurried over to Coach Sylvester, terror in both of their hearts. This could not get better, only worse.

Santana felt a sudden camaraderie with Quinn, realizing that they were both totally screwed together. She instinctively tried to brush the feeling away, but when she glanced at the new Head Bitch and saw an eye roll to rival her own, she knew she was going to give in.

Quinn fought a smile when Santana planted herself firmly at her right shoulder.

"Yes, Coach?"

"Listen here, you two, it was my intention to humiliate and isolate you once young Fabray here felt the need to open her mouth and correct me. It's kind of a tradition for me to see if I can break the toughest girls on the field, and typically I am successful. Your captaincy was intended to drive you from the group so that I could later rip it out from under you when you inevitably failed. However, when you didn't flinch or complain, and when Ms. Salsa Caliente here decided to go all drill sergeant on an upperclassman, I realized that you two are actually quite the duo. Icy Quinn Fabray and Fiery Santana Lopez. Fire and Ice. And since it seems as if you two don't actually even like each other all that much, things just got more interesting for me, which is really all I care about. You will remain the alpha and beta of this team. You will lead us to a championship. You will do as I say. Now go hit the showers."

"Yes, Coach," they replied together, turning to jog off the field and not stopping until they made it to the locker room.

Quinn sat in front of the locker she had claimed and waited, while Santana immediately peeled off her shirt as she walked in the door. Santana was already in a towel and headed for the showers when she noticed her new boss just sitting there.

"Gonna shower, Q? Kind of gross if you don't, so..."

Quinn looked up in surprise.

"What did you call me?"

"Umm...Q. Like, short for Quinn."

Santana was confused by the question. What was the big deal, it was just a nickname.

"Oh. No one has ever given me a nickname before," Quinn admitted reluctantly.

The shock on the Latina's face was clear, so Quinn immediately interjected.

"At least, not one I didn't hate, so...it's a good one, a good, uh, nickname, so um, thanks."

"Wow," Quinn thought, *"could I seriously be any more awkward if I tried?"*

Santana just shook her head and laughed lightly.

"No problem. So...shower?"

"Oh yeah, be right there. Just taking a minute to process."

Another smile from her Latina counterpart as she walked out, and Quinn felt her head swimming. She had no idea what the hell was happening, just that she was terrified of whatever it was. She quickly changed out of her clothes and grabbed her towel.

The shower room was surprisingly empty considering how many girls were trying out. Quinn assumed a lot of them had gone home to shower or that some had just plain quit. She didn't dwell on it once she heard soft singing coming from a stall at the end. Quinn smiled when she recognized the words, finding herself quietly humming along as she turned on the shower and enjoyed the hot water on her skin.

Santana turned her shower off and could suddenly hear someone humming along with her song. She knew, without knowing, who it was, and felt an immediate draw towards her. Santana kept singing as she walked closer to the only remaining shower still running. Quinn switched from humming to singing along in a soft voice, surprising Santana by knowing the words to a 90's Usher song *and* actually being a decent singer.

Santana leaned against the wall and tilted her head back as she debated her next move. Sure, the new girl had sort of stolen her thunder and then got them unwanted attention from Sue. But it was also day one and Coach had just made them the leaders of this team, which meant they had obviously already made the squad. Plus, even though it meant being left out of the friends circle, they were automatically the head bitches at school, as *freshmen*.

Knowing full well that her "friends" from middle school were just a mindless pack who clung to her to leach off of her popularity and hopefully avoid her wrath, Santana found herself hoping that maybe she and Quinn could be friends. On the other hand, she also knew that the odd attraction she felt towards the new captain was completely taboo. Quinn fascinated her in a way other people had stopped doing when she'd outgrown childhood and started calculating the advantages of every action she took.

Quinn jumped when she walked out of her stall, shocked to see Santana standing against the wall in her towel. Her eyes took in the tanned body in front of her of their own accord until she caught herself and snapped her eyes to the floor.

"Hey, uh, didn't think you were still here," Quinn mumbled quickly, completely unnerved.

Santana took in the blush and the roving eyes and the uncomfortable tone, and added up the sum. Whatever weird thing she had for Quinn was evidently not a one way feeling. Either that, or the new girl was just really uncomfortable around her. Santana was immediately pissed off at herself for feeling hopeful for the former and tried to gain her balance with snark.

"Well, I figured since you pretty much ruined our chances of making friends, we might as well hang out if we don't want to be loners for the next four years."

Quinn brought her eyes back up to dark brown ones and stared hard. She was tired of being shit on by girls like this, and being reminded of their situation only made her that much more defensive.

"Yeah because I'm sure there was a line of girls around the block just waiting to get the chance to be your friend so that they could be abused by your weak insults and insane need to push everyone around you down in order to elevate yourself even an inch. If you think I'm another one of the herd who will take your crap just to be popular, you've got another thing coming."

They regarded each other in silence, the flash of surprise on Santana's face long since passed. The Latina was impressed, in truth. No one had gone toe to toe with her in a long time.

Quinn was terrified of what might come back at her, but fixed a calm, emotionless expression on her features.

Both girls knew that a friendship between them served their best interests. Both of them knew that a friendship between them would often be strained. They would battle each other more often than not. They would constantly be competing. There was already a charged air between them, and it would only get worse. They knew, but were still drawn to each other, unwilling to back down from the possibilities this friendship put before them.

Their staring match extended to the point of uncomfortable for both of them, but the idea of backing down went ignored until Santana smiled suddenly.

Quinn kept her icy demeanor until Santana finally spoke.

"Fair enough, Q. I'll give it to you, you aren't one of the herd. So what do you say we figure out how we're going to rule over the peasants together?"

At that, a genuine smile spread slowly across Quinn's lips.

"Sure, but I already know how we're going to do it," she said with a smirk that sent Santana's heart fluttering uncomfortably.

"Oh yeah?"

"Yup. Flawlessly."

Soon to be HBIC, by TakeMyBreathAwayTwoTimes

Santana Lopez was in the kitchen, drying the dishes from dinner when she was startled by a call from behind her.

“Mami?” was asked quietly in a sleepy voice.

“Yes, baby?” She replied as she set a plate down and turned to her daughter.

“I can't sleep.” She pouted as she hugged her teddy bear tight to her chest.

“Aww Alexia, did you try counting sheep?” Santana asked as she moved around the island towards her daughter.

“Yup but I jus got's my numbers mixed up.” Alexia replied as she raised her arms towards Santana to be picked up, who immediately obliged. “Will you tell me a story?”

“Mami is trying to clean up from all that mess you made at dinner earlier,” Santana fake scowled as she booped Alexia's nose. “Why don't you ask mommy?”

“I tried but she's asleep on the couch and I didn't wanna awakes her.” Alexia explained as she lay her head on Santana's chest. “Please?”

“Okay munchkin, let's go.” Santana sighed as she brought the girl back to her room.

Once she was tucked in with her mother lying next to her, she lay her head on her pillow and looked over at Santana intently. Santana quickly racked her brain for a story to tell before beginning.

“Okay. Once upon a time in a faraway...”

“Mami no!” Alexia interrupted frowning at her mother.

“What's wrong Al?” Santana asked confused.

“I wants a real story.” She explained patiently. “About you and mommy.”

“A story about mommy and I?...Have I ever told you about the first time we met?” Santana asked her inquisitive daughter.

“Nope.” Alexia replied as she smiled expectantly.

“Right well as you know, when we were in high school, mommy and I were cheerleaders but we met the summer before high school at cheerio boot camp. Now as you know your Mami is a Bad Ass and...wait don't tell your mom I said Ass...and I didn't take anything from anybody...until your Mom came along...”

The sun was beating down on the large group of pre-freshmen as they stood in a line waiting for their turn to audition. Santana Lopez, who was near the front, continued to stretch as she shook her head at the awful auditions. All of a sudden, she was shoved back slightly as a girl pushed in in front of her. The blonde girl gave her a look before turning to watch each girl take her turn.

"Hey, what do you think you're doing?" Santana asked as she tapped the girl on the shoulder.

"Excuse me?" The blonde asked as she smiled innocently.

"I said, what do you think you're doing skipping me Blondie?" Santana repeated as she crossed her arms over her chest.

The blonde's eyes followed the movement and stared for a moment before she caught herself and looked back to Santana's face.

"I'm Quinn Fabray, soon to be head cheerleader and it is in your best interest to let me do what I want." Quinn said as she too crossed her arms and smirked at Santana.

"Well I'm Santana Fucking Lopez and I don't take orders from anyone. I'm from Lima heights adjacent, you know where that is? The wrong side of the tracks. So you best be scuttling on back to your place afores I ends you!" Santana growled at the girl as they both stepped closer to each other.

Before either girl had a chance to continue, they heard a shout from Sue Sylvester's megaphone that deafened them both.

"Alright you lazy pathetic excuses for future cheerleaders, who's next?!" Sue shouted.

It was then that Quinn noticed that she was now in fact at the top of the line. She smirked at Santana again and moved to the centre to perform her routine. As she flawlessly performed, Santana felt her jaw drop and a small smile grace her lips. This girl had skills.

After Quinn was finished, Santana quickly pushed past her to stand in the centre and waited for her music to start. She recounted her moves to a tee and once she was finished, walked over to where the rest of the girls were crowded. She grabbed a bottle of water and sat down on the grass to rest.

Soon, a shadow loomed over her. She sighed heavily before looking up with a scowl.

"Oh god what do you want now? Come to take my place on the grass?" She sneered as she glared at Quinn.

"As a matter of fact....no, I wanted to introduce myself properly." Quinn explained as she sat down next to Santana.

"What are you talking about, you already did?" Santana questioned looking at the girl like she was crazy.

"Yes but not properly. I'm Quinn Fabray. I just moved from the next town over and you've got some really good moves. I think we could be good friends." Quinn introduced herself as she held out her hand.

Santana stared at the girl for a long minute before lifting her hand, rubbing off the grass and taking Quinn's with a smile.

"I know I have moves, that's an understatement. Santana Lopez, soon to be HBIC of McKinley. Maybe we can share it." Santana introduced as she shook the other girl's hand.

"...And just like that, your Mami and I became the best of friends and took the Cheerio's to three national titles as well as ruling the school and Mommy being secretly in love with me. The end." Santana concluded.

As she looked down she realised Alexia was fast asleep cuddled deep into her duvet. Pressing a light kiss to her forehead, Santana carefully got up from the bed and pulled the door closed. She was once again startled as she saw Quinn sitting down on the floor leaning against the wall.

“How long have you been there?” Santana questioned softly as she reached out a hand to help Quinn up.

“For most of the story. I like how you tell our stories, except for the bad language.” Quinn scolded light-heartedly as she stood up but kept Santana's hand clasped in her own.

“Well if I'm going to tell a story I'm going to tell it how it is. Just keeping it real babe!” She replied winking at Quinn and pulling her along to their bedroom.

As they got ready for bed, Quinn circled her arms around Santana's waist as she put moisturiser on her face.

“So I was the one secretly in love with you huh?” Quinn asked as she lay her head on Santana's shoulder and kissed her neck softly.

“Yup that's right.” Santana replied as she smirked at her wife. “I was never good at being discrete with my feelings.” She added as she turned in Quinn's arms to pull her in for a kiss.

Splintered Heart, by Tampered Temporary Bliss

"Santana!" The words broke into incoherent whimpers, moans, demands that she knew only she could fulfil.

"Yes, Quinnie? What do you want? Tell me..." Her tongue gave an experimental lick to the swelling clit in front of her, replacing the ghosting fingers that had been there only seconds ago. She heard no reply except for more moans as she moved her tongue in a circular motion, applying the perfect pressure—not too little, but little enough to keep Quinn wanting more.

"Oh fuck!"

She continued her ministrations, feeling her head being pushed further in between Quinn's legs. Fingers dug through her hair, almost yanking at it occasionally. Quinn was almost as desperate as she was.

A few more licks and another moan, followed by a muffled chain of curses mixed with her name, and Lucy Quinn Fabray had been officially unraveled by Santana Lopez.

"Fuck fuck fuck fuck! I'm late!" Santana ran out of the house, her phone in one hand, her purse in the other, and a piece of bread between her teeth.

"Be back for dinner!" Kurt called from somewhere in the 'house', as Santana ran down the flight of stairs, plunging her heels into the sidewalk and desperately looking for a taxi to take her to her 'date' with Rachel Berry. She had promised to be there for Rachel's dress rehearsal for a show today, and unless the cab was about to fly at least 90 miles per hour through a zero-traffic road, she was likely going to be late. And the words 'late' and 'Berry' didn't fit well into a sentence together, especially when a stage was involved.

As soon as she climbed into the backseat of a cab and gave directions, she took a look at her phone for the first time that morning. Well, afternoon. It was a little past twelve already. She saw a couple of missed calls and text messages and she scrolled through the list.

Gracie. Probably another failing attempt at a booty call.

River. The guy at the bar maybe? Or was it the extension program? Whatever.

An unknown number. Junk.

Rachel. Twice. Whoops.

Quinn. *Quinn?*

Santana quickly touched the message on her phone, only to find a notification for a voicemail. She dialed a quick few buttons and held the phone to her ear.

A familiar sweet voice came on. Sweet, but sad.

"Hey, Tana... Can you come over tomorrow night? Like after Valentine's Day? I gotta spend it with Finn and all, but it'd be really nice to see you after. Give me a call and let me know?"

Something sounded wrong and something felt wrong. Quinn had probably been in yet another fight with Finn.

Santana rolled her eyes as the thought.

Ever since the Valentines' Day wedding disaster a year ago, with a very fortunate drunk four-or-five-time thing with Quinn, the pair had kept in contact. They had exchanged uncountable phone calls, spent time together on weekends and during holidays, regularly Skype'd, and were better friends than they ever had been in their highschool years.

Santana had been the first to know when a certain dick-head named Finn had set his eyes on his hot blonde ex once again and had asked her out. She was the first to know when Quinn said yes. Santana had to admit it shocked her, but since this was Quinn's decision, she had supported it (while trying to prove that Finn was a complete dick in the long run, of course).

The traffic outside was honking and making a lot of noise. It did little to make Santana feel a little more at ease, and did everything to make her want to punch something or someone even more.

She sighed as she returned to her thoughts, impatiently tapping her fingers on the leather seat. Her disdain for Finn didn't only stem from the way he treated women, or the way he practically outed her in highschool. Her disdain for Finn stemmed from the way that he had suddenly wormed his way into Quinn's heart and by doing so, had practically thrown all of her own chances out the window.

Santana tried to be discreet about it, and had not openly confessed it to anyone—obviously not Quinn—but ever since that damned failure of a wedding, she had found herself with a tiny bit of affection for a certain blonde. No, it wasn't Brittany this time—thank god she was over her—but it was Quinn Fabray.

Straight-as-an-arrow Quinn Fabray.

Of course, to make things more complicated, Quinn had very specifically said that drunken night was probably more of a 'one-time thing' for her (though it turned out to be a four-or-five time thing, as Santana wasn't too sure when Quinn had passed out—just before or after her fifth orgasm), meaning that she was still pretty much straight, despite the night of passion and pleasure she had experienced. It wasn't called 'experimenting' for nothing.

Now to make matters worse, she was dating a guy. That thought didn't sit well with Santana at all.

As she chewed through the stale bread she had, she sighed out loud. She tried to remind herself that she was Quinn's 'best friend' now, and because of that, she had to show support to Quinn, even though she was now dating an insensitive bastard. But it fucking hurt.

Talk about being friend-zoned.

There was so much Santana didn't know. But one thing she did know was that none of Quinn's boyfriends had ever treated her right, loved her right. Not Puck, not Sam, and definitely not Finn. None of those three could ever compare to the love one Santana Lopez could offer.

The cab came to a halt in front of the building that Rachel was having her dress rehearsal at. Hastily paying the fare, Santana ran up the steps and burst through the doors, turning left and making a beeline to Hall A.

Santana was not the only one who had started late. The whole crew had began their practice about 15 minutes after the set time. The first number had already begun, though, as Santana stepped into the hall, but luckily, Rachel wasn't in the first number. She knew Rachel wasn't in it, because this number was one she had never heard before, and she was almost too certain that Rachel had sung each and every of her parts (and many of the other parts) in all the songs she performed in at the top of her lungs at least thrice in the house.

Santana quietly took a seat at the back of hall, near the center. If she hadn't been so drunk the other night, she most definitely would not have drunkenly promised Rachel to come to this stupid musical. Then again, she'd never really admit to anyone she didn't really mind.

As the second number began, Rachel's voice came across loud and clear from the stage, and when she saw Santana, she broke into a bigger smile than she already had on her face. Santana lifted her hand to give a tiny—and somewhat flirty—wave.

She sat through the whole rehearsal, trying, and failing, to push all thoughts of Quinn to the very back of her head. Santana tried her best to focus on Rachel and the rest of the cast, but with that little Quinn-sounding voice in the back of her head bugging her, it was a little hard.

"S, should I wear yellow or pink today?"

"It's just a fucking first date with an ex. Which makes it not-so-much a first date. Why bother?"

"But—" Quinn knit her eyebrows together, pouting a little.

Santana could only sigh in defeat. She shifted her position on the edge of Quinn's dorm bed, crossing her left leg over her right. "I think you should go with yellow. It'll look beautiful on ya." Anything and everything would look beautiful on Quinn.

Unexpectedly, Quinn pulled her shirt above her head, revealing her bare back. Santana's eyes widened slightly, before she forced herself to turn her gaze away. As many times as she had seen Quinn naked, both in highschool and after... ever since the wedding, it had been more than tempting

"Santana, my bra won't clasp properly. Or I can't do it anyways. Can you help?"

"Woah, flawless head bitch can't do her own bra?" her signature smirk graced her lips as she stood up from the bed and walked to Quinn. Smirking was the one mask she could always put on to hide herself.

Resisting an urge to just rip off the half-clasped bra and take Quinn against the wall, Santana let her slender fingers fix Quinn's bra properly. Her fingers unintentionally brushed along Quinn's spine as she finished, and she could have sworn Quinn flinched.

With a silent sigh, she took her seat at the edge of the bed again.

"Wait, Tana! I need you to zip up my dress too!"

"How do you survive in this dorm alone, Q."

"I can zip up myself but it's a bother, so if you're here, you can do the honors."

"Oh, I'm plenty honored." Her voice dripped with sarcasm, but inside, she did feel a little honored. Pride was a really weird thing. She felt strangely proud of 'having' Quinn, even though Quinn was preparing for a date with a guy. And of all guys, Finn fucking Hudson. The thought made her want to vomit.

Her fingers moved swiftly, pulling that small piece of metal up the zipper on Quinn's back. She took a step back as Quinn whirled around.

"How do I look?"

"You look like a child who's excited about going to her own execution because she doesn't know what that word means," Santana mused, feigning a look of boredom on her face.

"No, c'mon S, how do I look?" Quinn drew out the word 'S' so it sounded more like 'ass'.

"You're fucking stunning" The words slipped out from Santana's lips and it was much too late to reel them back in.

"Um... Ew." Quinn's eyes told Santana she was only teasing. But somehow it stung, and it stung bad. Surely, if Finn had made that comment, Quinn would have been giddy with laughter. Flattered.

"Well, more like... beautiful." Santana's voice trailed off, realizing her save could perhaps prove to have more devastating effects than her original statement.

She looked away, fixing her eyes on a stray sock on the floor in the corner of the room. Santana could hear her own heartbeat in her ears, and then there was Quinn's breathing. Fuck this.

"Um... thanks..." Quinn sounded uncertain, but when Santana looked up, she found Quinn staring at her, a blush on her cheeks. That made Santana blush as well.

"So... do you want me to pick you up after your date?"

"I... well... Finn probably wants a goodnight kiss."

Santana felt bile rise in her throat. She tried to tell herself that Quinn wasn't kissing any Finn on their 'first date'. But she knew. Instead of starting a meaningless attempt of protest, she swallowed her disappointment along with the sick feeling. She wasn't in any position to comment. She simply forced a smile that screamed fake. "Shouldn't you be going then?"

"Yeah..." Quinn's gaze lingered curiously on Santana's suddenly darkened countenance, "You could wait here for me though... I know it's kind of my fault I didn't tell you last week that you'd be coming to visit on my first date..." "

"No, it's fine," Santana let herself fall onto Quinn's bed, "I'll take a nap. Just don't take too long. We still have tomorrow to hang out right?"

"Uh..." Quinn was slipping on her heels, her hand on the wall for balance. She turned to look at Santana, who had her eyes closed, "About that... Finn asked me out for lunch..."

Santana's eyes shot open, but she rolled herself over so she was facing the wall and not Quinn. She gave up trying to cover up the disdain in her voice with sarcasm, "Oh, you can go, it's fine. I'll book the appointment for your dinner tomorrow with your fucking secretary."

"Santana..."

"No, it's fine. Go, you're running late already."

There was a brief pause, followed by a soft sigh, "See you later tonight, S."

"Bye, Q." She heard the door click shut. Her heart was throbbing with pain, and a single rebellious tear rolled down her cheek. "So much for sisters before misters."

—

"Santana! How was it?"

Santana found herself caught unaware as a blur of brown hair and a ridiculous-looking costume jumped onto her lap. She shook herself free of the memories and smiled, trying to push Rachel off her lap so she could stand up.

"Hey, Berry. Pretty good job~" She flashed a smile, even though she hadn't been paying too much attention to the rehearsal.

"Pretty good only?" Rachel frowned, a tinge of worry clouding her face.

"You know I don't give glorious compliments, future Broadway star."

Rachel grinned at the nickname, deciding that it was a huge improvement from 'dwarf' or 'wannabe diva from hell'.

"Do you have plans for the weekend?"

"Uh, yeah, I'm probably going over to Quinn's."

Rachel, in all her over-dramatic-ness, faked a look of pure shock, "No you are not! What about Kurt and me?"

"I thought Lady Hummel might want one less person in the house so he could turn his bedroom into a sex-cave with Pretty Pony."

Since the failure of a wedding, Kurt and Blaine had been hooking up on and off. Santana could tell there was chemistry and the certain possibility for more, but Rachel just automatically assumed that this was simply a series of flings for Kurt's entertainment.

"Then that leaves me all alone trying to shield my ears!" Rachel promptly plopped down on the seat the Santana previously occupied.

Santana crossed her arms in front of her chest, "I'm sure your singing could drown that out."

"Please stay, Santana!"

"Unless you're planning some lesbian sexcapade with me, I'll have to pass."

"Well, um."

"No, Berry, it's not happening. I'm going to Quinn's."

"Doesn't she have... Finn?" Rachel cocked her head to the side. The name felt like daggers in Santana's heart.

"Yeah, but she says she wants me to stay the weekend with her... so I will?"

Rachel studied Santana for a moment, "San..."

At that moment the director shouted a loud "Berry!" which made Rachel jump right out her seat. Santana watched as Rachel looked curiously at her for a moment, before shrugging it off and prancing off back to stage for a debrief. Santana waved, letting Rachel know that she'd be leaving, and Rachel nodded as she heaved herself onto the stage.

As Santana exited the building which she had entered with such haste, she inhaled, taking in the scent of the city air (which smelt pretty bad, honestly). Her heels clicked loudly as she walked down the stairs.

The chilly air of New York in late-winter made her crave something warm to hold. Like Quinn's hand. But that was impossible.

Deciding to get a late lunch, as the three-hour rehearsal made her stomach growl wildly, Santana walked along the cement sidewalk, hoping to find a cafe that looked at least mildly satisfying. With Valentine's Day just around the corner again, the shop windows were decorated in ridiculous amounts of pink hearts and red cupids. As she had so often told Quinn, Valentine's day was invented by breeders to sell cheap chocolate and false hope, and she hated it.

Those words brought a very familiar memory to her head. Wasn't it Quinn who had responded by telling her that "women without men were like fish without bicycles"? Santana remembered that little hope blossoming in her heart at those words. False hope. Perfect for Valentine's Day.

If Quinn really believed in that, what the hell was she doing with her fishy bicycle-riding Finn?

As she passed through yet another shop window, her eyes caught a periwinkle blur. She stopped in her tracks, turning to look. Her fingers grazed the large glass, and the eyes of a teddy bear shimmered in the light back at her.

"Oh my god! It's so cute!"

"It's really big, too."

"I bet it's fluffy."

"Are we going in the shop or are we just gonna stand at the shop window looking like dorks?"

"Come!" Quinn grabbed Santana's hand, pulling her towards the entrance of the shop, a small bell tinkling as the door was pushed open. She didn't let go of Santana's hand when they were inside. Not like Santana minded.

A slim grey-haired woman walked towards the pair from the back of the shop. Her hair was pulled back in a bun, and her face wore a sweet smile. "Merry Christmas, dears," Her voice was soft and cheery, full of holiday-spirit already. Her red sweater with a reindeer reminded Santana of Rachel Berry's highschool closet. That just proved her right that Rachel dressed like an old woman sometimes.

"Oh hi!" Quinn piped and smiled at the woman, "Do you own this place?" Santana could tell Quinn was really excited. It was kinda cute.

The woman let out a low chuckle, "Yes, dear, I do. It used to be my mother's. It'll be my daughter's in a few years. Do you like it?"

Santana couldn't help but notice that Quinn's hand was still in her's. It made her feel all warm and fuzzy inside.

"I love it!"

"Are you two young'uns finding a Christmas gift for each other? It's rare to take your lover for Christmas shopping~"

At those words, Santana found herself a little defensive, but the old woman's wrinkled smile made her feel a little safer. At least this woman wasn't judgemental.

"Um... we're not... really together," Quinn smiled, letting go of Santana's hand immediately. Santana remained silent, inwardly cringing at the loss of contact.

"Oh, pardon me then, dears. I just thought you would be. You two look sweet together, and my 'gaydar' is usually never wrong," she made her way to the cashier desk with a half-smirk that resembled Santana's, "My name is Elsa, by the way."

"I'm Santana, and this is Quinn," Santana offered a weak smile, "We're here because this kiddo likes your teddy bear."

"Santana, I'm no kid!"

Santana rolled her eyes, "You sure act like one sometimes."

Quinn snorted, "Like you don't."

"Oh, hell, I don't!"

"Feel free to look around, then." Elsa was chuckling to herself as she opened a brown-papered notebook and picked up an old ink pen. She dipped the tip in a small jar of black ink and began drawing on the paper. Quinn watched her with interest, standing on her toes in her obvious attempt of spying.

That of course, did not go unnoticed by Elsa. "Darling, why don't you come over here. I'll show you what I'm doing. It's for my daughter's wedding."

Quinn curiously walked over, dragging Santana by the arm, coming up behind the counter. The brown paper held an elaborate design and a couple of carefully calligraphed words: 'Anita and Lily invite you to share their happy day'.

Santana felt Quinn tense as her eyes scanned over the words.

"That's them," Elsa pointed to a framed photo of two women on a wall covered in photographs of all ages, "Lily should be about the same age as you two."

Quinn and Santana shifted their gaze to follow Elsa's pointing finger. Santana found herself smiling softly. Quinn seemed even more tense.

"If you two are together, it's okay to let the world know," Elsa continued, a twinkle in her eye.

"We're not," Quinn answered a little too quickly, letting out a small nervous laugh, her voice, however, devoid of emotion, "She's only my bestie. I have a boyfriend."

Only her bestie. Santana smiled, nodding in agreement, feeling a part of her die inside.

Elsa laughed again, "Still, you two are cute."

"How much is the teddy bear in the window?" Santana blurted, feeling a little desperate about changing the topic.

"Periwinkle? Oh, he's not for sale, darling. Sorry."

"Aww... but he's so cute!"

"He's a gift, Quinn, so I'm afraid I'll have to say no. You could look around the shop though. I'll do a 20% off for you two~" Everything about Elsa looked kind. Even rejection.

Within seconds, Quinn was already peering at all the handmade items scattered around the shop. Santana was a little less excited, looking at the many photos that decorated the wall, seeing many smiling couples—gay, lesbian, straight, and everything else in between—and eyeing Quinn from the corner of her eye.

A small little part of her wondered if a photo of Quinn and her would ever stand on this wall.

—

There was a familiar ring of a bell as Santana pushed open the door. No sooner was she inside, she heard a voice call her fondly, "Santana! It's been a while!"

She looked up to find the smiling woman again, looking a little thinner, a little older and a little more worn out than two weeks ago, when Santana had last paid a visit.

"Hi, Elsa! I was in the area so I thought I'd drop by!"

"Your little blonde friend's not in town, I suppose?"

"No..." Santana shook her head with a sigh, "She's probably with her boyfriend." She tried to focus her attention on the new items stocked in the shelves.

Elsa eyed Santana with a knowing smile before turning aside to offer her a seat behind the counter.

"It's Valentine's Day tomorrow. You in here for last minute shopping for a special someone?"

"Not really," Santana mumbled, finding herself looking into a pair of sincere brown eyes.

"Santana, don't lie. You are here for someone special."

"You read me like an open book, Elsa, it's not fair!" She huffed with a roll of her eyes, "I thought I was befriending a cookie-baking granny, and instead I've found myself a psychologist!"

"Maybe it's for the better," she held a paper cup of warm tea towards Santana, who took it and warmed her fingertips on it. "You have a few minutes today? Maybe you could stay and talk to your cookie-baking granny?" She smiled warmly.

To Santana, Elsa had become more or less a close friend. Despite her age, Elsa proved no less witty than Santana. Santana liked that. Besides, Elsa was understanding, caring, and felt a little like a real grandmother to her. It was nice, since she had been disowned by her own grandmother...

"I actually baked some cookies earlier, fancy any?"

Santana took a seat on the stool beside the cashier and found a jar full of heart-shaped cookies pushed towards her.

"Sure," she smiled as she set the cup down, "How are you feeling today?" Her fingers found themselves in the cookie jar. She took one and bit into it, savoring the taste. They were sweet, and it only reminded her of how much Quinn would have loved these cookies.

The old woman's chuckle was one that Santana had long grown used to, and secretly treasured, "Oh, the usual. Selling a few things here and there. Spending more time with ink and paper than people. You?" She smiled, her tired eyes twinkling as she looked at Santana.

Santana had always found that optimistic twinkle in the elder's eyes a little comforting and encouraging. It was the unspoken support that made her day a little easier to live.

"I just came from Berry's rehearsal," she explained, "It's in the hall a couple of blocks down?"

"Ah. Rachel Berry, correct?"

"You're magical when it comes to names," Santana laughed.

"Seventy years worth of names are all surprisingly stuck in here," Elsa tapped her head with a teasing smile. The pair sighed softly, taking in a sip of the tea.

"So... Periwinkle's out again for the season?"

Soft chuckles rang through the shop again, "Yes, he is. It keeps the kids coming in, you know? Have I ever told you how Periwinkle came to me?" Somehow, Elsa suddenly looked a little younger. It wasn't anything in particular, not that her hair turned black, or her wrinkles disappeared. Santana concluded it must have been something in her eyes, her heart.

"Not really, but I have time to listen to a story today?"

"Ah. Well, I'll tell you if you tell me whether it's true or not that you like Quinn."

What? "I..." Santana was forced to look away. She could tell Elsa was still watching her, and with Elsa, any lie would become no lie. Elsa could always see right through her. She sighed deeply, having finally come to terms with herself at her own feelings only a few weeks ago, "I do. But it's useless. She's dating Finn the bastard."

"Language, Santana."

"Sorry," she mumbled half-heartedly.

"You're a lot like me, dear." Elsa took another sip out of her mug, "I loved when I was young."

Santana offered a soft laugh as she cringed inside. *Loved*. How strong was the word 'love', even when it had been a moment so long ago that it had simply become 'loved'. "You married, of course you loved!"

"No... not that..." Elsa set her mug of hot tea down, opening a drawer in front of her and pulling out a singular faded photograph, "See her? I loved her. Love, really." She pushed the photo across to Santana, "She was my best friend. Periwinkle was a gift from her... He's about fifty now... still kept in wonderful condition though," Elsa's voice was suddenly choked with emotion, and Santana found herself staring at the young Elsa and the unnamed woman in faded hues. They looked so happy together, smiling. "You know how times were. I couldn't confess." she let out a playful chuckle, "That girl took my first kiss, just for fun. We were only kids."

Santana looked up to find Elsa staring at the photo fondly, smiling with such nostalgia.

"I would have given everything to spend one more day with her," Elsa raised her gaze to Santana. Their eyes met. "But it was different then. I had to marry Harry. He's a nice man, but he's not her. That's his biggest flaw. She married, too. We all had to. Wasn't really a choice." A flash of anger darkened her eyes, "Her husband wasn't the nice type, though. Alcoholic, gambler." For a moment, she pursed her lips together as though to gather her own thoughts so she could mentally stab the man, watch him writhe in pain even in his grave. Then her dark thoughts gave way to another wave of memories, and a smile reappeared on her face, "But we still kept regular visits, you know? Visiting each other with pies. Portia made delicious pies."

Portia. Beautiful name.

Santana could see how fond Elsa was of all these memories. It was really sweet, actually. It was as though she had remembered seventy years like it was just yesterday. A fresh love, a fresh bloom.

"And then a year later, she fell sick. Some say it was the abuse. Some say it was from missing someone she really loved... I was at her bedside all the time, praying the same prayers over and over again." Elsa paused, evidently admiring the girl in the photo. "Fourteen months..." She bit her lip with a tired sigh, "She never got better."

The ending was abrupt, and Santana found herself mute for a moment. When she finally found her voice, she could only mumble, "I'm sorry..." She wasn't sure why Elsa was telling her all this, but she reached out to take the Elsa's hand, "She's surely someone special."

"She is. And I don't regret having loved her. But I do have regrets, though. Sometimes I wish I fought a little harder. I wish I maybe told her. I wish I ran away with her. Maybe she'd have lived a little longer. She died young. She died never knowing." Elsa had teary eyes now. "Worst part was that when I look back... She wasn't too discreet about loving me either..."

Santana sat in silence as Elsa dabbed her tears with a single tissue with the hand that Santana wasn't holding. A part of her wondered what exactly Elsa was trying to tell her with the story. It could be a story, but it surely could mean more...

Elsa's voice came unexpectedly, cutting Santana from her mess of thoughts, "Quinn's not entirely against having a relationship with you."

Oh. She looked up to find Elsa staring into her eyes, and though they were still teary, they wore a sense of ferocity in them. Elsa was unafraid, even at the loss.

But Santana was scared of loss. "She... she told me that it was a one-time thing..."

"People change their minds..." Elsa sighed heavily, "Are you seeing her anytime soon?" She pulled her hand from Santana's but patted her on the back of her hand reassuringly. Elsa could sense Santana's fear. Like Santana, she could sense fear from a mile away.

"Tomorrow."

"On your least favorite day of the year?" Elsa laughed softly although pain still lined her ageing eyes, "Was it your idea or her's?"

"She invited me over... said she wanted to spend some time with me after her date?"

"You must have a small part of her heart, dear." Elsa stood up, straightening her back, and Santana did the same, "You know what. Lily's never fancied Periwinkle. She has the most irrational fear of teddy bears. I'll sell him to you if you promise me he'll find his way into Quinn's arms."

"No, Elsa! You couldn't! It's the only thing you have left from her!"

"Santana, listen. When you love, everything that matters is here," she landed a finger on Santana's chest, just where her heart lay, "And that's really the first time I've ever told anyone about Portia. It's nice to let it out... Besides, I still have this photo and all those memories etched into my heart."

"No, Elsa... even if you are to sell it, I should be paying more!"

"Santana, it really isn't the money. You deserve a chance. You deserve something I never had. I'll sell Periwinkle for 30 dollars if you promise me a photo of you and Quinn with him!"

"Elsa..."

"Come give your cookie-granny a hug if you agree to that," Elsa's smile warmed Santana from within. She hesitated for a moment before she threw her arms at the shorter woman, hugging her tight.

"Thank you, Elsa."

"So you had balls after all."

"Elsa, language!" Santana laughed playfully as she pulled away.

Elsa could roll her eyes just like Santana. "I thought they went into hiding, Santana. I know you're a fierce girl, just like me."

"Thanks, Elsa..."

"Come visit more often, yea?"

"I promise! But... Elsa...?"

"Yes?" The woman was standing up, taking her time as she walked towards the display window.

"Why is this photo not on your wall?" Santana watched as Elsa stopped in her steps.

A heavy silence hung in the air for a minute.

Then Elsa turned around, "You're right. I've been scared, regretful... but our love was real love, so why shouldn't it be put on the wall?" She offered a small smile, "Thank you, Santana. Would you like to find a frame in the shop and hang it up for me?"

"Alright," Santana chose a faint purple frame etched with birds and flowers from the vast collection in the shop. With the utmost care, she slipped the photo into the frame, tightening the cover. She moved over to the wall, moving the photo in the center of the wall to another nail, and replacing it with the photo of Elsa and Portia.

Elsa watched as Santana put the picture up. She felt as though a heavy weight had been lifted from her heart. She had not known the weight till it was lifted. Smiling, she turned on her heels to proceed to the shop window.

"Come on, let's get Periwinkle wrapped up for you." Elsa removed the 40-inch pale purple bear from the shop window, "Santana dear, do me a favor in a bit and pick a few of the smaller bears and put them on display?"

"I'll get to it!" Santana soon found herself with an armful of different-colored handmade bears. She took her time arranging them nicely at the shop display window. Now that the shop's main attraction was gone, she'd have to make the display look equally as enticing, if not more.

When she was done, she found Elsa behind her, handing her a large bag. Santana dug out 30 dollars and handed them to Elsa as she took the bag. It was a little heavier than she had imagined, but she suddenly felt powerful with it in her hands.

"Best of luck, Santana!"

Santana smiled as she kissed Elsa's cheek, "I'll see you, Elsa! You smell like cookies!"

"And you smell like some expensive perfume!" Elsa laughed as she watched Santana walk out and down the sidewalk. Watching Santana waltz out of sight, Elsa smiled softly and turned around, half expecting her own love to be smiling back with open arms.

As Santana took a seat on the train with the large bag on her lap, having forgotten about her intentions for a late lunch, she sighed softly. She let Elsa's story replay itself in her head. Santana found her thoughts drifting to Brittany. She didn't regret having loved Brittany. Of course, she didn't exactly fight hard when they had started their long distance. She did regret that a little bit. But she knew she'd have regretted more if she had never confessed to Brittany... She was eternally grateful for Holly Holiday all of a sudden.

In another fifteen minutes, Santana got off the train, heading back to the home that she shared with Rachel and Kurt. Before she could enter the key into the hole and twist the door open, Kurt had already pushed it aside.

"Hey, Satan! I thought you weren't gonna come home!"

"Lady, just because I'm half an hour later than usual doesn't mean I've disappeared from the face of the earth—hey! Give that back!"

Kurt was holding Santana's teddybear, eyeing it curiously, "Are you trying to woo a certain Berry?"

Santana rolled her eyes, "In a million years. It's for Quinn."

"Quinn?"

"Yea, I'm leaving this hell-hole for New Haven tomorrow."

"Ooh, you have a date with Quinnie!" Kurt was half-squealing, making Santana scoff.

"Are you gonna move aside and let me in the house or are you gonna stay squealing like a damn pig and blocking my way?"

"Alright, Satan. Dinner will be ready in 15!" Kurt moved aside, shoving the teddy bear into her arms before moving back towards the kitchen.

Santana rolled her eyes, pushing aside the partition curtain to her own 'room'. She took the teddy bear out of the huge bag and set it on her own bed. Its eyes seemed to twinkle at her.

"Kurt, do you think it's possible for you to go to a jewelry store with me after dinner?"

"Stop yelling, our home is smaller than you think! And an invitation into hell? No thanks!"

"Please?"

The man turned around to find Santana about two feet away from him, with a desperate frown on her face. She had placed her phone on the table, and was leaning over it. It wasn't seductive or anything, just pleading.

"What for?"

"Quinn..."

Cocking his head to the side, Kurt tried to get into Santana's head. Deciding after a while that he simply couldn't, Kurt shook his head as he wiped his hands on a nearby towel, "Alright, I'll go. But you're doing the dishes tonight!"

Santana groaned, "Fine. I swear Berry's getting us a dishwasher as soon as she gets that damned paycheck." She took a seat on the lumpy couch in their living room, sighing softly as the smell of a wonderfully cooked dinner floated through the loft.

"Santana!" The shriek robbed Santana from all sleepiness. She leapt up from her position on Quinn's bed, swinging around the corner of the door to the small kitchen Quinn was in. The water had boiled over, and Quinn's widened eyes were laced with fear.

"God, Fabray, how do you live alone like this." She ran to Quinn's rescue, grabbing a nearby dry towel and lifting the cover from the pot, setting it aside. The water simmered down, still bubbling. Santana sighed as she took the packet of pasta and poured some in. She turned the fire a little lower.

"I don't cook!" Quinn squeaked from a safe distance of six feet from the stove.

"Obviously." Santana rolled her eyes as she put the cover on again, tuning down the fire, "You should learn to though."

"No..."

"Alright, Queen, should I just stay forever and slave in the kitchen for you?"

"It'd be nice..." Quinn said with an innocent smile. It caught Santana off guard, and for a moment, she could only stare at Quinn. She swallowed as Quinn took a step towards her with a sultry look.

It was simply too dangerous.

Santana forced herself to look away, moving past Quinn and back into the bedroom. Just as her head hit the pillow, she heard another yell.

"Santana! I don't know how long this is supposed to cook!"

"God." With yet another groan, she dragged herself out of bed, away from the safe comfort of Quinn's intoxicating scent, and headed for the kitchen.

"Chef Hummel humbly presents his non-vegetarian lasagna."

"Coming!" Santana practically tripped over herself as she hurried to the table. She was really hungry now, having not had a proper lunch.

"Did you not hear your phone vibrate earlier?"

"What phone?"

"That phone," Kurt pointed to Santana's phone which was resting dangerously close to the edge on the table.

"Oh shit, it rang?"

"Well vibrated so loudly that I thought the table was coming apart. You didn't hear? God, I didn't know you struck Satan deaf!"

"Oh shut it, Kurt," Santana dug a fork into the plate set in front of her and reached for her phone. Three missed calls. All from Quinn. Whoops.

"Judging from your face it's either a drunk Berry or Quinn."

"Quinn," she muttered with a mouthful of delicious food, "I'll just text her back."

"It'd be nice if you'd actually wait for me to take my seat before you dig through the food like there's no tomorrow."

"It's good!" Her fingers typed away as she chewed.

S: Hey blondie. Sorry I didn't answer. Yeah I can come. Everything k?

She set her phone aside as she swallowed and took another bite, practically ignoring Kurt now. Her phone vibrated loudly, making both Kurt and her jump.

Q: I miss you. I'll see you tomorrow night?

Santana smiled as she quickly replied a 'yup'. It stirred something in her heart to see Quinn telling her she was missed.

"You're smiling like a dope. Can you eat faster so we can go?"

"You just want to be home faster so you can turn your room into a sex-cave for you and Blaine." Santana replied with a judgmental roll of her eyes. Still, she ate a little faster. When she was done, she slid the dishes into the sink, turning on a tap and adding some detergent. She'd let the dishes sit in the water for a bit before she washed them tonight.

"Come on, Kurt, let's go!"

"I'm still trying to find my jacket, hold up!"

"If it's your knew one that you bought yesterday, it's right here!" Santana muttered as she picked the jacket up from the couch, and throwing it at Kurt who had just walked out of his 'room'.

"Alright you impatient ass, let's go!"

"Q, it's been half an hour! You've said 'five minutes' at least four times!"

"Three minutes more! I just need to finish up my eyeshadow!"

Having tapped her foot on the floor till she could swear there was a dent, Santana pushed open the partition curtain separating her from her own room, where Quinn was, "Quinn, seriously now, we're gonna be late fo—"

"Hm?" Quinn turned with a bashful smile on her lips, "Sorry, S. I'm really almost done."

"Wow," was the only word Santana could breathe. Quinn was the absolute epitome of perfection.

"Okay, I'm ready!" Quinn, seemingly oblivious, took Santana's arm in her own, marching them out of the place Santana called 'home'.

Santana hated to admit it, but she had trouble with keeping her eyes on where she was going. Quinn looked breathtaking. But it broke her heart to know Quinn was not doing this for her.

She wished Quinn was.

"Hey, Satan! What about this one?"

"Huh?" Santana found herself torn from memories and she look at the pendant Kurt was pointing at. She was about to scoff at Kurt's choice for the third time already, when she realized his choice actually wasn't too flamboyant this time. She took a closer look.

"I think she'll like it?"

Santana stared at silver pendant. It was made of two linked stars, one the bigger one with small shining stone set into it. "I think she'll like it too."

"It's not cheap."

"Since when did price matter when it came to Quinn?"

Kurt fell silent as Santana waved a member of the staff over.

He knew the look of love, and he saw it in Santana's eyes.

"I'll get it for you, Q?"

"No, Tana, you couldn't... It's so expensive!"

"Since when did price matter when it came to you, Quinnie?"

"No... Tana... I can get Finn to get it or something..."

Santana frowned as she tightened her grip on Quinn's shoulder, "What makes you think you can spend his money and not mine?"

"Hey! Don't make me sound like a gold-digger!"

Santana sighed, feeling a little desperate, "That's not what I mean't, Q. I mean... why can't I buy you something expensive when he can?"

"Because he's my boyfr-" her hazel eyes met Santana's and she pursed her lips together. Why did Santana look so sad all of a sudden? Feeling somehow guilty, Quinn decided to give in, "Alright, I'll let you get that for me. But only if I pay for dinner tonight!"

A sad smile appeared on Santana's face, "Alright, that's a deal."

"Stop mentally frowning "

"Sorry."

"You're prettier when you smile."

Really?

"Hey, you okay?" Kurt shook Santana gently on the shoulder as they walked home in the chilly night air, "This is your gift, as far as I'm concerned." Kurt held out a small blue gift bag and waved it in front of Santana's face.

"What? Oh. Did I forget to take it when we left?"

"Yes. Which is why I'm taking the time to inquire if you're okay?"

"I... I'm scared, Kurt."

The way Santana looked now reminded him of the way she looked when she had first been outed—strong on the outside and breaking inside. "Why?"

"I..."

"Lay it out for me. I won't tell Berry, I promise."

"It's not about Berry."

"Well, she'll be singing it at the top of her lungs if she knows."

Santana laughed nervously, "Kurt... I'm scared that Quinn will reject me..."

Kurt's eyes grew wide, "You're gonna confess?"

"I..."

"I mean it's a good thing and all... but... it's gonna be all or nothing. You know she can get pretty weird when it comes to... being in a lesbian relationship..."

"I never said anything about liking her!"

"Stop turning on your defence system, San, you live, breathe, and bleed her. Seriously. You're pretty obvious about liking her."

Santana could only look away in embarrassment. "I... I don't know if I'll confess... but I don't want to have to live with the regret knowing I never told her... What if next week she gets hit by a truck or I get run over?" Clearly, Elsa's story was still fresh in her mind. In all honesty, it had made her think long and hard about Quinn and their relationship.

"Woah, philosophical Santana!"

"Kurt..."

"Sorry... I just... I guess you're right... I mean, after the little bit of fun at failed wedding last year—"

"Wait, what? Who told you that?" Santana stopped in her tracks, turning to glare at Kurt. This was a secret she had told no one.

"I figured out as much... Quinn's a screamer? Like, a *really* loud screamer."

Santana sighed deeply. Quinn really was a screamer, so in a way, he was justified. Her silence allowed Kurt to continue.

"Anyways, after that... I was shocked she started dating Finn, really..."

"I was more shocked than you were."

"I know... Never knew Satan was capable of such deep feelings." He laughed in attempt to lighten the mood. Santana could only heave an even heavier sigh.

By now the pair had began walking up the steps to their home. When they were at the top, Kurt pulled out a key to open the door. Santana silently entered the place, slipping out of her heels and heading straight to her room. She mumbled something that resembled a 'goodnight' to Kurt, shut her curtain, and found her headphones. Plugging them into her phone, she played her favorite songs on shuffle. She set the small gift bag in the arms of Periwinkle.

The music really fell to deaf ears. As Santana flopped onto her bed stomach down, still fully dressed, she let her hand fall on the teddy bear's paw. Her chin rested on her free hand.

Did that slim chance of Quinn actually accepting a confession weigh more than the much greater possibility of estrangement? Was this one chance of holding Quinn for something near forever worth their friendship falling into flames?

She must have fallen asleep as she waltzed through the enigmatic maze of her thoughts, because the next thing she heard was a loud laugh followed by some heavy but uneven footsteps, making Santana raise her head. Drunk Berry was probably home now. There was loud giggling and a man's voice. So she was planning on an early Valentine's Day performance.

Instinctively, Santana turned her music a little louder.

Now, for the first time since she had even bothered with music, she heard the words. It was the acoustic version of a song that Blaine Anderson had recorded for Kurt. Why she had the song on her phone, she couldn't remember anymore. It sounded nice, though, so she let it play.

You think I'm pretty without any make-up on

You think I'm funny when I tell the punch line wrong

I know you get me, so I let my walls come down, down

It's funny how lyrics mean so much when you allow yourself to realize the hurt inside. The broken heart, the shattered shards, the lost piece. Santana let her head rest on her bed again, as she thought of all the times Quinn had made her feel so comfortable that she had put aside her mask. Those times, of late, had become rarer and rarer. But she missed them.

Before you met me, I was alright

But things were kinda heavy, you brought me to life

Now every February you'll be my valentine, valentine

Valentine. Funny. Quinn could be considered to be her valentine last year. Quinn was her 'date' to the wedding. Quinn was the one who made her laugh. Quinn was there to listen to her. Quinn was there to kiss her, make her feel a little loved.

Let's go all the way tonight

No regrets, just love

We can dance until we die

You and I, we'll be young forever

Indeed, Santana had never regretted the one night stand. She only wish it lasted for more than one night. The euphoria of holding Quinn, she knew she could never be bored of. Besides, she was Quinn's first female slow-dance partner. Quinn loved it, that's what she told Santana. Truth be told, it made Santana feel all warm and fuzzy inside—it was a feeling she had long forgotten she was capable of feeling. She was proud to be Quinn's first for two things that fateful night—the dance and the lesbian sex.

You make me feel like I'm living a teenage dream

The way you turn me on, I can't sleep

Let's runaway and don't ever look back

Don't ever look back

Tonight, the night before Valentine's Day, Santana found herself looking back. The past year had been beautiful. To spend it in a closer relationship with Quinn was a blessing. But it was also agonizing to be so close to Quinn yet so far from her heart. That part was a curse. The love itself was a curse.

My heart stops when you look at me

Just one touch, now baby I believe

This is real, so take a chance

And don't ever look back, don't ever look back

Santana needed a chance. She wanted one, and technically had one, but she wasn't sure she was capable of taking it. Failure had never been in her dictionary, but tonight it was. The realization struck her like a bolt of lightning. While it set an unwarranted passion in her heart, it also sent fear spreading faster than fire in a forest.

We drove to Cali and got drunk on the beach

Got a motel and built a fort out of sheets

I finally found you, my missing puzzle piece

I'm complete

If anything, Quinn always filled her heart. Be it the soft laughter or the way her finger's would brush against Santana's—Quinn made her feel warm, loved, cared for. Quinn was the missing part of her broken heart. And having had Quinn ripped out again made her heart fall into a billion pieces.

Let's go all the way tonight

No regrets, just love

We can dance until we die

You and I, we'll be young forever

Santana wondered why Elsa had told her the Quinn wasn't exactly opposed to a relationship. Did Quinn talk? Or was it Elsa's sixth sense which she had learned in these months, was seldom wrong?

You make me feel like I'm living a teenage dream

The way you turn me on, I can't sleep

Let's runaway and don't ever look back

Don't ever look back

Elsa's words aside, Santana could tell Quinn wasn't too happy with her relationship with Finn. Santana had been getting more and more desperate calls, texts, voicemails that were filled with bitter and sometimes tearful complaints. And there was that one time when Quinn had texted her asking if she ought to break up with Finn. Santana hadn't known how to answer. She had simply told Quinn to hang on to what she felt was right. That broke her own heart. But if her broken heart could promise Quinn's whole one, then it was worth it.

My heart stops when you look at me

Just one touch, now baby I believe

This is real, so take a chance

And don't ever look back, don't ever look back

Was this really her chance? She didn't want Quinn to cheat on Finn with her. She didn't want a one-time thing again. She wanted Quinn to be her's and only her's.

I'm a get your heart racing in my skin-tight jeans

Be your teenage dream tonight

Let you put your hands on me in my skin-tight jeans

Be your teenage dream tonight

Was she capable of bringing Quinn the very happiness that she so much deserved? Was she capable of satisfying Quinn, not only sexually, but emotionally as well? So many questions rolled into one giant rock, rolling full speed at her, as though to crush her.

You make me feel like I'm living a teenage dream

The way you turn me on, I can't sleep

Let's runaway and don't ever look back

Don't ever look back

Without stepping out, Santana figured she'd never know. She had to venture into the unknown if she was going to give Quinn and her a chance.

My heart stops when you look at me

Just one touch, now baby I believe

This is real, so take a chance

And don't ever look back, don't ever look back

It was decided then. Tomorrow. Valentine's Day. Their one year anniversary of a drunken one-night-stand.

I'm a get your heart racing in my skin-tight jeans

Be your teenage dream tonight

Let you put your hands on me in my skin-tight jeans

Be your teenage dream tonight

It was all or nothing.

The train chugged along quietly along the railroad between New York and New Haven. The sun was well in the sky, almost fading from it, really.

It was getting late in the afternoon, and Santana, with the company of one oversized teddy bear, was gripped by fear as she looked out the window without really seeing.

One thing Santana hated now was imagination. Her mind was running wild with how Quinn would react.

It was highly likely that Quinn would feel disgusted, throw her out, and say goodbye forever. There was a chance that Quinn would promise to remain friends, but slowly fade out. There was even that slim chance that Quinn would do something really stupid to herself or commit a criminal act towards her.

All those things shook the courage out of her heart. Whatever courage her broken heart had mustered last night was fading fast. Whatever strength she found last night was failing her.

The train came to a stop much too early for Santana. She was white as a sheet as she stepped off the train. With a duffel bag in one hand, the bagged bear in the other, and boxed necklace in the pocket of her coat, she decided to walk from the station to the university. It was a half-hour walk, and though it was still a relatively short time, it would at least offer a little space for her to gather herself.

Santana Lopez had never been such a mess. Nor did she ever intend herself to ever be again. It wasn't her. Quinn was her love as much as her greatest enemy. Only Quinn Fabray could render her so powerless.

As her sandals met the sidewalk time and again in her walk, Santana found her memories running her back to her childhood years.

They say those near death see life flashing before their eyes. It made Santana even more sure now that she was close to her death. Her breathing was laboured, even though this walk was really nothing compared to the morning runs she sometimes went on to keep fit.

As the university became closer and closer, her heartbeat grew faster and faster.

Chastising herself mentally for making a fool out of herself, Santana took a deep breath. She told herself it would all be okay. Quinn wasn't going to be in the dorm. She'd be let in by the security guard, who had by now, recognized her. She'd put the teddy bear on Quinn's bed, complete with the necklace in a box and then wait in the living room for her to come back. No snooping around Quinn's room.

It wasn't long before she found herself inside Quinn's dorm building, having greeted the security guard with a hurried 'hello', standing at the bottom of the staircase. Those stairs never looked so long and menacing before.

Trying to pick herself up from the mess her head and heart were in, Santana began to walk up the stairs. She was at Quinn's door when she realized that she needed Quinn to let her in. In her haste, she had forgotten to tell Quinn what time she was arriving, and knowing Quinn, she would have locked the door. One try at the doorknob and Santana found her thoughts real.

She slid down, against the wall, duffel on one side, Periwinkle in a bag on the other side. She leaned against the wall and drew her knees up. This was terrible. Now Quinn was to come home at god-knows-when, smelling like fucking Finn, and find someone who probably resembled a druggie frantic and half-asleep at her door.

There was a tinge of regret in Santana's heart, and it seemed to grow fiercer and stronger with each passing moment. She was truly scared. Feeling like the little girl who had just realized how to love, Santana sighed. She felt so lost.

Suddenly, Santana heard a loud crash and the tinkling of broken glass from inside Quinn's room. She straightened up, her body rigid as she listened for more. It seemed silent for a moment, and she thought about there being a burglar of some sort in the place. Then she heard muffled shouts, growing louder and louder.

The voices were, of course, unmistakable. There was Quinn's voice. And a man's. Finn's. Instantly, Santana moved closer to the door, trying to catch more of the heated conversation.

From behind the door, she could only make out words and phrases, and at first, they made little of any sense.

"Cup... Stop..."

"Leave..."

"No... It's not that..."

"No sex... Months... Breaking point..."

"Not fair... Can't keep waiting..."

"Cheater... don't do this..."

She pressed her ear impossibly closer, the agitation in Quinn's voice sparking both her curiosity and fury.

"Finn. I've known for two months now. Whatever her name is, I know you're seeing her! You smell like sex and it's Valentine's Day!"

"Put that fucking lamp down, you're not throwing that at me!"

"Just admit it, you're cheating!"

"And you're not?! You always push me away when I'm horny. I have needs! It's been almost a year since we've gone out! We've never had sex! Seriously!"

"You're trying to change the topic!"

"I'm not, but I have needs!"

"Are you saying your cheating is justified because I never have sex with you?!"

"Fuck yes, and what are you gonna do about it?!"

"We're so fucking over!"

A crisp, loud slap sounded in the room, almost echoing, even through the wooden door. While Santana felt a little comforted in knowing Quinn wasn't touched by the fucking giant, she was also angered by how upset Quinn sounded—not at Quinn of course, but at Finn.

She wanted to stand up and storm in. But she knew she couldn't. She could kill the cheating bastard later though. It all boiled down to who slapped who. If Quinn was the one who gave that flawless slap, then Finn deserved to be murdered with a billion knives in him. If Quinn was the one who received that damned slap, then Finn deserved to be murdered with a billion knives, chopped into a billion pieces, and fed to the sharks.

The door opened unexpectedly just as Santana pulled away. A very angry and sore loser stormed out, his cheek a glowing red, too blinded by his own ignorance, as Santana liked to call it, to even see her sitting on the floor. His feet stomped heavily down the hallway.

Blood rushed to her ears, and she could hear her own heartbeat. Santana watched his back, as though her thoughts could conjure enough power to strike him dead on the spot. She wanted to make sure he wouldn't go back to hurt Quinn more.

When Finn was at last out of sight, Santana heard a soft sobbing within the dorm room. Finn had left the door ajar as he had left. Santana stood up immediately, dusted herself off, moving her belongings inside and setting them on the couch. She shut the door quietly.

Quinn was crying, her head buried in her hands, sitting on the edge of her bed. Her back was to the entrance of her room.

At that moment, Santana felt like she saw the pregnant Quinn again. Quinn was vulnerable. The Quinn who was so desperate for some love, so desperate for some comfort. This love and comfort was something Santana wished she could answer.

She saw a pile of shattered glass near one of the walls, but there was no blood. She heaved a sigh of relief.

Slowly and gingerly, she took a seat beside Quinn. Quinn's shaking made her oblivious to the sagging of the mattress. Santana carefully wrapped her arms around Quinn's waist. She felt Quinn tense up and Santana mentally prepared herself for a brief struggle.

Instead she felt Quinn's shoulder's sag, her body turn, and she felt Quinn's head rest on her shoulder. She asked no questions, nor did she say anything as she kept one hand around Quinn and raised the other to stroke her hair.

Quinn's sobbing and shaking gradually lightened. Her breathing slowed, and even though she still had the occasional hiccup, she was becoming calm.

Santana, however, will still filled with concern. Although her hatred for Finn had gradually melted into sympathy for Quinn. She wanted to forget her intention of coming over. There was no way she could drop another bomb on Quinn after this happened anyway.

Just as Santana passed through her emotional desert and into conflicted thoughts, she felt Quinn move. Quinn looked up, her eyes filled with an unreadable emotion.

Then she felt it. It was short and soft, but it was real.

Her eyes widened as she realized what just happened.

Quinn had pressed her lips against Santana's, and pulled away as quickly as she had served the kiss.

As Santana tried to process what was happening she felt herself being pushed back onto the bed. As her back hit the mattress, her eyes became focused and she found herself staring into a pair of desperate hazel eyes. They were teary, but the pain had evaporated.

"Quinn...?" Santana's word came out as more of a croak. She felt her throat run dry. As much as she wanted to know what was happening... she didn't.

"Can you love me?" was the only whisper she heard from Quinn. She was hovering on top of Santana, a knee on each side of her waist, a hand on each side of her head.

"L-love you?"

"Make love to me."

"Quinn..."

"Santana... please..." She began to lower her lips on Santana's again.

This time, she gave enough time for Santana to react. With a swift motion, she reversed their positions so she was on top of Quinn. She needed to be in control of the situation.

This wasn't drunken. This was no one night stand.

"Quinn, you're hurt, alright? Sex isn't going to help you..."

Quinn's eyes reflected only more pain than she did before. She parted her lips to speak, but she had turned mute.

Santana swallowed, staring at Quinn. She wanted Quinn, but not if she herself was to be a consolation prize. She had come with the full intent of loving Quinn, yes, but she was also prepared for rejection. Santana found herself surprisingly calm with acceptance.

"I have something that will make you feel happier though... Can you come out with me to the living room?"

"Is he gone?" Quinn's voice was timid and soft, and to Santana, she looked so, so small.

"Yes. And if he isn't, I'll kick him in the balls for you." Santana got up from the bed, off of Quinn. She leaned in a little, offering a hand to Quinn to help her up.

Quinn eyed her hand warily before deciding to take it. She let Santana lead her out of her room.

"Close your eyes," Santana smiled, letting Quinn stand in the middle of the room.

"What is it..." Quinn was still a little nervous, but she trusted Santana enough to do as she was told.

"Mm... It's soft and fluffy... And two months ago, it was what you wanted but couldn't get!"

Instantly, a smile washed over Quinn. It was small, but it was there. "Periwinkle!" She opened her eyes instinctively just as Santana picked the teddy bear from its bag.

"Hey! I thought I said you need to keep your eyes closed!"

The squeal from Quinn made Santana forget everything. Had she needed to remember to tell her heart to beat, she'd have dropped dead. Quinn took the bear in her arms, hugging it close.

Her tear-stained face shone with a childish light. Santana found herself grinning, standing and watching Quinn holding the bear. Who knew Quinn had such a childish side?

Then suddenly, Quinn's countenance changed. A look of sorrow and confusion washed over her. She pushed the bear back towards Santana.

Santana found herself equally as confused, "What's wrong? Do you not like it?"

Quinn turned around, away from Santana. Her eyes were downcast. Santana found her heart sink. "It's... It's not that... I... Santana..."

Santana listened in silence as she sat the bear down back on the couch. She needed an explanation. When none came, she reached into her pocket to find her second gift, hoping it'd suffice to cheer Quinn up again.

"I... I can't... Just... Stop being so nice to me..." Quinn shoulders began to shake again as her tears began to fall.

She froze. This one moment when Santana had shown so much care, so much love, broke all her barriers. For months since the last Valentine's Day, she had chosen to hide from her feelings. She had chosen to run away. Now that she was coming face to face with them, they were threatening to kill her.

"Why..." Santana felt her words stuck in her throat. This was torture. Pure torture.

"I... Santana..." Quinn's voice was gradually growing softer and softer, "Stop making me love you..."

What...?

Without another word, Santana retrieved the silver necklace from its box. She took a cautious few steps towards Quinn's shaking back. Quinn's head was hung low, her whole stance sagging in hopelessness.

Santana unclasped the necklace, bringing it over Quinn's head and then fastening it around her neck. For a moment, she didn't say anything. And then she spoke soft words that drowned Quinn in an even bigger flood of tears.

"If you are in love with me, then let me love you, too."

The words were spoken in attempt to stop the flood, but at the realization of her own foolishness, of her unwarranted pain, and the unnecessary breaking of both their hearts, Quinn only found herself weaker, and more torn down.

Once again, Santana took Quinn in her arms, stroking her hair and just letting her cry. Quinn's body was heavy against Santana. She was crying so much she was beginning to feel faint and Santana was her only pillar of support, both emotionally and physically.

Santana didn't mind being this support. She liked the feeling of being able to hold and comfort Quinn. But Quinn's tears were getting the better of her. She had so many unanswered questions that desperately needed answers. She felt relieved that Quinn's tears were dying out, as though she had cried her eyes dry.

Slowly, she led Quinn towards the couch, sitting her down and taking a seat beside her. She let their fingers lace together, fitting perfectly like two puzzle pieces.

"What's wrong?" she breathed out slowly, using her free hand to wipe away the remnant of Quinn's tears.

Glazed eyes met her own. "I've been so stupid..."

Santana urged Quinn on with a squeeze of her hand and her silence.

Quinn was hiccuping softly, still stifling sobs. As cute as that was, Santana knew Quinn needed water. She stood up, patting Quinn's hand, and headed to the kitchen and returning with a glass of water. She watched in silence as Quinn took a sip. Santana resumed her seat beside Quinn, and her fingers between Quinn's. Quinn had calmed down now, and was fairly ready to continue. She kept her head down, though, unable to look into Santana's eyes.

Twice, Quinn opened her mouth to speak, but only to find no words coming out. Then, for a third time she tried to speak. This time she succeeded, "I thought... I thought the whole night was a one-time thing to you..."

Santana smiled softly, sighing, "I thought so, too, at first... but then... turns out you weren't..."

"But then I realized... I kind of liked you... and I didn't know what to do..."

"Me neither."

"So I dated Finn... I thought... maybe... I could forget you..." The tiniest of smiles graced her soft pink lips.

Santana offered a small laugh, "What? No one ever forgets me!"

"It's true... I... Nothing felt the same after you..."

"Is that why you've been avoiding Finn's... um... intimate moments?"

"You were eavesdropping outside?"

Whoops. "Not exactly... I mean, I heard glass shatter and I was worried... so... Sorry..."

"Whatever... Forgiven..." Quinn raised her head for the first time to find Santana staring at her. She turned aside bashfully.

"Hey... um... Quinn... Can I..."

"Can you...?"

"Can I kiss you again?"

Quinn looked curiously at Santana again. Even though Quinn's nose was red from crying and her eyes were puffy and redder yet, even though her face was stained with trails of tears and mascara, even though she looked worn out and tired, Santana found Quinn the most beautiful girl in the world.

"I'm clearly in no state for kissing... I probably look like a witch that jumped out of a fairytale."

"It doesn't matter... You're still beautiful in my eyes..."

"Santana..."

"Can I kiss you?"

"Can you stop asking?"

Santana smiled softly before trailing her slender fingers along Quinn's jaw again, tilting her head slightly to get a better angle. She leaned in, and as soon as her lips felt Quinn's, she closed her eyes.

Quinn, too, did the same. She let Santana lead the kiss. She moved her own lips weakly against Santana's.

Everything seemed to disappear all of a sudden—all the pain, the tears, the un-prettness. All of a sudden, Quinn found only passion inside, love, beauty.

As Santana traced Quinn's lower lip with her tongue, Quinn could only part her lips and allow Santana to take control.

As Santana's tongue slipped into her mouth, Quinn let out a weak moan. Her fingers found their way to Santana's shoulder, and she instinctively clung onto the soft fabric of her shirt. She felt Santana's fingers slide around her waist, pulling her a little bit closer.

As Santana deepened the kiss, all thoughts left Quinn's mind. She could smell Santana, she could hear Santana's breathing, she could taste Santana's sweet kiss, and she could feel Santana so close to her. That was enough to make her lose her sanity.

It wasn't long before Quinn found her back against the couch and felt Santana's weight on herself. Not that she minded.

Both women felt courage rushing back in tidal waves.

As the kisses became more and more fervent, Quinn found herself needing more and more air. Her heart was beating so fast it felt like it would explode. As she felt Santana's hand slip underneath her dress, her fingertips grazing her thigh, she let out an audible gasp. Her eyes opened as Santana pulled away from the kiss. Her lip was tingling, and she silently begged Santana for more. Quinn's eyes were glazed over.

Santana exhaled with a small smile, letting her fingers trail a little higher onto Quinn's side. She loved the way Quinn shivered slightly as her fingers danced along the perfect skin.

"Wait..." her plea was weak but Santana stopped immediately. She pulled her fingers out of Quinn's dress. Did Quinn not want...?

Still, as disappointment sank in, Santana willed Quinn to finish telling her. She was ready to hop off Quinn and resume a pure friendship at any point. After all... Quinn was a little hurt, and hurt Quinn tended to do rash things.

To her surprise, she found Quinn leaning up for a chaste kiss. "Can we take this to the bedroom?"

A smile broke on Santana's face as she got off, slipping her arms underneath Quinn so she could carry her into the bedroom, "Still a traditional lover aren't we? No sex anywhere else but the bed?"

Quinn looked bashful and oh-so-cute with the blush on her cheeks. It made Santana's heart skip a beat.

"Just... not tonight? Maybe... sometime..."

"If this is your attempt at talking naughty, Q, you have a long way to go and a lot to learn." Santana's smirk set a new desire in Quinn's heart. As she was lowered onto the bed, she reached out, grabbed Santana by the collar, and pulled Santana down on herself.

"Shit, Quinn... You're gonna make me lose control."

Santana licked her lips as Quinn smiled in a slightly haughty way, "Then lose control. I'm yours."

That was all the encouragement Santana needed. She hastily pulled her shirt over her head, tossing it aside. Then she let her lips fall onto Quinn's neck, kissing it softly. Quinn tilted her head to allow Santana more space, and she let out a small mewl.

Fingers once again found their way under the soft fabric of Quinn's dress. They trailed random patterns up Quinn's side, making her shiver in delight.

"Santana... don't tease..."

"But you like it," Santana found herself smirking as she moved her kisses down onto Quinn's collarbone. She sucked at it softly, earning a jolt of Quinn's body.

Santana felt cold fingers on her neck, trying to trail down her spine. She felt the tightness in her chest suddenly evaporate as Quinn's two fingers quickly unclasped her bra. Santana threw it aside with a small smile.

She liked the effort Quinn was giving—it was adorable really—but she wanted to focus on pleasuring Quinn. She wanted Quinn to feel as wanted and as loved as she did last Valentines' Day.

Choosing to ignore Quinn's advances, she pulled away to help Quinn out of her dress. When that was thrown aside, Santana wasted no time in unclasping Quinn's bra and straddling her.

With eyes filled with a fiery passion, she feasted herself on the sight of the half-naked beauty in front of her. Quinn watched, biting her lower lip nervously as Santana's eyes travelled from her

eyes to her lips, from her collarbones to the top of her breasts, finally resting their piercing gaze on her peaks.

Deciding she could get a better angle if she wasn't straddling Quinn, Santana moved off to kneel on the bed, one leg in between Quinn's.

With one swift motion, Santana lowered her lips to kiss the tender skin just above Quinn's half-hardened nipple. Instantly, Quinn let out a soft grunt as she felt her nipples harden.

She watched in anticipation as Santana lowered her kiss down to her left nipple. Santana was taking her fucking time, taking way too long, and her lips only grazed the tip of the hardened nub. It was almost painful for Quinn to wait. Instinctively she arched her back a little, pushing herself into Santana. Santana pulled away immediately with a smirk.

The smirk that Santana responded with was one that turned Quinn on impossibly more.

"S... please... do something... I need you..."

"Don't be impatient, Q. Patience is a virtue."

Quinn opened her mouth to whine, but the only thing that came out was a gasp followed by a sultry moan. Santana was now licking her nipple with the occasional suck, and it was driving her insane.

Slender fingers traced down her torso and onto her abs. Santana took her time, letting Quinn's desire multiply tenfold as she teased.

Quinn's breathing was shaky and small sounds were escaping her lips every now and then. As she felt Santana's mouth on her previously neglected nipple, she let out a groan of pleasure.

It was this moment that Santana decided to let her fingers slip just along the hem of Quinn's panties. It tickled a little, making Quinn's hips buck a little. But that 'little' was enough for Santana to stop her motions, much to Quinn's disappointment.

Just as she was about to complain, Santana nipped on her nipple and began sucking hard, sending her into a flow of whimpers and muffled pleas. Then she felt it.

Santana was applying the tiniest bit of pressure onto Quinn's sex. Her fingers pressed at the cloth of soaked underwear, providing minimal amounts of pleasure that made Quinn tremble at every touch.

It made her want to clamp her legs shut until Santana would promise her more. But with Santana's knee in between her's, she realized she couldn't.

Suddenly, Quinn was all too aware of their positions. She drew her right leg up a little, almost experimentally, until her thigh pressed against Santana's center. She felt Santana flinch and her lips stop for a short moment. Quinn's heart blossomed with pride.

Now that she was feeling better and very, very needy, Quinn became determined to not be completely overpowered by Santana. She moved her leg again, pressing harder at Santana, earning a soft groan. It wasn't long before Santana took her lips and hands off of Quinn and got

off momentarily to take her jeans off. She knew she needed to feel more of Quinn. Within seconds, she resumed her position, looming over Quinn, with a leg on either side of Quinn's.

Once again, Quinn pushed her thigh towards Santana. This time, Santana thrust her hips against Quinn to find a little more friction. Her head tilted back and her lips parted at the impact. She heard Quinn gasp, which turned her on to no end.

Santana decided to push the soaked cloth aside, and slip her fingers through Quinn's folds. Instantly, Quinn let out a strangled moan, verging on the edge of a scream. Santana's cold fingers were quickly warmed up as she traced Quinn's entrance teasingly.

She rocked herself against Quinn's thigh every now and then, but even in her desire, only half-heartedly. She wanted to stay focused on loving Quinn. Santana let her finger slip over Quinn's clit. The bundle of nerves was swelling slowly with each gentle touch, leaving Quinn more desperate and needy than before.

"Santana..."

Hearing her own name called in a half-moan, Santana instinctively moved away from Quinn's thigh so she could lower her head and place a kiss on Quinn's clit. She tasted just like Santana had remembered. The taste made her want so much more.

She yanked on the hem of the panties, and as Quinn raised her hips, pulled them off and tossed them aside.

Resuming her position between Quinn's legs, Santana's tongue flicked out after a couple more kisses, and just as it landed on the swollen nub for an experimental lick, a hiss escaped Quinn's lips. Her hips bucked upwards and had to be held down by Santana's firm hands.

Santana began licking a little harder and at a constant pace, and she drew a string of moans mixed with curses out of Quinn's lips. She was shivering, her fingers digging into Santana's scalp as she craved for the long over-due release.

It really wasn't long when Quinn felt the desire pooling in her threaten to explode. Although Santana didn't quicken the pace as Quinn's moans become louder and louder, Quinn felt her pleasure heighten.

She was thrown over the edge unexpectedly, her whole body trembling as she moaned loud and clear. Despite the gentleness Santana had shown her, her orgasm was anything but gentle. It was violent, but still she welcomed it. Quinn tried desperately to push Santana's head away, but with only half the strength she had. Santana's skills rendered her powerless.

The way Santana was licking softly let Quinn ride out her orgasm for a little longer than she ever had. She felt like she had found paradise. But even as heaven subsided, Santana continued licking at the same pace.

It wasn't long before Quinn found a familiar desire ignite within her again. She had barely enough time to catch her breath when Santana's tongue slipped down from her clit and into her entrance. Instinctively, her muscles tightened.

Santana pulled back with an amused smirk, "You don't really help yourself much when I'm not around, do you? When was the last time you did yourself a favor?"

"You talk too much."

"Is that your attempt at telling me to get my tongue back onto you, Quinnie?"

Before Quinn was given a chance to respond, she felt a finger tease her entrance. It didn't go inside though. By the look on Santana's face, Quinn knew she would have to ask properly...

"Santana... can you..." she felt the finger inch into her just a tiny bit. So painfully slow. "Can you... fuck me...?"

"Oh, I don't know, can I?" Santana's eyes twinkled dangerously as she pushed in just a tiny bit more, earning a soft groan.

"Please... fuck me... Santana~" Her sentence ended in a moan that Santana was sure the whole floor of dorms heard. Not that she minded. She wanted everyone to know who Quinn Fabray belonged to.

Quinn was tight and tense around Santana's singular finger. She waited for Quinn to relax a little before moving her finger out and then back in again.

She knew she was treating Quinn like a virgin, and Quinn loved it. Santana knew Quinn loved the tenderness. She also knew where she had to reach to make Quinn scream. She added another finger.

Santana grazed Quinn's clit with her thumb as she moved in and out at an increasing pace. With a couple of quick thrusts, she had found the spot in Quinn. Quinn really was a screamer. As Santana leaned in to muffle Quinn's noises with a kiss, she felt fingers raking across her bare back. It didn't really hurt, even though she knew that there would be marks in the morning.

Even muffled by Santana's lips, Quinn's moans were a rising crescendo of sounds. Her breathing was laboured as she reached her climax once more, tightening her hold on Santana's fingers.

Santana broke the kiss to allow Quinn to breathe in, only to hear her name moaned from those lips. If Santana had been somewhat needy before, she was now desperate.

Once again, she allowed her thumb to graze Quinn's clit to prolong her pleasure. Even after she removed her fingers, it took a while for Quinn to stop shaking and for her breathing to return to a fairly regular beat.

Quinn felt thoroughly satisfied (although she would never deny Santana yet another round), but she could tell from the look in Santana's eyes that the desire in her was barely satiated.

With a sultry look, Quinn sat up, propping herself up on her elbows. Santana watched with a small smirk as Quinn raised her gaze. Their eyes met.

Quinn's voice was husky as she spoke, "Why are you still wearing something?"

"Why didn't you take it off?"

"You never gave me a chance to."

"Well, you have all the chances you want now."

In a swift motion, Quinn was on her hands and knees, crawling up towards Santana, who was now sitting with her back against the footboard of the bed. Her breathing and heartbeats quickened with every movement from Quinn.

Santana's knees were drawn up, but her legs were apart, giving Quinn the perfect view of the wet patch on her thong.

Before Santana could tease Quinn for the hungry look she had in her eyes, she felt her own hips being lifted gently and her thong practically torn off.

The next thing she saw was Quinn's hazel eyes staring at her in the most predatory way ever, Quinn's lips hovering just above her clit.

She exhaled slowly.

It was then that Santana felt a warm, wet feeling on her clit. She watched with hooded eyes as Quinn ran her tongue along her folds, not only over her clit, but over her entrance as well. She let out a soft whimper. Quinn's gaze was intensifying her whole experience.

Quinn began to focus on Santana's clit, licking and sucking. It really wasn't long before Santana was shaking, one hand clutching the bedpost and the other tangled in Quinn's gold locks. She threw her head back as wave after wave of pleasure rushed over her. She was getting closer and closer to the edge with each moment. Just as she was seconds away from crashing into bliss, Quinn stopped.

Santana let out a disgruntled groan at the loss of contact. Much to her relief, the tongue was quickly replaced with a slender finger. Quinn ran the tip of her finger on Santana's swollen nub, before trailing down and pushing it into Santana.

Santana tensed at the sudden but welcome intrusion, letting out another throaty moan. Quinn began moving her finger in and out slowly, adding a second finger somewhere along the lines. She watched with curiosity as Santana shut her eyes tight, muttering in a broken mix of Spanish and English.

Santana was quickly spiralling into her end when Quinn's fingers curled and made her see stars. That only quickened her descend into pleasure.

Within seconds, Santana was moaning for Quinn as Quinn tried to curl her fingers again within the tightening walls. Pleasure unfolded itself within Santana, and she reached her height in absolute bliss.

When Quinn could at last pull out, Santana had been reduced to a shaking mess. Shaking but hot mess. She took deep breaths, trying to stabilize her erratic breathing.

Quinn took Santana's hand and pulled her close, so they were lying side by side on the bed. They were both a little sweaty from all the 'working out' they had been doing, but neither woman had felt so happy in the past year.

"So... what happens next?" Quinn's voice was soft as she gazed deeply into Santana's eyes.

"Is this what you always ask after sex?" Santana's voice was still raspy, "Well... you could be the first to walk out... or this could be a two-time thing?" Her eyes twinkled with mischief as she quoted the same words she had said only a year ago.

"What just happened was already a two-time thing. Besides, no one said I'm done with you yet."

"I think I'll pass for tonight. I'm drained," Santana took Quinn's hand in her own, lacing their fingers together, "I don't mind continuing tomorrow morning, though."

"Santana!" Quinn giggled as she snuggled a little closer to Santana. After a moment of silence, she spoke up in a whisper once more, "Really... what happens next?"

"Why do I have to be the one to ask you out? Can't you ask me out?"

"Because I like being asked out... I'm a girl..."

"In case you didn't notice when you had your head at my pussy, I'm a girl too," Santana murmured fondly into Quinn's hair. Quinn was kissing her collarbone now, sending butterflies into her stomach.

"So..."

"Quinn, will you go out with me? I've been wanting to ask since forever, but—"

"Yes!" Quinn raised her head to look into Santana's eyes, "I thought you'd never ask."

Santana rolled her eyes as she kissed Quinn on the forehead, "And you couldn't have asked."

"Sorry..."

"It doesn't matter anymore. You're mine."

"Says who?"

"Says the hickey on your neck~" Quinn's squeal was too adorable. Santana could only laugh.

"Oh no you didn't!"

"Good luck covering that one up when we go on a date tomorrow!"

"Santana!"

"I love you, Quinnie!"

There was a pause, but the silence was neither heavy nor uncomfortable.

"I love you, too, you dork."

"Happy Valentine's Day, Q."

"You, too, S."

Another pause.

"Can I kiss you?"

"Geez, stop asking before you do something to me! You're ruining the surprise element!"

"Quinn Fabray, you're gonna completely regret what you just said. I'll be jumping you every fucking day I'm around you."

"I'd like to see you try."

"Is that a challenge?"

"You talk too much. Kiss me already."

The couple shared another kiss. As their tongues battled, they felt unity. Both of them felt complete, full. Any trace of pain, of brokenness had evaporated in love.

When they had at last separated, Santana let out a soft sigh. She pulled the covers from the corner of Quinn's bed, covering their bodies. With one last chaste kiss on Quinn's forehead, pulling Quinn close, Santana closed her eyes.

Everything around her smelt like Quinn, felt like Quinn. Everything had become flawless. Whole.

"Goodnight, baby."

Quinntana Begins, by team-valkyrie

Santana meets Lucy when she's seven years old.

It's the first day of kindergarten and she strolls up in there like she owns the place, which she does because hello she's Santana Lopez, and her gaze instantly falls upon a chubby, brunette haired girl that is quietly sitting away from all the kids. Her brilliant hazel eyes stops Santana in her tracks and makes butterflies appear in her tummy. They are so incredibly expressive and the pain is the most prominent emotion. It leaves her heart aching because such a beautiful girl shouldn't look so sad. Santana makes a decision and strolls up to the unknown girl.

"Hi, I'm Santana Lopez," the young girl states proudly. "What's your name?"

The brunette girl shyly looks up from her drawing of a unicorn and a look of confusion grazes her face. "Me? I'm Lucy Fabray."

"Well, Lucy Fabray, it's nice to meet you. Would you like to color with me?"

Lucy tentatively smiles and nods. "I would like that very much."

Their friendship blossomed from there. They played together during school, Santana protects Lucy from bullies, and Lucy teaches Santana how to color inside the lines. Even as the years went by, they grew closer together. They got their first matching best friend necklaces in the first grade, got their first piercings in the second grade, had their first sleepover in the third, went to see their first movie in fourth, spent their first vacation in Florida in the fifth, and had their first heartbreak in the sixth.

Lucy's family moving to Columbus for Russell's new job hit both girls the hardest. They were inseparable by then and spent everyday together. It was always Santana&Quinn or Quinn&Santana. From the moment they found out, the two girls spent every moment they could together, trying to savor the few remaining weeks they had together.

The day the Fabray's left, both girls cried all day. They hugged tightly, sobbing, promising to keep in contact through letter, phone calls, anything to keep the connected.

When they watched each other get further away, their hearts simultaneously broke.

Santana meets Quinn when she is sixteen years old.

It is her first day as a sophomore at McKinley High and she struts in like she owns the place, which she does because she is Santana Lopez and head cheerleader of the Cheerios. With her pinkie linked tightly with Brittany's, she easily maneuvered her way through the sea of red and to her locker in order to get her stuff for her classes.

Halfway there, she is frozen in place. Familiar hazel eyes meet brown and the entire world just melts away, the entire world except for her. She looks different, yet the same. She is taller, slimmer

and her hair is dyed blonde. But those eyes. Those hypnotizing, beautiful, expressive hazel eyes are exactly the same.

Santana is running before she realizes what is happening and so does Quinn. It's so clichéd and overplayed but at the same time, they are both too excited to wait. They meet in the middle and immediately engulf each other in a tight hug. Finally, years later, they are both together and the heartbreak they felt that fateful day is mended.

And this time, Santana isn't going to let go.

Don't Think, by tehedward

"I just want somebody to love me, is that so much to ask?"

Santana continues to stare at her broken and crying friend. She and Brittany exchange worried glances before turning their attention back to Quinn. She's hurting so badly right now and all Santana can think about is how much she wants to take that pain away. She and Quinn had what was quite possibly one of the most volatile and aggressive friendships in the entire world.

I mean for God's sakes Quinn had told people about her boob job just so she could take back her old spot on the cheerios. And she had given the girl freaking mono, not because she was really all that into Trouty-Lips but because she wanted to knock Quinn down a peg or two. They had tried to beat the crap out of each other on more than one occasion and had called each other names and they viciously insulted one another constantly and yet...

When Santana was first discovering she was gay it had been Quinn to whom she had turned to for support, who had been her shoulder to cry on as her world spun out of control. When Quinn had gotten pregnant it had been Santana who had made certain that the rest of the school knew under no uncertain terms that Quinn was off limits to those who might have tried to take advantage of her fall from grace.

When Santana had discovered that Brittany was dating Artie and wasn't going to leave him even after she had done what Brittany had asked and opened up her heart to the girl, it had been Quinn who she had gone to for comfort. And when Quinn had moved back in with her mother this past summer it had been to her house that Quinn would sneak off to when she couldn't stand to be around the woman any more.

They had done some awful things to each other over the course of their friendship but neither of them had ever questioned its existence or its strength. They were too alike to get along perfectly and peacefully but as far as Santana was concerned nobody got her like Quinn did. And now her best friend was in the process of going through a complete breakdown which had been triggered by getting dumped by a guy who didn't even deserve her in the first place. She didn't think for a moment it was the entire cause of her friends breakdown, but it was certainly the final straw for what must have been building up for quite some time.

She had no idea what to do to make things better for her friend, all she knew is that she couldn't stand to see the heartbroken expression on Quinn's face for one more second and that she had to act.

"Quinn?"

Quinn looks up at her as the tears continue to stream down her face and Santana doesn't hesitate. She leans in and, albeit slowly, presses her lips to Quinn's in a soft and deep kiss. She reaches up and runs a hand through Quinn's hair and is pleased when Quinn begins to respond and starts to return the kiss.

When Santana finally pulls back Quinn is breathing a little heavier than the intensity of the kiss should warrant but considering how out of the blue it was, it probably wasn't all that out of place. A glance over Quinn's shoulder and she can see the hurt and shocked expression on Brittany's face, who when she notices Santana looking at her quickly forces a smile onto her face.

"I... I'll just leave you two alone for now." And Brittany quickly gets up to leave. And Santana has a front row seat to see the tears begin to fall down Brittany's face as she leaves the room and Santana has to fight the urge to chase after her.

She turns back to Quinn who is looking at her, her eyes wide with confusion and fear. And Santana can see that Quinn is just waiting for her to leave, to once again have someone else be chosen over her and now Santana truly comprehends the consequences of her actions.

If she got up now, she could probably catch up to Brittany. She could make things okay, she could get Brittany back and they could finally be together. But if she left, it would destroy Quinn. Quinn who was absolutely certain that no one did or ever could love her. And so now she had a choice to make. She could either choose Brittany whom she had been chasing after for as long as she could remember or she could choose Quinn. Quinn who drove her up the wall, Quinn who she argued with constantly, Quinn who...

Santana can hear the door click behind her but she doesn't pay it any mind as she slowly leans forward again and begins to kiss Quinn once more. Quinn hesitantly begins to kiss her back, at first unsure of herself before she slowly gets more and more into it.

For now Santana was content to keep things as they were, but Quinn was a fantastic kisser and while she would love to take things further she knew she couldn't let it go farther than this. And she was right in thinking that way because the moment Santana had innocuously rested a hand on Quinn's knee she felt the blond girl stiffen and pull away.

"I... I can't... I... what's going on?" Quinn asks, her voice cracking as the doubt and uncertainty begins to get to her. She just doesn't understand, why is Santana kissing her and why... why does she like it so much?

"You said you just wanted someone to love you, well here I am."

"I... but I'm not... I like boys... or at least I thought I did..."

Santana rolls her eyes. "And how many boys have you been with exactly? You've dated Frankenteen and Trouty-Lips and you hooked up with Puck once. Not exactly the pinnacle's of the male half of the species. And look maybe you're not gay but..." Here Santana gently runs her fingers down Quinn's shoulder and watches with satisfaction at the small shiver that seems to run through Quinn. "When I was kissing you, you kissed me back. Tell me did you like it or was it just reflex? Someone kisses you, you kiss them back."

"I... I don't know..." Quinn says softly, looking down uncertainly.

Santana reaches forward and gently tilts Quinn's chin up so that she is looking at her, "Look I know you're probably really confused right now and you have all these strange and confusing emotions running through you but maybe that's a good thing?"

"What do you mean?"

"One of your biggest problems Quinn is that you think too much. You analyze and over analyze everything you do, and then you second guess yourself. Maybe the best thing for you to do right now is to let your mind be a whirlwind, and don't try to think and analyze but instead just trust your instincts, you know, go with your gut and just do what feels right."

"Maybe..."

"When I kissed you did you like it? No, don't think, just answer did you like it when I kissed you?"

Quinn nods her head.

"Then really what is there to think about, I like being with you, you like being with me, let's see where this takes us."

"What about Brittany?" Quinn asks softly. "I thought... aren't you in love with her?"

"My feelings for Brittany are... let's go with complicated, I'll always care about her but I'm here with you right now, not her. I kissed you and when Brittany left I had a choice, I could have gone after her and I probably could have gotten her back or I could stay here with you. The fact that I didn't hesitate to stay here tells me that as much as I may care about Brittany... she isn't the one."

"And you think I am?" Quinn asks her sounding unsure.

"Not a clue." Santana says, laughing lightly and she manages to get a little laugh out of Quinn as well. "I just know that when it came time to choose between you or her... I chose you. And to me, well that says something. I don't know if we're soul mates or if we're destined to be together. Hell, half the time I don't know if I want to hug you or strangle you-"

Quinn lets out a little giggle at that and the sound brings a warm smile to Santana's face. "But the thing is, I want to find out. You say you want somebody to love you, well here I am. Let me try. You and I are both so screwed up, both so overly confident and yet so extremely self-conscious that I don't think anybody will ever get us the way that we do each other. In the end we'll either be the most epic love story in the world or we'll kill each other." Santana playfully nudges Quinn's shoulder. "I figure we'll have our answer by next Thursday."

"I'm not ready to come out... I... I don't even know if I'm able to be in a relationship with you." Quinn says after a moment.

"Well then that makes two of us because I'm not coming out until after I've left that hick town. And as for being in a relationship with you... well let's just take it one day at a time and instead of worrying about defining it, let's just see what happens."

"I think..."

"Don't think." Santana interrupts before leaning in to kiss Quinn and this time Quinn meets her halfway.

It's just like love, by timbrenoir

Shit, shit, shit. I was late. I was *so* late. When my boss told me that I'd be representing our marketing team on the annual convention cruise due to another employee falling ill, I was ecstatic - my headache the next morning from celebrating a testimony to that fact. The fact that I was leaving the next day was a minor detail. A loud, early morning phone call, two advils and a quick shower later I was out the door and catching a cab.

"Seriously, can you not go any faster?" I said exasperatedly to the cab driver, who seemed very keen on following the speed limit. *Seriously, what kind of cab driver was this guy?* He glanced back at me and I rose an eyebrow expectantly, "What? You expecting a tip? Pretty sure these beauties are enough for you to speed up" I told him, in reference to my very obvious cleavage. If I didn't make it to the port in twenty minutes, the ship would most likely be gone. Boarding had started over an hour ago. The boob reference seemed to have done the trick, considering we were actually going faster than cyclists now.

I threw a twenty dollar bill to the front of the cab when he parked - the ship still there, thankfully, and quickly pulled my suitcase from beside me as I exited the vehicle. "Thanks for the ride, gramps" I told said as I shut the door. *It wasn't like he deserved a tip.*

The whole boarding journey was a hassle. After being told where to go three times but still managing to get to the wrong entry point, I finally managed to find where I needed to go before I was ushered onto the ship quickly. It seemed like the big crowds had already made it onto the boat, considering the large room that looked like a lobby seemed practically empty.

Argh! I suddenly felt myself collide with something rather sharp from the side. A loud noise came right after, and I immediately spotted a young, blonde woman on the ground.

Normally, I would have gone all Lima heights on her ass for not watching where she was going. Normally, I would been annoyed at how this day was going so far. But for some reason I was transfixed on her face - my eyes examining her hazel ones. She was beautiful.

"Are you going to help me up, or keep gawking at me creepily?" I heard her say. It wasn't hard to admit that her charming voice matched her face.

I extended my hand to her, pulling her up slowly. I realized I still haven't spoken a word to her. "I'm Quinn" She said, and brushed her hair aside. "Sorry about that, I got a little distracted by the grandeur of this place" I hadn't even noticed the beauty of the lobby before then. It was probably the most expensive-looking place I had ever had the chance to stay in. The fact that she didn't even seem bothered that she had fallen to the ground because of me confused me.

"Santana" I finally said, and wanted to slap myself for being so off my game. "It is pretty great, isn't it? Not everyday you get to step onto a ship this big"

"It's a pretty great Thursday indeed" She replied with a grin, "So, *Santana*, what do you think of mini golf?"

And that Thursday, filled with a beautiful girl and some cruise ship mini golfing, was the first day of the rest of my life.

On Friday, we got to know each other.

"How about you guess?" Quinn said with a smile after I asked her what her job was, and I couldn't help but notice that she was enjoying being mysterious a bit too much.

"Stripper? Maybe an escort, considering you're making enough money to be on this cruise" I replied with my usual snark, despite knowing that the blonde was much too classy for an occupation of that sort.

"Funny" Quinn replied with a roll of her eyes; something that I found to be adorable yet still conveyed faux annoyance.

Wait, did I just say adorable? I need Puck to come slap some sense into me.

"I've just recently graduated. This was my grandmother's graduation gift" She told me, with a quiet, but content, sigh. "She told me that since I wasn't getting married, she couldn't pay for that, so this was the second best thing" I chuckled at the fact that her grandmother put marriage and cruise on practically equal scales. "Yale, English Lit" She added before I could even ask, and I smiled.

"Impressive. You seem like the lit type. Artsy and...artsy" Way to go Santana. Great choice of words. She will definitely praise your vocabulary now. I heard her laugh, and her pale cheeks tinted pink when she caught me staring at her.

"My father was furious. He would have rather I follow his footsteps with the family business" She shrugged as she rearranged her sunglasses and hair, and I took the opportunity to indulge in the sight of her hazel eyes. "But I saw the beauty in words, and decided to dive in. Carpe diem, am I right?" She flashed a wide smile, and everything she did seemed effortless. My usual confidence was out the window.

"Santana?" I heard, bringing me out of my dazed state.

"Hm?" I asked, turning my head slowly, hoping that it wasn't too obvious that I was lost in thoughts about the blonde before me.

"I asked what it is that you do?" She said, and if she had asked me multiple times she didn't show off any irritation.

I was suddenly embarrassed. "Um, I'm in marketing" I said, "I work as an associate with my firm" I added, hoping it would make me seem a bit more important. "I mean, it's not something I'm super passionate about, but it pays the bills and it's not boring" I shrugged. Marketing had always been my safety net - I hadn't 'dove in' like Quinn had mentioned.

"But what's the point of paying the bills if your life isn't worth the bills you're paying for?" She asked me, her eyebrow quirked up as I felt her eyes see right through me - as if I was a book she had read and analyzed years ago.

Who was this girl? Puck's definitely going to be receiving a phone call tonight.

Saturday, we had fun together.

Turns out these ships have a lot going on - including bars that turned into semi dance clubs at night. I knew spending the night with alcohol and Quinn in a short dress probably wasn't the greatest idea for someone who was on a business trip, but when she asked I couldn't say no.

Tipsy Quinn was a touchy Quinn. I mean, touchier than she normally was. Every move I made, her hand was in mine, or around my waist. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't enjoying it.

We danced for most of the night. Quinn's back against my front, and then both of us facing each other - our lips centimeters apart. The closeness we shared was filled with silent sexual tension. I could feel her hips connecting with mine to the beat of the music at every song that came on.

More than one guy asked us to dance with them. I tried to convince myself that Quinn's possessive 'no' and how she grinded against me a second later was only to scare them off.

Now all I could think about was how I wanted possessive Quinn to be my Quinn.

Sunday, we shared secrets.

"I got a boob job when I was a sophomore in high school" I told her as we lay on the lounge chairs by the pool. The words obviously took her by surprise. I smirked proudly when she blushed as I caught her looking at my chest. I couldn't blame her, really. Catching Quinn off guard when she lost her cool was definitely my favourite thing

She didn't have to say anything I knew she didn't care.

"So, what's hidden in your closet?" I asked, turning my head to look at her. I honestly couldn't understand why I cared about knowing her so much.

"I don't have any skeletons" She said, with a shrug. For some reason I knew she was lying to me.

We really spent most of our time together. After my meetings in the afternoon, we met up for a swim at the pool.

"A daughter" I heard her say later that afternoon, as she swam to the edge of the pool to where I was sitting, and I looked up.

"What?" I asked, my eyebrows scrunched up in confusion at her sudden words. We had both been swimming and lounging around the pool area that afternoon after my afternoon meetings, most of our time being spent in comfortable silence.

"That's my skeleton" She said, and before I could speak her hand was on my knee. "My first ever boyfriend. He claimed that condoms weren't necessary. Turns out they are, or you end up pregnant and kicked out of your house" She wasn't looking at me. Her eyes were on her hands, as if she were trying to memorize them.

I certainly wasn't expecting that.

"Your parents kicked you out?" For some reason that was the part that struck me. I couldn't even fantom intentionally hurting this girl, so the fact that her own parents would do that seemed surreal to me.

"Mm. Moved in with my grama and stayed with her until college. She helped me go through the pregnancy, and the adoption process" Quinn told me, a bright sparkle filled her eyes. "I still get to visit her, and see her, she's beautiful" I didn't doubt that fact at all.

We spent the rest of the evening talking about her daughter. Yep, Quinn's eyes when she spoke of Beth was my new favourite thing

Monday, I fell for her a little.

"It's just like love, isn't it?"

We were looking out at the sea from the front of the ship, both of us leaning onto the rail as the warm breeze hit our faces.

"What is?"

"Water" She said. "You have oceans and seas, they're so vast, deep, mysterious. You can dive in head first and think you know what you're getting into, but you really just reach the surface. There's a whole other world deeper, with new things to discover and fall in love with. And then you have rivers, and they're so free, and fresh. Even when things get cold, it rarely ices over. It keeps going and provides life to so many things" She said, her arms on the railing as we both looked out at the never ending sea before us. "Some people kind of forget it exists, until they really need it, and others can't get enough of it. It's beautiful, yet so exploited" When she turned to look at me, I swear the entire universe was shouting at me to kiss her.

Tuesday, I finally managed to get my backbone back.

"Like what you see, Fabray?" I teased as I lathered my arms with tanning oil. Being around Quinn had made me completely lose my cool, but I was starting to feel more comfortable.

"No" She said in a weak joking manner, and it was her turn to be the blabbering idiot that I had been for the past few days.

"Mmhuh" I replied, biting my lip as I got an idea. "Oil me? Can't reach my back" I told her, handing her the bottle before she could say no. I lifted my hair up slowly and parted it over my shoulder.

After a few seconds, I felt a soft hand on my back. Her hand moved in a circular fashion as she rubbed the oil into my skin, and I swore she was taking just a little too long on purpose.

"All-all done" I heard her say, and I was proud that I finally managed to affect her in a way that I was used to. Girls would bow down to my feet at home.

"Thanks, Q" I replied and turned around, applying some of the leftover oil onto my chest with a smirk. "Help me again?" I asked jokingly, a wide grin on my face. I was faced with an eye roll and my name sighed in a way that reminded me of my annoyed mother. Somehow Quinn managed to make it cute.

Wednesday, I gave her part of me.

"Santana?" I heard through the bathroom door as I lathered my hair with shampoo. Quinn and I had decided to go to the theatre that night, and getting ready in Quinn's room had just become a habit for the both of us. I was tired of my business wardrobe, and she let me borrow anything of hers. "Mind if I come in? My make up is under the sink" She said.

I nodded before I realized she couldn't see me. "Sure" I shouted out. Quinn had decided not to shower, but had insisted that I use hers instead of going back to my room. I heard the door click open and a few footsteps before I was met with only the sound of the water hitting the shower floor once more.

The thought that Quinn was only a few feet away from me while I was completely naked made me feel chills all over my body. The tension between the two of us had grown since that night in the club, and even more so after my constant teasing the previous day.

I felt a hand on my shoulder before I even heard the shower curtain being pulled aside.

Quinn's now dark eyes was the only encouragement I needed to crash my lips onto hers. I felt my back hit the cold shower wall, and the pain went away as soon as her hands grazed my breasts. My hand curled at her neck as our tongues battled for dominance. I had never realized how enchanting moans could be until I heard Quinn whimper my name against my lips.

We didn't end up going to the theatre that night.

Thursday, we ignored everything else.

"I really don't know why I hang out with you" I said in mock seriousness as I watched Quinn walk from the balcony to the spot next to me on the bed in her robe. "You're kind of hard on eyes, and you're just not that smart" I teased.

Another favourite thing of mine about Quinn was that she always took my teasing well. Either she retorted with a witty remark or rolled her eyes and cuddled into me. The latter happened this time.

Today was my only day without meetings, and we hadn't left my room since we woke up.

"I take it you agree?" I teased, she was rarely ever this silent - and I was taking advantage of it. "I'm definitely the prettier and smarter one here"

"So what's the capital of Qatar?" She mumbled against my neck, and I could feel a smile forming against my skin as my silence grew longer. "Who wrote Anna Karenina?"

My response was to slide my hands down her body, tickling her sides. She squealed and I laughed, continuing to tickle her as her body squirmed in all directions. "Well, I'm sorry that I don't binge read wikipedia articles" I teased as I captured her lips in a kiss, and I felt her body relax against mine slowly.

"You should be sorry that you're this annoying" She said with a smile as I pulled away, and I laughed before kissing her again.

Friday, we said goodbye.

"Stay in Miami with me" I had told her that morning

The ship was due to arrive in a few hours, and it had only hit me that we'd be back to the real world then.

Quinn was flying back to Ohio, to be with her family.

"I can't" Her reply hit me like a thousand bricks. I knew she couldn't. I knew that. But hearing her say it out loud for the first time hurt. "You know I'm heading home. My parents - they want to meet Beth"

I couldn't understand why she wanted to go back to people who left her, when they were supposed to love her unconditionally. It didn't make sense.

I couldn't understand why she was leaving me, when I felt like I could love her unconditionally.

Today, I fell for her a lot.

Quinn and I's goodbye hadn't been very successful. I had planned to return to my apartment that evening and spent the night binge watching Netflix, all the while ignoring anyone who tried to contact me, but I was met with a loud knock on the door. Pretending not to be home didn't stop whoever was knocking, so I reluctantly got up from bed and walked towards the door.

When I opened it, I was faced with a tear stained Quinn, luggage in hand.

"You know what they don't say about home?" Quinn asked me, and I was still stunned at seeing her that I couldn't even think of a reply. "It's completely overrated"

"Santana!" I heard, and I groaned loudly as I turned my head further into the pillow. It felt like it was way too early to be awake. I felt a cold hand on my bare back and my face scrunched up in discomfort. "San! Wake up! There's a fire!" My eyes shot open and my body sprung out of bed, my eyes now focusing on Quinn as my first instinct was to grab her and run. I couldn't understand why she was just standing there, and then I saw her crack and a smile and start to laugh.

"You should have seen your face" Quinn said through laughter, and in that moment I wanted to kill her. Well, not really. But maybe deprive her of sex for a few weeks. *Okay, maybe just a few days.*

"That isn't funny, Lucy Q" I said, my voice still laced with the grogginess I felt but my heart was pumping at full speed. I felt her arms wrap around my waist, and I gave into the warmth when she held me close.

"Sorry, babe" She said and pecked my cheek lightly. I turned my head to face her, feeling slightly cheated from a kiss. "You just weren't waking up, and I have to head out for my meeting" Quinn said, and finally gave me the soft kiss I was waiting for.

Oh, right. Quinn was meeting with a publisher today. Her poetry might be getting published. I had planned on waking up early and making her breakfast. Way to go, Santana.

My eyes scanned her outfit for the occasion, and my smirk told her that I approved. I could feel her roll her eyes at me. "So, no time for morning fun times?" I asked, hopefully, even though I knew that she was short on time. My initial thoughts on withholding sex were long forgotten by now.

"Well, *I* had time" She said with a smirk to match mine, kissing me again quickly.

"Quinn" I whined, and my hands roamed down her back to gently grab her ass.

"Santanaaaaa" She imitated me, and I rolled my eyes at her attempt to irritate me before I kissed her deeply. I managed to get away with distracting her through the smart use of my talented tongue, but was soon swatted away playfully. "Okay, I have to go, I'm going to be late! Stop being sexy" Quinn said with a laugh, and I joined in before I slapped her ass goodbye. It was kind of a tradition between us.

That night we celebrated with champagne, great food and lots of sex. She had managed to snag a book deal. Everything was falling into place.

"It's just like love, isn't it?" I heard her say beside me, our fingers intertwined together as we lay sprawled out on the bed.

"What is?" I asked; my mind racing to that Monday on the ship. She had only grown more beautiful since that evening.

"This"

Quinntana Begins, by vampyre in hiding

Quinn wasn't too happy as she strolled down the sidewalk, avoiding the usual hustle of New York's typical occupants. She'd caught her longtime boyfriend, Sam, with her best friend Kurt and as much as she loved Kurt as a friend, she was mad enough to want to kick his pale ass.

She stopped on the corner and peered around. There were plenty of stores to spend Sam's money at, but at the moment, she didn't feel up to forcing a false smile onto her face. Down at the end of the row of stores was a club. *Ecstasy*. She'd heard it was a wild party and dammit, she had nothing to lose.

Crossing over, she hurried toward the club. It was pulsing, the bass so loud she could hear from three buildings down.

"Name," the bouncer demanded, hardly casting a glance at the short blonde. She didn't look her best in a black "I Heart New York" t-shirt and skinny jeans, so she knew there wasn't much of a point to try and flirt her way in, not that she really would anyways.

She turned away, planning to slump down the sidewalk toward the nearby liquor store when the bouncer's hand touched her shoulder. "Wait."

Quinn returned her attention to the man and he held his fingers up to his ear, listening into the small black device in it.

"Yes, ma'am." He faced the little blonde with a slight smile. "Go on in and ask the bartender for the boss. She'd like to talk to you."

The blonde was terribly confused. She didn't know a lot of people in New York or that had moved to New York, so she wasn't too certain what to think. "Okay," she found herself saying as she stepped past the man and into *Ecstasy*.

Inside, Quinn was amazed. There were people of all kinds – gay, straight, blue-haired and blonde haired alike – throughout the club, taking up the dance floor and the outer walls and even the bar. She was so overwhelmed she almost forgot her confusion from earlier.

The bar, Quinn remembered and butterflies swarmed her stomach. She felt like she was going to get set up, but she didn't have any enemies that would do something like that...hopefully.

She walked carefully up to the bar, avoiding the lustful eyes of many of the patrons. One guy nearly talked to her, but she shoved past him.

"What can I get ya, sweetheart?" a bartender asked as she sauntered around the bar, handing a burly man his beer and a feminine guy his cocktail.

Quinn swallowed nervously. "I was supposed to ask if you could take me to see your boss."

"I don't think-" she cut herself off, looking past Quinn to something unseen by the blonde. She glanced around, but whatever the bartender saw was gone.

"Come on," she said, slipping out of the bar. She took the girl's hand and brought her toward the door leading to something.

Quinn followed. "Where...?"

The bartender pushed open the door and Quinn nearly fled. The room was dark and had a single flight of stairs leading up to a second floor that had only one door. "Go on up." She shoved the blonde forward slightly and shut the door behind her.

Come on, Quinn, you can do this. Quinn started up the stairs, taking two at a time before stopping in front of the door. She rocked on her heels and bit her lip before knocking.

"Come in," a muffled voice encouraged.

Quinn exhaled and pushed open the door, coming eye-to-eye with someone she never thought she'd see again.

—

Quinn, at a young age of fourteen, was a beautiful girl. She'd been a cheerleader, loved and adored, had the perfect boyfriend, and planned to be homecoming queen. She was the ideal Christian daughter every parent wanted.

She was at an infamous Puck party when she saw *her* - the sexiest, naughtiest dancer in the whole house. All of the guys wanted to dance with her, but she continued to push them away and dance alone.

"Who's she?" Quinn inquired to her friend, Finn.

"That's Santana Lopez. She's from Carmel." Quinn watched with wide eyes as the Latina strolled toward her and just simply took her hand, leading her out onto the dance floor.

Now, Quinn wasn't too sure what to do. Her boyfriend was in the kitchen for heaven's sake and she knew she should get away from the Latin seductress, but she couldn't bring herself to do it.

Santana stroked Quinn's hips, trying to entice her to dance. She was swaying to the beat and hoped with every inch of her soul Quinn would too.

"Come on," she murmured, tugging the blonde close and grinding slowly into her.

"I-I'm not..." Quinn didn't know what she was going to say, but she needed to say something to try and get away from the uncomfortable heat she was starting to feel around Santana. It was ridiculous the feelings Santana put into her body.

Santana leaned forward and whispered, "Does it really matter?"

"I..."

"Quinn?" Brody called. "Get away from her! She's a bitch and a..." he stepped dangerously close, "a lesbian." He didn't want others knowing *his* girlfriend was dancing with a lesbian.

"Come on, Quinn, just one dance," Santana smiled, though her cold eyes glared daggers at Brody.

Brody growled. "You dance with her, we're over," he warned.

Quinn looked between the two. Did she want to stay with a girl she barely met or her six-month boyfriend? Her choice was easy, but her body did something else. She stepped into Santana, surprising everyone around, and a part of her really didn't care anymore.

The Latina wrapped an arm around Quinn's waist and pulled them flush together. "I'm surprised."

Brody stormed off and Quinn gave her a genuine smile. "So am I."

After that night, they chose to start dating about two months later. Telling Quinn's parents was an awkward occurrence, but that was a story for another day. They stayed together for almost three years, but senior year drove them apart.

Santana wasn't serious about life. She partied, smoked weed, and never did her homework.

"You have to choose!" Quinn screamed at her disbelieving girlfriend. "It's me or the partying!"

"You can't be serious, Q, you love me, you wouldn't leave me so easily," Santana said confidently. She couldn't believe it when the blonde really did walk out of her life forever.

It took months for it to settle in that Quinn wasn't coming back. When she finally went to apologize and get her life together, the blonde was already gone – living her life and doing her own thing. From then on, Santana swore she'd win the love of her life back, no matter how long it took.

Quinn stared at her former girlfriend with awed eyes. The girl had cleaned up nicely over the years and matured into a beautiful woman. She was as beautiful, if not more so, than when she saw her five years ago.

"San..." Quinn whispered. She couldn't believe it.

"Hi, Q-Ball," Santana smiled bashfully, brushing curls from her face.

The blonde didn't stop to think. She just wrapped her arms around Santana's neck and brought her in for a deep kiss. She didn't know what was going to happen, but she didn't care. She had her San and that was the beginning of something new.

Knight in Leafy Armour, by wonderlandwaitforme

(BlessYourSoul)

I'm never going to Puckerman's ever again. A young Latina thought to herself as she stomped through the near deserted park, well, deserted park seeing as the only other kids there had sprinted off laughing. At what? She didn't know. *If Fuckerman thinks he can get away with trying to kiss me and push Britts in to the pool I swear he has another thing coming I swear I'll go all Lima Heights on his sorry ass.* She continued to walk down a quiet lane surrounded by trees thinking of ways she could get back at Puckerman when it hit her. Literally.

What the- Her thoughts were cut off when she looked to see what had hit her, assuming it was a twig or a bird or something, she looked to see a shoe. *The Fuck?*

"Hello?" the young girl asked cautiously, trying to catch a glimpse of whatever attacked her. "Is anybody there?" A snuffle could be heard from somewhere in the tree, making the girl frown. Contemplating whether or not she should see who there, she makes the decision and begins to climb the tree, attempting to locate the source of the sniffing.

After climbing at least four times her height, she comes face to, well, knee, looking up she sees a girl about her age, with golden blonde hair, pale skin, her shoulders shaking whilst her face is buried in her hands. "Are you okay?" the young Latina asks gently, spooking the girl, making terrified hazel meet concerned mocha. "Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. I'm Santana, what's your name?"

"Lu-Q-Quinn." The blonde answers shakily, mentally berating herself for her near slip up. She glances cautiously at the girl who had joined her, tanned skin, raven hair, and deep brown eyes staring straight back at her.

"What are you doing up here?" Santana asked.

"I- uh, m-my friends said that I couldn't climb this tree because I'm such a scaredy cat, and me, being the idiot that I am, tried to prove them wrong." Quinn whispered.

"Why would they do that?"

"Because I'm petrified of heights and too stubborn for my own good, and look where that got me, stuck in a tree." The blonde said, an edge in her voice that Santana couldn't tell if it was fear or anger. *So that's why those kids were running and laughing. Pfft. Some friends they are.*

"If I guide you, do you think you could make it down?" Santana asked, feeling an unknown need to protect the girl in front of her.

"You'd do that?" Quinn murmured a hint of admiration in her voice.

"Sure, c'mon, put your left arm there and right foot there."

Slowly but surely they made their way down the tree, until the last few branches when a branch they both had their weight on snapped sending them tumbling towards the ground in a heap. Santana stood, brushed off the leaves and dirt before reaching a hand for Quinn to grab, pulling her up. Quinn giggled, reaching for the leaf stuck in Santana's hair.

"Thank you." She said before leaning in to give Santana a hug.

"No problem." Santana blushed, clearing her throat. "Here," she said reaching for the shoe on the ground. "I believe this belongs to you Cinderella." Now it was Quinn's turn to blush. She muttered quiet thanks.

"I've never seen you around before, do you go to school here?" Santana asked.

"Yeah, I just moved here and I'm starting at McKinley in the fall." Quinn said.

"Really? Me too." Santana nearly yelled, she soon became quiet. Shyly she asked, "Can we meet here again tomorrow? At say around 12?"

"Yeah." Quinn smiled gently. "I have to go, I'll see you tomorrow my Knight in Leafy Armour." She said, leaning in to kiss Santana on the cheek, leaving without another word.

"Bye." Santana whispered to the wind.

Love at first sight (is that a thing?), by

WordsHaveMelodies

"Quinn come on!" Sam calls while you put the finishing touches on your makeup, "The game starts in an hour!"

"Hold your horses bro I'm coming," where the hell were your car keys? "Hey have you seen my keys?"

"I have them now come on!" he practically whines and you could see him now with that huge pout on his face, "I don't wanna be late."

"Alright, alright, keep your pants on," you say throwing one last glance around your bedroom, "I'm ready."

Little brothers could be so annoying.

"Do you have everything munchkin?" you ask as you reversed out of the driveway, "I won't be coming back for it if you don't remember now."

"No I've got everything," he replies after a taking a sip from his juice box, "I'm really glad that you're back Quinn. I missed you."

"I missed you to kiddo," his hand swatting at yours that was ruffling his hair, "Still you've got me for two whole months so how about we saved the mushiness for the airport huh?"

"Do you really have to go back?" the sadness in his voice palpable, "Can't you stay?"

"I would if I could Sammy but I can't."

"Ok." is all he says from his spot next to you and you ruffle his hair once more before leaving him to ponder his thoughts.

You hated that this would be the first time that you ever got to see him play soccer but at least you were making time for it. You were supposed to go with your Yale friends to Paris for the summer but when he called and begged you to come back home and spend it with him, you couldn't help but to give in. Ever since he was born he became your weak spot.

"You know that I love you right Sammy?" you ask as you both sit at the light, "And if I could be with you all the time you know that I would be right?"

"Yeah I know," a small smile coming to his lips at your words, "I love you too."

"Right. Now let's get you to your soccer game so you could kick some ass."

"You said a bad word!"

—

"Ramon what the hell. You're going to be late!"

"Tana I can't find my lucky sock!" he yells back and you roll your eyes for the millionth time, "I need my lucky sock!"

It's bad enough that you had to be back in Lima, Ohio but now you were being forced to again spend your Saturday watching your cousin Ramon play soccer with a bunch of other 9 year olds. So not your definition of a kickass summer vacation.

"Ramon aye dios mio! You don't need a lucky sock!"

"I do," he says taking the steps down two at a time, "Puck said that I did."

"Your half-brother Puck is an idiot who sleeps with a nightlight," you say amidst Puck's shouts of 'I heard that' from the living room, "You don't need a lucky sock because you're related to me and I'm a badass. You are without a doubt the best player on that team and you are going to tear it up, no lucky sock needed."

"Thanks Tana!" he says around a hug, "Let's go then."

"Hold it there tiger," your tio Andres says walking into the room, "You sure you got everything?"

"Oh crap, I forgot my bag," Ramon calls already running for the stairs, "Be right back!"

"Thank you for taking him Santana," he says taking the seat next to yours at the kitchen table, "I know you had better things to do this summer but-"

"Don't mention it," you say with a shrug, "New York will still be there when I get back."

"Alright let's go!" his little body already halfway out the door, "Bye papi!"

—

"So what do you want to do after this?" you ask Sam as you apply his sunscreen, "Go home and crash? Watch a movie? Go for a drive somewhere?"

"Can we go for ice cream and then to the movies with my best friend Ramon?" his little eyes staring into yours, "It's sort of become a tradition after the games."

"And when were you going to tell me about this tradition mister?" his giggles caused by you tickling his sides.

"You didn't ask before!" he sputters out through his laughs, "Can we still go? Please, please, please?"

"Is Ramon here yet?" you ask pointing to the field, "I need to meet this fellow."

"Nope," he says with a sigh, "He's always late when he can't find his lucky sock."

You're about to respond to that before, "Sammy!"

You don't have a second to react before he's jumping down the bleacher steps and running over to where the most gorgeous girl that you've ever seen is standing with who you would assume to be his best friend Ramon. She's clad in black skin tight skinny jeans, a navy blue v-necked t-

shirt with a pair of chucks to match and you're more than a little surprised when Sam runs into her arms first. Well actually you were more jealous than surprised but whatever. You watch as she gets the biggest smile on her face in reaction to something that Sam says before he's pointing at you and she's brushing back her hair to look up.

Your heart stops in that moment.

You know for a fact that it's not the Lima heat that's currently setting your skin on fire but rather the heat from her gaze. It's been a while for you surely but no one's ever made you feel like this with just one look. Sam motions for you to come over and you have to dislodge your eyes from her direction in order to do it. You didn't need her seeing how she'd already affected you.

"Quinn!" he shouts even though you're significantly closer, "This is my best friend Ramon I was telling you about and his awesome cousin Santana."

"Nice to meet you Ramon," you respond shaking his outstretched hand before shifting your eyes back up to her, "Awesome cousin Santana huh?"

"Awesome among other things," her smirk setting you further on edge, "I'm guessing you'll be joining us later for ice cream and a movie?"

"She said that she needed to meet Ramon first." Sam answers before you can.

"And now that you've met me can we go?" she smacks him somewhat gently behind the head and he quickly adds in, "Please?"

"You don't have to say yes if you don't want too," her amusement at your predicament quite obvious, "But I wouldn't say no to these two if I were you."

"Then I guess it's a yes then." their joint squeals of delight nothing compared to the smile that she sends your way, you'd agree to anything to see that smile again.

"Alright chicos, the time for fun is afterwards," her tone getting them both to quiet down, "Focus on the game right now got it?"

"Got it!" they say in unison before Sam gives you a big hug and runs off with Ramon to go be with the other kids.

"Awesome among other things?" you ask as you gesture towards the stands, "Care to elaborate on that?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?" she responds while trying to hide her smile, "After you blondie."

—

Love at first sight. That wasn't a real thing, was it?

"Oh come on!" Quinn screams at the referee from her spot next to you, "That's a clear foul."

For as long as you'd been sitting next to her you were thinking that it could be a real thing. It had to be. She was single, on your team and thankfully she didn't actually live here but was on summer break from Yale. It wasn't close to NYU but you were willing to make the exception for

her. She was beautiful in a way that went way beyond just skin deep and you were trying not to get too attached but you'd been failing so far.

"Did he not just see Ramon get pushed?" she questions but all you could do was smile in response, she'd been verbally abusing the referee since minute 1, "I think we need to go closer so that he could hear me better."

"No," you say taking her hand and gently pulling her back down to you, "I don't think that would be such a good idea princess."

"Why not?"

"Because the game's almost over and I don't want you to get ejected from the stands."

"They actually do that?" she asks through a laugh and you mentally start thinking of jokes to ensure that you hear it again, "Seriously?"

"Yup," her lips quirking in amusement, "First time I ever saw them play I got banned for two matches. Apparently the referee hates it when you call him a wanker."

She starts cracking up at that, like full on laughing and you realize in that moment that love at first sight truly did exist.

"Wait a second," she says once she's caught her breath, "Did you call me princess?"

"What?"

"Yeah, you said 'I don't think that would be such a good idea *princess*.'"

"I don't-"

Thankfully the whistle blows then to save your ass and as you stand you realize that your left hand was still in her right. She realizes it too but she doesn't say anything, instead she just turns her eyes to the field and mutters a soft, "Come on princess," before leading you down the stairs and towards the waiting boys.

—

"Do you like her?" Sam asks as he carefully applies your lip gloss like you taught him, "Cause Ramon said that she likes you."

"Ramon said that huh?" your focus on the curling iron in your hair, "When did he say that?"

"When he called to cancel our movie date," he says recapping it, "He said I wasn't supposed to tell you that she was nervous about tonight either but you're my favourite sister. I tell you everything."

"And you're my favourite brother," you say placing a kiss to his cheek, "And yes I do like her."

"I think she's nice," he says dropping himself unto your bed, "Nicer than your last girlfriend."

"I thought you liked Rachel?" you ask while reading the text on your phone.

"I did but then you broke up and you cried so I don't like her anymore."

"And that is why you're my favourite person on planet earth," his bashful smile making you smile in return, "Now go be a gentleman and open the door for Santana."

He's off of your bed and taking the steps two by two while you put the finishes touches on your ensemble. You have no idea what made you ask to speak to Santana when Ramon had called, you have no idea what made you ask her if you two could still do the whole ice cream and movie thing together and you sure as hell had no idea why she said yes, but you were happy that she did.

"Promise you'll treat her right?" you can hear Sam's little voice trying to sound tough while he says it, "She's the best person ever so you have to promise Tana."

"Have I ever made you a promise that I haven't kept?" you hear her say and you reach the landing in time to see her wrap her pinkie finger with his, "But if it'll put your little blonde head at ease, I promise you that I'll treat your sister right."

"Great," he says pulling her into a hug, "I really like you Tana."

"I really like you too squirt." and that moment makes your mind up for you.

"Did someone die?" you ask to make your presence known, "What's with the hugging?"

"You could get a hug too if you want," she says with a small smirk as she rights herself but you're too busy taking in her appearance to form a rebuttal.

"My eyes are up here Quinn." Sam's laughter pulling you out of your head and your eyes away from her... chest area.

"Right," your cheeks surely pink from embarrassment, "Your bedtime is at 8 Sammy."

"Yes mom," he responds with an eye roll, "I'll be good."

You kiss him on the cheek before walking out the door with Santana following close behind.

"Wait Quinn, are you sure about this?" she asks running her hand through her hair, "Cause I've been thinking and I don't just want this to be some summer fling that-"

You shut her up with a kiss.

She's stunned for a moment but it doesn't last long. She kisses you back, content to move with you at the pace that you've set and it's the best first kiss that you've ever had as far as first kisses go. It's slow and steady and sure just like you knew your feelings for her were going to grow.

"Well alright then," and you miss her lips immediately as they leave yours, "I see your point."

"I don't want us to be a summer fling either Santana," her eyes holding yours as your hands slip around her waist, "So we won't be and we'll figure out how to do that together ok?"

"Ok," she says slightly leaning forward to recapture your lips again, "But I think we should move the PDA to the SUV. I'm pretty sure that your neighbours have called the cops by now."

"Just one more," but she dodges and places a kiss to your cheek instead, "Fine," her heading shaking in amusement, "If you insist."

You were about two weeks into your relationship when she stole your heart without even trying.

"Why do queens always carry a sceptre?"

"I don't know, why?" her grin already making you smile.

"Because everyone works scept-er," and she immediately starts laughing, "Get it."

"You are such a dork," you respond trying not to give in to your urge to laugh, "Like the biggest dork ever."

"Yeah whatever Fabray you like it."

And you did like it, you really did.

Summer was amazing and everything that you would've hoped it to be but then summer ended and it was back to NYU and Yale. You made it work though because you were determined to. She was beautiful, smart, stubborn(you would later figure out), funny, cocky but most importantly, the greatest love of your life. There were moments of course where your personalities clashed more than clicked and you both hated each other and avoided each other for days. There were also moments where you thought about just giving up and throwing in the towel but no matter how hard you tried to tell yourself that you'd be fine without her, you knew deep down inside that that could never be true. You would never be whole without her.

"The kids are down for the count," she says through a yawn as she climbs into bed besides you, "I pray those two munchkins don't wake up until noon tomorrow."

"That's what you get for letting them eat sweets for breakfast, lunch and dinner," you finish with a laugh when she tickles your side, "And just before bed."

"It's the eyes," she says placing a kiss to your shoulder, "Gabriel knows how I feel about your eyes and he uses them against me every single time. I can't say no and believe me I've tried."

"I know," you respond as you pull her closer, "He steals hearts just like you do."

She stole your heart with a look but she kept it with a promise. When Sam was born he became your weak spot and you loved him more than life, but even he had to admit that your weakest spot was and always would be Santana.

"I love you Santana."

"I know," and you shake your head at her cockiness, some things would never change, "I love you to Quinn."

I got you, by WriteForYou

Cars flood the parking lot of Belleview Elementary as parents drop their children off to their first day back to school. While some were returning to Belleview Elementary, some were just beginning their education. A black mustang stops at the curb, and a little girl pushes the door open and hops out. The little girl had her hair in a ponytail, short jeans, and a batman t-shirt. She adjusted the straps of her red backpack around her shoulders as she slammed the door shut.

She toys with the straps of her backpack nervously as she comes face to face with the looming gate in which all the other kids and their parents were walking through. The girl peers over her shoulder and bites her bottom lip. The window rolls down and two figures appear.

"Go in, mi'ja. It'll be fun." A woman with dark brown hair tied in a bun told her daughter. She didn't even look at her daughter when she spoke as she was too preoccupied with applying her makeup.

"C-can you go in with me?" The little girl shuffled her sneakers on the ground and fiddled her fingers.

A man with a clean shaved face and black hair looks over from the driver's seat. "Go in by yourself, Santana. Mommy and Daddy can't go in with you." He spoke with a rough tone.

Santana balls her fist at her sides. "B-but I see other Mommy's and Daddy's going in!" She looks at the kids walking through the school gates, hand in hand with their parents, like a family.

Her father looked at her sternly. "Santana, you're not a baby. Mommy and Daddy are busy. We'll pick you up after school."

The little girl's lip quivers and she steps towards the car and reaches her arm through the window and tugs her Mother's arm. She pulls her mother's arm the moment she was applying lipstick resulting in a red thick streak smeared across the older woman's cheek.

"Santana!" Santana retracts her hands immediately and looks down in shame.

"Please, Mommy." Santana whines. Her mother wipes the red lipstick mark off her cheek and stares at her frightened daughter from her peripherals. The woman aches at the sight and softens her expression.

"Oh, alright." She says softly and smiles when Santana grins widely.

"But, Maribel, we have a conference to—"

"Oh, shut it David. We're the head of the conference, they can wait. But today is our little girl's first day of school." The woman steps out of the car and grabs her little girl's hand.

The little girl waves her free hand at her father. "Daddy? You coming?" David immediately softens and relaxes his shoulder when he looks at his little girl.

"Coming, mi'ja." He puts the car in park and steps out. He grabs his little girls hand and then three of them all walked through the gates and set foot onto the black asphalt of the kindergarten playground. Santana swings her parent's arms gleefully, all of her fears dispelled.

Santana stares in awe at the playground with all the other kids running around and playing. An Asian woman suddenly blocks the view and smiles warmly at Santana.

"Hi, there sweetie. I'm Miss Lee and I'll be your teacher for the school year." The woman, who doesn't look a day over 25, holds out her hand to Santana. Santana let's go of her Dad's hand and quickly shakes the woman's hand.

"I'm Santana Lopez." She smiles shyly and grasps her parent's hands tighter. Her parent's look down at her proudly and smile.

"It's nice to meet you, Santana." Miss Lee smiles brightly. Miss Lee then starts a conversation with Santana's parents about the general outline for the day.

Santana's eyes roam the entire playground, idly scanning through the seas of nameless faces as her parent's and Miss Lee drone on about mundane things. Her eyes land on a girl with red hair, tied in pigtails, in a pink sundress. The redhead was trying, miserably, to tie the loose laces of her white tennis shoes. Santana, intensely intrigued for some reason, watches the girl puff her cheeks in frustration as she fails to tie her shoes. Santana watches the redhead do the same thing over and over with her shoelaces just to get the same result as before. Finally, the girl lets the laces fall from the grips of her hands and stands up, giving up on trying.

The redhead starts walking over to the grass field when, as if in slow motion, Santana notices how the girl steps on one of her shoelaces and proceeds to fall forward. Immediately, Santana moves away from her parents (who are shocked by her sudden action), pushes past the teacher and other little kids, and runs toward the falling redhead.

Just when the redhead was about to fall face forward on the ground, Santana came swooping in swiftly with her arms stretched out to catch the girl. Santana breathes a silent sigh of relief when she wrapped her arms around the other girl in the nick of the time. The redhead lifts her head up slowly and looks up at her savior.

Santana is greeted with hazel eyes and her cheeks grow warm. Santana gulps. "You 'kay?" She asks the hazel-eyed girl softly.

The redhead nods her head shyly. Santana pulls the girl up to have her standing upright. The girl slowly removes her hand off Santana's shoulders and steps back.

"Thanks." She says softly.

Santana nods her head. The redhead is about to move away when Santana stops the girl. The girl looks at Santana with scared eyes. Santana kneels down.

"You haf to tie your shoes or else you going to fall again." Santana pulls the two laces together. "Here I'll show you." The redhead blushes and watches Santana tie her shoes. "You make an 'X' with the strings like this." Santana looks up at the girl. "You listening?" The girl nods

her head. "Okay. Then you take this guy under the 'X' and pull. He's like a pirate, y'know? Trying to find the treasure." The redhead giggles softly to herself, not wanting to disrupt Santana's focus. "And then you make bunny ears like this." Santana continues to explain the steps to the girl while tying both of her shoes. "And there. See not hard?" Santana stands up and smiles, face to face, at the other girl.

"Tank you." The redhead smiles bashfully.

"You're welcome." Santana suddenly becomes shy.

Both girls stood there in silence, hazel eyes and brown eyes glued to one another. Santana wipes her sweaty palms on her jean shorts and holds it out to the redhead. "I—I'm Santana!" Santana rushes out.

The redhead giggles and Santana can't help but love how sweet the sound is. The girl takes Santana's hand and shakes it but never lets go. "I'm Lucy."

Santana grins widely. "Lucy. I like it." A blush paints Lucy's cheeks and she ducks her head trying to hide it. Both girls still haven't let go of each others hand, neither of them really wanting to let go. Santana relishes the warmth from Lucy's touch and Lucy finds comfort in the touch.

"Do you wanna play with me?" Santana tilts her head to the side. Lucy stares up at brown eyes and smiles. Lucy nods her head vigorously and giggles at Santana's enthusiastic response. "Yay! Let's go play on the swings!" Santana and Lucy, hand in hand, walk towards the swing set when the sound of Santana's parents calling for her halted them.

"Mi'ja! There you are!" David and Maribel run over towards Santana and Lucy.

Maribel bends down and gently holds Santana's hand. "Santana, you shouldn't run off like that out of the blue. Is everything okay?"

"Yea, mommy!" Santana tells her mom.

"Who is this Santana?" Her father asks sweetly.

Santana looks over to the girl next to her with the hazel eyes that entrance her. "This is Lucy." Lucy stands shyly behind Santana and whispers a polite 'hi'. Santana feels Lucy's grip tighten and without even thinking about it, Santana rubs her thumb on Lucy's hand in a comforting motion.

"It's nice to meet you, Lucy." Santana's mother gives a warm smile. She then looks at her daughter. "Santana, your dad and I have to go now? Is that okay?" She asks tentatively.

"Yea! I'll be 'kay. I got Lucy!" Santana kisses both of her parents by the cheeks swiftly and then runs off with Lucy.

And that's how it all started...

There's a first for everything, by xsummer-rainx

The hot rays of the summer sun shone down onto my skin, beads of sweat had begun to trail down the side of my face and my chest rose and fell rapidly, the only indication of the physical 'torture' I had just undergone. I remained composed, straightened up and attempted to place a mask of indifference onto my face, it was what Frannie had taught me. In actuality, though all I wanted to do was to collapse onto the ground on my knees and just *breathe*. I could picture that, picture myself panting, gasping for oxygen. I felt my eyebrows crease together and shook the image away. Air steadily whistled into my nostrils, filling my lungs, I held my breath slightly, prolonging that burning sensation that was already present, before exhaling once again. From somewhere behind me I heard another girl release a large sigh of relief. I was immediately curious as to what would warrant such an action, we had finished the 'hard' part of our try-outs a while ago... Just as I was about to turn around, a shadow partially blocked out the sun. Instead of feeling relieved from the harsh heat, I suddenly shivered instead as in front of me stood a tall woman clad in a red tracksuit.

"Quinn Fabray." Sue Sylvester's intimidating and scrutinising gaze fell over me, I the hairs on the back of my neck tingling. "Yes Coach?" I tried to speak with as much conviction as I could muster, remembering at the last minute to couple my words with a snarky eyebrow quirk; another thing I had learnt from Frannie. Sue looked slightly bemused, her cold eyes widened minutely and a small devilishly smile appeared on her face. As Sue's gaze swept over me, I could feel her sizing me up, watching me like a hawk, waiting for me to break down-but no I would not give her that satisfaction, I was born and raised Fabray after all.

Stop beating so loudly, heart will you calm down!

I had crossed my arms and leaned on one hip, hoping that Sylvester wouldn't sniff out my fear, and the nervousness that threatened to freeze me in place. I knew that my palms were clammy, but hopefully she would think the sweat was from the 'training' we had to undergo this afternoon. I wondered if Sue could hear the beating of my heart as it thudded furiously against my chest.

Sue narrowed her eyes, and frowned at me, the way the sunlight fell upon her face made her face seem even more demonic—her cold eyes judging everything about my existence. To her, this cheerleading team was serious business, and to me, it was as well. It would determine whether I was at the top of the food chain, worshipped by my fellow peers, or a loser, a lowly bottom feeder, destined to live out a life filled with bullying or at best invisibility. I knew what it was like to be at the bottom. I realised that may have been a huge reason as to why I had decided that I needed to change myself. And apparently changing myself meant trying out for Cheerios...my previous loser status made me so determined to show the ones who had bullied me that I was in fact, Quinn Fabray, a queen, revered and feared by her classmates.

This was the moment, the moment when Sylvester would judge one's strength of character. I had spent the majority of summer with Fran, my older sister, an ex cheerio perfecting my new

persona-no, perfecting myself, the loser Lucy Caboosey no longer exists. The Lucy who everyone laughed at and teased, Lucy, she is gone. I am Quinn Fabray.

Sue straightened back up and seemed to dismiss me with an indifferent wave of her hand before moving onto the next hopeful candidate. A sense of dread washed over me, it was accompanied by a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach, and suddenly the world around me grew out of focus. If i had failed, my father... i could picture the disdain that would colour his face. i never knew why i tried so hard for him, to him i would never be able to live up to Frannie's perfection. The foreign and devastating sensation of failure began to bud within my heart. The feeling grew and grew like a twisted plant of some kind within me, tangled branches of negative emotions fighting to break out. I struggled to contain them. With difficulty, I swallowed the hard lump that had formed in my throat. The more i thought about Sue's dismissal, the more I felt a bubble rise from my chest, forcing its way up, bringing with it warms tears of failure. I didn't know why I was so affected by this, I was so weak. I angrily clenched my fist, at my frustration. Everything had gone to plan, I had trained all summer for this, I had changed myself for this and yet I had still failed. I wanted to cry, I want to run away, to hide in the locker room, to be left alone. Maybe I was destined to remain as Lucy forever, Quinn was someone who I could never be.

"Someone's having a bad day? You in a pissy mood or something?"

Anger coursed through my veins, I snapped my head up at the sound of the voice, one of the mean remarks I had learnt from Frannie settled on my tongue, waiting to strike harshly at whoever had spoken to me.

"No seriously, what is up with you, you look like you're going to murder someone."

The insult I was about to utter was severed completely and became stuck in my throat when I saw who it was in front of me. The unmistakable dark locks, the mocha coloured eyes, and that signature smirk of...Santana Lopez.

When I had first seen Santana, at summer camp (my parents had forced me to attend), I thought she had been the epitome of 'perfect' in the standards of a high schooler. It was what Quinn Fabray was meant to be and was what the people who had bullied Lucy was like. Santana was attractive, confident and snarky. I had also heard that she did not care about getting into trouble, which meant that she was, she was ruthless. I froze as my mind registered the fact that she may become one of my many tormentors.

"I...I...umm," I stuttered trying to gather my thoughts, "I'm Quinn." I managed to get out. I mentally face palmed, Santana knew that already, Sue had made us introduce ourselves in front of the others, something about "I need a team who can work together, so tell us your name and then work together, simple!"

Santana just nodded in acknowledgement, "I'm Santana." There was an awkward silence that fell between us, I felt the need to start a conversation...i had never been comfortable with silences. They had always made me-made Lucy think that the other person was mentally judging you, picking out your every flaw, ready to use it against you.

I fidgeted nervously, "So..."

"Oh my god! Look who it is!" A familiar voice laced with fake sweetness cut through the air. Footsteps moved closer and closer to where Santana and I stood. My muscles tensed preparing to flee, there was no way I would not be able to recognise that voice. I bit my lip, and I dug my nails into the soft flesh of the palms of my hand as panic threatened to consume me. I swallowed forcing myself to remain still. Santana seemed to notice my tension and unease, and a small crease formed between her furrowed eyebrows. she tilted her head slightly as if to silently ask me if I was okay. I turned away not wanting to meet her eyes, not wanting her to see my vulnerability as i knew that as a 'popular' girl she would soon side with them, and I would be left alone.

"I can't believe it!" A second voice joined in with the first, I decided that if I was going to face them, I might as well try to fight back, even if it meant that I would be miserable for the rest of my high school days. Steeling my resolve I turned around and unsurprisingly, the two people who had made my Elementary and Junior High School life a living hell stood before of me.

Eliana and Tiffany.

Santana looked confused, she had never encountered either of these girls as Santana had moved to Lima only a year ago. In addition, she had gone to a different school from the three of us. I gritted my teeth at the sight of the two girls.

"I can't believe you even have the nerve to show up Lucy. You're just a loser, like you even think you have a chance of getting into the Cheerios?" Tiffany's mouth curled into an unpleasant sneer. "Get off this field before I throw up, you're repulsive."

Something in Santana's demeanour seemed to shift at the cutting words that were aimed at me. Her expression darkened and her eyes did so too, seemingly becoming an ominous dark brown.

Eliana picked up from where her friend had stopped. "Yeah Lucy Caboosey, get your fat ass off the field!"

I saw Santana's eyes widen at her recognition of me, of Lucy Fabray, the loser at summer camp. Even with the weight loss, new contacts and braces, I was still Lucy.

I frantically looked around for the Coach, but she was nowhere to be seen. I could feel a sense of hopelessly crash into me, hitting me like a ton of bricks, panic seized me and my breathing became erratic. I gasped for breath but no matter what I did I could never rid myself of the tightness that was constricting my chest, hindering my breathing. My hand began quaking and the field became a messy blur of colours, everything felt distant and bizarrely close at the same time. I heard the mocking sounds of laughter and suddenly felt claustrophobic. The world was muted but I could barely make out sounds of shouting. I wanted to run away—this whole thing had been a bad idea. Who I was kidding! I would never be able to become one of them.

"Quinn?" As my eyes struggled to focus, a husky voice spoke softly, slowing drawing me out of my panicked state. "Focus on my voice, Quinn, look at me."

My eyes blinked several times before they settled on calm brown orbs of melted chocolate, "Can you tell me how many tyres a car has?" My face contorted slightly, bewildered as to why Santana would ask such a question...then I realise who it was, *Santana*! I jerk away suddenly, and my eyes widened, I felt the fear and helplessness return again. Of *course*, she would want to make me look like a fool! Santana tugged at my wrist gently.

"Quinn." She said more firmly. "Please answer the question." For some reason, I yielded to her assertive tone. As I tried to concentrate on answering her question, I felt myself relax and the foginess that had clouded my mind before dissipate into the atmosphere.

"Four." I concluded after a while.

Santana smiled mischievously at me, gently bumping my shoulder as she replied. "And a spare tyre makes it five."

I allowed my mouth to quirk into a smile and rolled my eyes at her antics.

"We've met right? You're Lucy Fabray, from summer camp?" I ducked my head and nod. So much for the plan of leaving Lucy behind. No matter how hard I tried to get away, Lucy still haunted me.

"Santana...I get it if..." I swallowed nervously, before taking a deep breath and continuing. "I get it if you don't want to hang around me..."

Santana rolled her eyes and just grinned at me. "Quinn, you serious right now? You were pretty good out here today. You're going be the next Head Cheerio and I wants to be on your good side. I needs an ally who isn't batshit insane. We're going to rule McKinley together."

Santana paused for a second, before her face turned dead serious.

"Besides, I already went all Lima Heights on those bitches." I glanced around and I found that the two girls were nowhere to be seen, at this I smiled brightly.

There was the sound of static before Sue brought the megaphone to her mouth. "Pathetic wannabe baby Cheerios!" Sue's voice crackled over the megaphone. "If I call you name, please step forward, for the rest of you please get lost! The smell of mediocrity is making me sick."

Sue adjusted her glasses before she glanced down at her list. To say I felt nervous was an understatement. On one hand I felt reassured by Santana's word but on the other, I remembered the dismissive look that Sue had given me when she had been sizing me up. My teeth gnawed at my bottom lip and I stood there fidgeting with my hands. I sensed Santana's nervousness emanating from her as she shifted awkwardly on the spot trying to calm herself.

"Fiasty Latina." There was a murmur of confusion amongst the crowd and Sue cleared her throat exasperatedly spoke again. "Santana Lopez, hurry up! How many feisty Latinas do you see?" Santana looked surprised for a second before she slipped into her usual demeanour and stepped forward with an air of confidence. A smirk now replaced the nervous look she had on a minute ago. She gave the waiting group a once over, sneering at Eliana and Tiffany before giving Quinn a soft and encouraging smile.

"Tweedle-Dumb" When there was no response, Sue shook her head. "Brittany Pierce."

"Mary Johnson, Jackie Layman, Tina Hawthorne..." The names rolled off the Coach's tongue and faded into one another as the number of people who had made the team grew. I couldn't help but feel the sinking feeling once again.

"Tiffany Burkett, Eliana Carmel..." I watched as the two girls strode forward, Tiffany turned her head and locked eyes with me, her mouth twisted once again into a mocking sneer. I forced down the building feeling of unease once again. I may not have looked like Lucy anymore but it was in moments like these that I felt like I was still that same girl.

"And last but not least, I would like to congratulate this final person, who clearly has the most potential amongst all of you, with the exception of maybe fiery Latina here." Sue paused. The entire field was silent, some were waiting for the announcement of a rival, and others were hoping to make the team. I held my breath, heart racing fast, if by some miracle it wa-

"Quinn Fabray."

I remained composed but I was screaming ecstatically inside. I could not believe it. Sue had said I had a lot of potential.

With new-found confidence I stepped forward and for the first time in my life, I felt like Quinn.

"That is all, dismissed!" Coach Sylvester curtly announced.

When I found Santana, she didn't look the slightest bit surprised. I couldn't tell but I would say she even looked a little bit proud of me. "Told you Q, you were pretty good on the field." I blushed. We had began to move towards the change rooms. I'm not sure whether I blushed because of her compliment or from the fact she had just called me 'Q'.

"Wait what did you call me?"

"Q? For like Quinn."

"I've never had a nickname." I admitted quietly.

"There's a first for everything, Q"

A part of me beamed at this, and I smiled genuinely at Santana. She returned my smile, before frowning again. "You needs to works on your HBIC glare, especially if we're going to rule the school."

"Santana, we have two weeks!" I rolled my eyes at her. "Anyway maybe you could 'teach' me then, since you are *obviously* so good at it."

"Yeah, well what can I say, I'm good at a lot of things." She wriggles her eyebrows at me, and I blushed.

"Give me your phone," I looked at her blankly for a second. When I glanced around, I noticed that we were already in the changing rooms and she had taken her phone out. I cringed

at my slow reaction and hurried to find my phone, tossing it at her. Santana effortlessly caught my phone and punched in her number under a new contact. While she was doing so, I found myself staring at her. She had raven locks of hair that were tied neatly into a ponytail, a set of captivating mocha colour eyes, full lips and a defined jawline. The way she was currently biting her lip with concentration was actually very distracting. I admired her beauty, taking in her every feature. I think i ought to have felt jealous in moment, but there were no such feelings. Only a warmth which spread out from my chest to my extremities. Santana was prett—

No she was more than that, she was beautiful.

Santana looked up from my phone, and her dimples showed as her lips formed a smile. "Call me or text me or something, Q. I'll come pick you up and we can hang out."

Santana patted me on my arm before sauntering towards the exit.

"Mum, just texted, she wants me home. So I've got to go, well I guess I'll see you 'round Fabray."

"Okay, I'll text you then, Santana."

I released a sigh of content after she had left.

For the whole afternoon, ever since I had talked to her, one name had kept running through my mind.

Santana Lopez.

My phone buzzed.

Santana Lopez: "beat you to it, Q."

Santana Lopez: "Oh and about what those 2 bitches said, ignore it. Fabray, you are beautiful. Lucy is part of your past, accept that, but ultimately you are still whoever you want to be, which is probably hot bitch or something."

Quinn Fabray: "it's not hot bitch! That's defs you..."

Quinn Fabray: "but thank you San, it means a lot"

Santana Lopez: "that waht friends are for right?"

Santana was right, there was a first for everything...maybe high school would actually be mildly enjoyable.

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Sick and Tired But Lost in You, by 27summer

When she regained consciousness, Quinn's first instinct was to grab a weapon. Unfortunately, her weakened immune system made it pretty much impossible to move. She buried her face back into her pillow and hoped that her intruder would make the attack quick. She listened as the trespasser came into her room, muttering Spanish profanities. "Oh, you've got to be kidding me."

"Oh, shut your mouth, Blondie, I came from New York to the land of the geeks just to take care of your invalid ass. How about a little appreciation?" Santana dumped her bag onto Quinn's desk, a worried look on her face.

"No one asked you to come." Quinn managed to turn over, groaning in pain as she did so.

"Yeah, well, someone had to make sure you didn't die in this hole." Santana sat down on the edge of Quinn's bed and patted her leg. "What can I do to make you feel better?"

"Nothing. It's just a cold that has to run its course." Quinn started coughing and struggled to sit up until Santana came to her aid. "Thanks."

"It's what I'm here for. And this seems like more than a cold. You can hardly move," Santana said as she propped up some pillows behind Quinn.

"It's just because of the weather. It's freezing right now. It's making my bones achy. And being sick aggravates everything. But I'll be okay." Quinn tried to smile but ended up coughing once again.

"Why are your bones achy, Old Lady?" Santana asked, pressing the back of her hand to Quinn's forehead. "And you're burning up."

"Quit babying me, I'm fine." Quinn batted away Santana's hand. "It's because of my accident. I'm mostly okay, but there were some effects that aren't going to go away."

Santana frowned, pushing Quinn's hands away and stoking her cheek. "Oh. I- I didn't know that. How come you never told me?"

"Come on, Santana. You know we don't talk about things like that. We make bitchy remarks to each other and make fun of other people." Quinn closed her eyes and leaned into Santana's touch. "That feels nice."

"What does?" Santana asked as she continued her rub her hands over Quinn's face.

"You touching me." Quinn rested her head onto Santana's shoulder. "Your hands are nice. They feel cool."

"See? I am useful for something. And you're going to let me stay here and take care of you until you feel better." Santana helped Quinn lie back on her bed, pulling the covers up over her. "I know you feel hot but it's cold as balls out and you need to keep this blanket on you until I say otherwise."

"Bossy," Quinn murmured as she burrowed under her blankets, rolling over into Santana.

“You like it.” Santana stood up, grabbing her bag and pulling out a thermometer. “Open up, Fabray. I want to take your temperature.”

By the time Santana was done taking her temperature, Quinn had fallen back to sleep. Shaking her head, Santana pressed a kiss to her forehead before pulling out her laptop. At least she could get caught up on her shows while she waited for Quinn to wake up.

A few hours later, Quinn woke up once again to Santana. This time, the other girl was poking her in the side. “God. What are you doing now?”

“Trying to wake you up. You need to eat and take some medicine.” Santana helped Quinn up into a sitting position. “Plus, you were coughing a ton in your sleep and I was worried you were going to choke to death and I’d be blamed.”

“Your concern for me is overwhelming.” Quinn shot Santana a glare that was highly ineffective. “I didn’t know you cared so much.”

“Yeah, yeah. Look, I brought you some soup. It may be a little cold but I looked in your fridge and didn’t find anything. Have you eaten anything thing in days?” Santana asked, settling down next to Quinn, a bowl on her lap.

“I have. I just- I got sick and it was too much trouble to leave.” Quinn took the spoon from Santana and began to eat. She immediately started feeling a bit better. It was good to have something solid in her stomach. She’d been surviving on leftover take out and peanut butter sandwiches since she’d gotten sick.

Santana rolled her eyes. “Why didn’t you call? I’d have been here sooner. I only found out you were sick because Rachel mentioned she’d talked to you and you sounded awful.”

“Didn’t want to bother you.” Quinn finished eating and handed Santana back the bowl. “Can I go back to sleep now? I’m still tired.”

“Not yet. You’ve got to take some medicine.” Santana handed Quinn the pills and some water. “And you’re full of crap. You’re not a bother. I’d do anything for you.”

Quinn swallowed the pills and wiped her mouth before lying back on her bed. “Can you pull the covers up? I’m cold again.”

“Sure.” Santana pulled the blankets over her, making sure Quinn was completely covered up. She brushed the hair away from Quinn’s forehead, placing her hand on it. She was pretty sure Quinn’s fever had gone down a bit but she was still worried. “You can’t get sick like this, okay? You can’t do that me.”

“Mmm,” Quinn mumbled, already half asleep.

“I’m serious. It scared me to death when I got here and you looked awful. You have to take care of yourself.” Santana waited for Quinn’s response, glancing down when she was met with

silence. She was already asleep. Santana shook her head. It was probably better that way. She didn't need Quinn to think she was going soft.

It was pitch black dark when Quinn woke up again. There was a weight on her stomach. She reached down and felt silky hair. Santana was slumped over on her. Quinn nudged her awake, smiling when she looked up at her. "Hey. You stayed."

"Of course I did. I was afraid you were going to choke to death on your own phlegm." Santana glanced at the clock and groaned. "3 in the morning. I'm usually only up at this time if I met a hot girl at the bar. Something tells me you aren't up for that."

"Not now." Quinn smirked. "But I am feeling a little better."

"Good." Santana propped herself up on an elbow, using a free hand to feel Quinn's face. "You're not nearly as warm."

"You must be my good luck charm. You saved me." Quinn smiled at the bashful look on Santana's face. "Thank you so much."

Santana tangled her hand into Quinn's hair, scratching her nails along her scalp. "I told you before that I'd do anything for you. I meant it."

"Mmm. That's nice," Quinn mumbled, closing her eyes. "It's been a long time since anyone's taken care of me. Thanks."

"Quit thanking me. That's not why I'm here. I just- I don't know what I'd do if something happened to you. I want to take care of you." Santana screwed up her eyes as she spoke. She'd said more than she'd meant to. She didn't want Quinn to know exactly how much she cared about her. That would only give Quinn all the power and she wasn't ready for that. She wasn't sure she was ready to be that vulnerable with her yet.

"Why?" Quinn gazed up at Santana. She rarely had a chance to see the other girl so unguarded. Santana wasn't one to let her feelings show. Without thinking, Quinn brushed her hand over Santana face, waiting her to open her eyes. "Why do you care so much?"

"I don't know," Santana said, looking down at Quinn, a little surprised that she would bring this up. Quinn was the only person on earth more closed off than she was.

"Really?" Quinn scoffed and shook her head. "There's got to be a reason. You haven't managed a visit since you moved to New York but I get sick and all of sudden, you're here? Come on, Santana."

"Hey, I don't remember seeing you in New York. You weren't in hurry to spend time with me." Santana maneuvered herself out for under Quinn and began to pace the room. "But that doesn't matter. I didn't come here to argue with you."

"That's the point. Why are you here? Why do you care what happens to me?" Quinn attempted to sit up but fell back against her pillow, too weak to move.

"I can't explain it, okay? I know it's crazy but I just-" Santana cut herself off, glancing up at the ceiling. "I care about you, Quinn, and I need you to be okay."

Quinn shook her head in disbelief. "Okay, you care about me. Why is this the first time you've come to visit me? Why haven't you called or texted me?"

"You're not going to let this go, are you?" Santana asked, already knowing the answer. Quinn avoided the difficult subjects but when she finally decided to talk about something, she wouldn't let it drop until they settled it.

"No. I mean, you're here. No one else is. That has to mean something. Rachel knew I was sick but she couldn't get away. You came. Why?" Quinn asked simply.

Santana came back to Quinn, sitting on the edge of her bed. She pulled the blankets over Quinn again, making sure she was warm. Finally, she lifted her eyes and shrugged. "I care about you. A lot. More- more than I probably should."

"You- you mean-"

"I mean I can't stop thinking about you. Ever since the night we spent together, I've wanted more." Santana looked away from Quinn. She couldn't stand to see pity in her eyes. She knew that would kill her.

"Why haven't you said anything about it?" Quinn gaped at Santana, unable to contain her shock. "I never would've guessed. You never acted any different."

"Of course I didn't. We agreed it was a one time thing. You never brought it up. What was I supposed to say, 'Hey, Quinn, I think I'm love with you?' Come on," Santana retorted, slapping her hand against the bed.

"You love me?" Quinn's eyes widened as she processed Santana's words. Everything else she'd said flew completely over her head. All she heard were those three words running through her mind over and over again.

"Uh." Santana started shifting anxiously as she tried to think of something that would get Quinn to back off. Eventually, she realized she had no choice but to tell the truth. "Yes. I love you. And not as friend, although we are friends. But I know the difference. And I know what happens when I fall in love with my best friend and she doesn't love me back. You don't have to sugarcoat it. I'm a big girl. Just say it already."

"Say what? I'm not Brittany, Santana. This isn't the same." Quinn pushed herself up so that she could sling an arm around Santana's waist. "I'm surprised but-"

"But you don't feel the same. This doesn't have to turn into a big thing." Santana jumped up once again and began pacing. This room was too small for her. She had no room to breathe. She needed some space.

"Don't walk away. That's what you do when things get scary but you can't do that now. I am way too sick to chase after you." Quinn struggled to stand, wobbling a little because her head was spinning. "Wow, this may have been a mistake."

Santana rolled her eyes when she saw what Quinn was doing. She rushed over to her, grabbing her sides to steady her. "What are you doing? You shouldn't be up."

"You're were going to run. I had to stop you." Quinn slumped, her short burst of energy waning quickly. She rested her head on Santana's shoulder.

"Oh." Santana held onto her. "I don't mean to run. I just care about you so much and I couldn't take it if this blew up in my face like everything else does."

"I'm not everyone else," Quinn whispered into Santana's neck. "I may get scared sometimes but if you want me to stay, I'll stay. I know what it is to get left by everyone in your life. I wouldn't do that to you."

"Good." Santana tugged Quinn until they were sitting on the bed again. "You don't need to be up right now. You're still sick."

Quinn shook her head, refusing Santana's attempt to get her to lie down. "We're going to talk about this. I'm not avoiding this."

"We don't-"

"Yes, we do. If we drop this now, we won't talk about it and it'll be months before we speak again. I want us to figure out what this means."

"You've changed a lot, Fabray." Santana ran her hand through Quinn's hair. "I thought you'd find the nearest guy and try to screw the gay out of you."

"Yeah, I already tried that. Right after our two time thing." Quinn laughed when Santana glared at her. "It was only once. I panicked. It- it was a disaster. I realized I didn't want to be sleeping with guys because I was scared of my feelings for you. So I stopped. And I accepted that there's nothing wrong with who I am."

"Is was that easy?" Santana asked, a little jealous that Quinn was able to figure things out far easier than she ever did.

"No. I think how I acted in high school pretty much shows I'm adept at running away myself. But I don't want to do that anymore." Quinn shrugged, a little unnerved by the look Santana was sending her way.

Santana forced herself to stay sitting next to Quinn, resisting her natural urge to run. She couldn't afford to lose another friend and she knew this conversation would definitely change things between them. "I don't want to do that, either. But I don't want to lose you. I- I can't, okay? I can't handle it what this means."

Quinn nodded, her gaze softening. She understood why Santana was scared but she couldn't help wishing that the other girl would take a risk. "If that's what you want, we can forget this conversation ever happened. I'll pass back out and you can go back to New York and it'll be like you never came. Nothing has to come of this."

"Is that what you want?" Santana asked, feeling a little disappointed, even though Quinn was giving her exactly what she asked for.

"No. I want you. I want to explore what's between us. But if you can't, if you're too scared, then I still want to be your friend. We'll give it a couple of weeks and we'll go back to how it was." Quinn yawned. She knew they had to finish this conversation soon or she'd fall asleep in the middle of it.

"I- okay." Santana didn't know what else to say. Everything was spinning out of control so quickly. That's not what she wanted but she didn't know how to stop it.

"Okay," Quinn repeated, falling back onto her pillow. "If that's what you want. I'm going to go to sleep. I'll talk to you in few weeks. Call me when you're ready."

"I will." Santana waited for Quinn to fall back to sleep and covered her up, patting her arm and kissing her forehead. "Good bye, Quinn."

Several hours later, it felt like the day was repeating itself. Quinn awoke to Spanish profanities as she tried to remember what happened. She recalled Santana surprising her and taking care of her. And of course, the two of them managed to make things far more complicated than they needed to be. She had told Santana to go, that they'd talk again in a few weeks. It had been dark, but she was almost positive that Santana had left. So why did she hear her right now? "Santana? Is that you?"

"Yeah." Santana smiled sheepishly, settling down next to Quinn. "Sorry I woke you up."

"It's okay. I just- I thought you left. What are you doing here?" Quinn squinted, still half way certain that she was hallucinating.

"I was going to. But you were sleeping and I just couldn't."

Quinn rolled her eyes. "Don't. I'll be fine. I don't need you to take care of me."

"It's not that." Santana bit her lip, still a little hesitant. "I don't want this to end like that. You know what's going to happen if I leave. We're not going to talk, we're going to go back to avoiding each other. I don't want that."

"Oh, Santana. I don't know what to say to you. You don't want to be with me but you don't want me to avoid you. Tell me what you want. I am too sick to deal with this right now." Quinn didn't mean to be impatient but she really needed Santana to decide exactly what she wanted. She couldn't take much more waffling.

"I- I do want to be with you." Santana spit the words out before she could convince herself to change her mind. She'd spent the whole time Quinn was asleep arguing with herself. She wanted her. She knew this thing with Quinn was special. She just had to gather up all her courage to take the risk. And that was what she was doing.

"Really?" Quinn asked, unwilling to really believe what Santana was telling her.

“Really,” Santana confirmed, using her thumb to trace Quinn’s lip. “I’m terrified right now and I’ll hate it if I lose another best friend because I decide I’m in love with her. But I think I’d hate it more if I left without trying.”

“Oh.” Quinn closed her eyes at Santana’s touch. It was hard for her to stop from throwing herself at Santana but she needed to be sure. She needed to know that Santana was sure. “I’ve said it before: I’m not Brittany.”

“I know that.” Santana trailed her fingers all over Quinn’s face, the touch softer than she had ever used before.

“Do you really? Because you keep saying things that make me think you don’t.”

“Quinn, I- I don’t know what you want me to say.”

Pushing herself up to a sitting position, Quinn managed to look Santana in the eye. She captured one of her hands between her own and held own tight. “I want you to realize that I’m not Brittany. Our relationship isn’t going to be like the one you had with her. You can’t manipulate me like you did her and I won’t believe every word you say.”

Santana shook her head, not liking where this was going. “It- it wasn’t like that. I didn’t control Brittany. I loved her.”

“I know.” Quinn squeezed Santana’s hand, careful not to let go. “I’m not trying to bad mouth her, I’m pointing out how we’re different. You and I will fight. A lot. They’ll be times we won’t be able to stand each other. I need to know that you’re ready for that. That you can handle it. Because if you can’t, if you’re expecting this to be the same as your relationship with Brittany, we might as well stop right now. It’s not going to work.”

“I- I know this will be different.” Santana spoke slowly, choosing her words cautiously. She sensed this was important and she didn’t want to turn Quinn away. “I can’t promise to always handle things the right way. But I’ll try. I swear, I want to be with you, Quinn.”

Her heart pounded in her chest as she listened to Santana’s words. This was what she wanted, Quinn just couldn’t believe it was actually happening. She’d dreamed of Santana so many times since their night together. But she’d always thought the other girl would always go back to Brittany. Nobody else ever chose Quinn, it was hard to believe that Santana would. But here she was, saying she wanted her. “I believe you.”

“Great.” Santana grinned like an idiot. She wasn’t used to someone wanting a relationship with her. Wanting to sleep with her, sure. But actually dating her? The only one who ever really wanted to date her was Brittany and even she could really live without her. But Quinn wasn’t Brittany. She knew that. She knew this would be different. And she really couldn’t wait to experience Quinn Fabray in all her glory.

“I’ll try my best, Santana. I want this to work.” Biting back a yawn, Quinn blinked several times. She needed to settle things with Santana before passed out again.

“Hey, you need to go back to sleep.”

“But-” Quinn protested even as she allowed Santana to push her back onto the bed.

“No way. I told you before, I need you to be okay. We’ll talk more when you’re better.” Once Quinn was relaxing in her bed, Santana let out a small breath. “I’m not going anywhere. Not if you don’t want me to.”

“I don’t. I want you to stay.” Quinn shied away when Santana bent to kiss her. “We can’t. Don’t want you to get sick.”

“I won’t. Rachel made sure that everyone who comes in contact with her had a flu shot.”

“How’d she manage that? I would’ve figured that you would resist on principle.” Quinn smiled up at Santana, fighting sleep. She didn’t want to miss out on anything.

“She followed me around quoting health statistics. It got to the point where my choices were flu shot or murdering her. And I’m too cute for prison.” Santana matched Quinn’s smile with one of her own. It was kind of amazing how crazy she was over this girl.

“You are,” Quinn agreed, finally shutting her eyes. She really couldn’t stay up much longer. “Love you, Santana.”

“Love you, too.” Santana leaned down, pressing her lips to Quinn’s in a soft kiss. There would be time for more later. They had all the time in the world now. Nothing would get in their way.

Chili, by 78Violetfan

"Quinn, honey, I'm home!" Santana called out as she entered the apartment she shared with her girlfriend.

"I'm in the kitchen!" Her girlfriend's voice returned.

Santana set her keys on the table beside the door and pulled off her jacket, hanging it on one of the hooks that were on the wall before she made her way into the kitchen. "Smells good." She said, stepping over to the counter, leaning back and watching Quinn, "chili?"

"Yes." Quinn nodded, stirring the food a little before she pushed back and stepped over to the fridge, "drink?"

"Please." She watched Quinn dig in the fridge a moment before she turned to the stove, stirring the chili a little.

"What are you doing?" Quinn asked joining Santana with two full glasses of iced tea.

"Oh, you know." Santana smiled, "just pitching in." She rolled around and took the glasses from Quinn's hands, setting them on the counter beside her, before placing her hands on the blonde's waist.

Quinn let her own hands wander up to circle around Santana's neck before she leaned in to kiss the girl. "Well, as much as I appreciate it, could you...I don't know...not?"

"What?" Santana smirked.

Quinn shrugged, "it's just that every time I start cooking something for dinner, you saunter in here and fix it like I've made it wrong."

"Okay, one Saunter? Really? And two, Quinn, I do not fix your dinner."

"Yes, you do!"

"I don't."

"What about the lasagna I made last week?"

"It just needed a little more cheese, and a splash of sauce."

"Okay," Quinn nodded, "and the chicken?"

"I was just adding extra honey, you know it tastes better that way."

Quinn groaned, rolling her eyes, "you know if you didn't like my cooking all you had to do was say so."

"I never said I didn't like it." Santana replied, "all I did was stir the pot so it doesn't stick to the bottom...which by the way it might if you don't stir it again." She turned toward the stove.

"Step away." Quinn demanded, "I can do this."

Santana smirked raising her hands in defeat before she backed away from the chili grabbing her glass of tea. She watched as her girlfriend grabbed the spoon and stirred the dinner. "I like your cooking." She said. Quinn only gave her a look. "I do." She swore.

Quinn again stepped back from the stove and turned to Santana, "I'm running to the bathroom for a quick second. Don't touch my chili!"

"Okay."

Santana's eyes watched as Quinn left the room. She took another sip of her iced tea before looking toward the chili. As it began to bubble she stepped forward to stir it again. As the scent ran through the air, Santana breathed it in. It smelled awesome, she couldn't help but raise the spoon to her mouth to take a taste.

It tasted as she expected, it was good, great even...but it could be better. Santana looked around to make sure her girlfriend wasn't coming before she reached toward the spice cabinet and retrieved the chili powder. She put a dash of it into the chili before grabbing the small bottle of hot sauce, she then added a splash into the mix before stirring it up once again.

Santana quickly stepped away as she heard some footsteps approaching. When Quinn joined her she sent her a look, "so what did you do?"

"I didn't touch it, I swear." Santana told her, she reached over and retrieved Quinn's beverage. "Drink?"

"Thanks." Quinn took the glass, and took a drink before turning to her chili again. Santana watched Quinn take a taste of it, she glanced at the pot before looking at Santana, "I'm missing something." She said.

"I wouldn't know."

"Taste it...it tastes different than it did earlier, maybe spicier?"

"Quinn, I didn't try it earlier, how would I know if it tastes different?"

Quinn quirked an eyebrow, "we've been dating for five years Santana, I know when you're lying...you did something didn't you?"

"No."

"Santana."

The dark haired girl huffed, "okay, I may have added like a dash of chili powder and a splash of hot sauce."

"Hot sauce?"

"It added a tang."

"You just can't let me cook you dinner."

"I jus-"

"Whatever." Quinn shrugged, dipping the spoon back into the chili and scooping out a spoonful, "is it done?"

Santana stared at her a moment before she took the offered bite. "maybe just another splash of hot sauce?"

Quinn stared at her a second before she tasted the chili again, "I think you're right." She smirked reaching forward and grabbing the hot sauce and adding a bit of it into their dinner. It didn't take long for Quinn to scoop their chili into bowls and for them to sit down at the table.

"I do like your cooking." Santana said a few minutes into the meal. "There are a lot of things you make that I can't do as well."

"Like?" The blonde smirked.

Santana shrugged, swirling her spoon a little before saying, "well, you can make really awesome pancakes."

"Pancakes?"

"Yeah, and like you've like perfected the art of making bacon."

Quinn shrugged, "that's because I love it so much." She reached out to grab her beverage.

"Oh! You can bake!" Santana cried out, "I can't...I suck at baking. Remember that birthday cake I made you?"

Quinn chuckled, "it was like solid rock."

"Yeah, so we like balance each other out." Santana smirked.

"On the scale of cooking."

"The scale of life." Santana added cheerfully.

Quinn laughed, "I love you."

"I'll always love you more."

I Caught Myself, by Annjul414

That was not the summer Santana had in mind. She was stuck with her parents, alone and bored to death in her room during the sunny weekend. Everyone went somewhere for the holidays and it seemed that she was the only one left without any plans. Lying on her bed, she scrolled through her phone contacts, wondering whom to text. Quinn's name drew her attention and she hesitated for a second. To some unexplained reason, after such a rough year between them, they didn't part in hate. New York somehow diminished the tension as they remembered that they were best friends once. Since then, both of them tried not to get on each other's nerves, which was so far going well.

Santana's finger hovered above her contact, but before she decided to touch it, the phone vibrated signaling a new message. Speaking of the devil.

Q: Hey, what are you doing?

S: Dying of boredom. R u in Lima

Q: Yes. Wanna hang out?

S: You read my mind, C u in 5

Having grabbed some shorts, simple top, and a pair of sunglasses, she got ready within seconds to meet her at their usual spot nearby local kindergarten. They decided to go to the ice cream parlor and sat outside to savor the sun with a cup of their favorite flavors.

"I've never suspected that I'd be so happy to see you." Quinn rolled her eyes at her, brushing aside the strands of hair which she had chosen to keep short.

"Who knew that so many people would leave. For the first time, I have no idea what to do with myself."

"Tell me about it. I thought that I was going to die if I stayed another minute at home. From what I've heard, everyone has a great time except us." Santana snorted, playing with the spoon between her fingers.

"Why didn't you go anywhere?" She shrugged in response.

"Why didn't you? I didn't expect to be that bored."

"I wanted to stay to have some moments of peace, but now I kind of regret it." She sighed, observing people on the streets.

"Same."

"Where's Brittany?"

"She's visiting her family somewhere in Europe. I don't even know when she returns, to be honest." Quinn narrowed her eyes with curiosity seeing her disinterested expression.

"I see. So, no plans whatsoever?"

"Not this time."

"How about we make our own vacation?" The blonde suggested and Santana leant towards her.

"I'm listening."

"Just like the old times. Field trips, drive-in cinema, sleepovers, sunbathing by the pool, window shopping, pointless driving around the town and singing along to the radio..." The corners of her mouth lifted and Santana smiled back.

"This actually sounds great."

They started exchanging ideas and before they realized, the afternoon passed in a blur.

After a few days of casual hanging out, they settled into a routine. They were cycling in the park, picking movies for night marathons, eating dinners at different places, took walks around the woods, and learning to bake new desserts, which usually ended up with kitchen in complete mess. During the hottest days, both of them took advantage of Quinn's garden with a swimming pool.

Santana's preferred activity was tanning as she motionlessly lay on the sunbed, not bothered by anything in the slightest. The blonde left the pool to place her wet hands on her warmed up thighs and Santana let out a high pitched scream, taken by surprise.

"Cold! What the heck?!" She took off her straw hat to glare at Quinn who was laughing at her.

"You will get sunburn if you don't move a bit. Why are you doing this anyway? Your skin is naturally tanned."

"For the health and beauty reasons. Maybe you abandoned taking care of yourself, no wonder considering your stretch marks, but I wanna look h-o-t. You probably forgot what it means, Juno." She stated, wiping off the water droplets, and Quinn huffed.

"You could seriously drop those names, it has been some time."

"Nope. It's funnier this way."

"You know very well that my marks are hardly visible. I saw you looking." The blonde rested hands on her hips, her blue bikini suit on full display.

"Please, don't flatter yourself. I was checking whether they are huge or just big. It turned out, they're pretty fat." She sent her a devious smirk.

Quinn smiled back only to grab her arm and suddenly toss her in the pool direction. Santana managed to shriek before she fell into the water with a splash. The blonde bent down in laughter, seeing as she emerged to the surface with hair all over her face, trembling.

"You're gonna pay for that Fabray." She grunted in a low voice and pounced on her in a rapid movement.

Quinn realized too late that she was standing dangerously close to the edge and she wasn't able to dodge Santana's arms that pulled her right into the pool.

"You bitch." She tried to get out, but the brunette kept a firm grip on her body.

"Huh uh, I'm not done yet. Your pretty little head looks too dry."

They fooled around, splashing each other until the sun lowered on the sky indicating late afternoon. Having grabbed additional towels, they sat on the terrace to dry up. Quinn was wearing a proud expression as she watched Santana who was angrily trying to fix her hair into something presentable.

"Don't be so smug about the whole thing, Q. Since I left cheerios, I'm slightly out of shape."

"I was always stronger than you."

"You wish." Santana elbowed her arm and they exchanged grins. "I seriously can't wait to sign up again. Trainings were exhaustive but at least effective."

"Why do you want to return? Sue treated us terribly although we won everything."

"Yeah, but it wasn't that bad. You loved that too."

"I don't want to go through it all again. This year I'm going to focus on myself, instead of trying to please everyone else." Quinn admitted, putting on her summer dress.

"Come on, don't you wanna win that last championship? If we were made co-captains, no team would stand a chance." Santana faced her with encouraging look, but she shook her head.

"This sounds fantastic, but I had enough of pressure and rat race for popularity. I realized that I need a change, I need to start being myself. I'm done with standing up to expectations of others." She suddenly smiled. "You will do fine without me."

"Yes, but where's the fun in that? Our fights for captaincy kept me on my toes."

They laughed and went inside to prepare dinner.

—

It was early August when Santana, being home alone, invited Quinn for a night to get drunk. They settled in the attic where she opened the huge roof windows to see the sky better. After a few drinks and chats with soft music in the background, they fell into a sleepy mood, lying silently on the mattress to stare at the stars above them. It got rather chilly and Santana pulled a blanket over them. Quinn turned her head to look at her and heavily sighed.

"San? What has happened to us?" She quietly asked. There was a moment of silence as the brunette considered her question.

"I don't know. Well, I do kinda know... we're both bitches."

"We didn't use to be, not to each other. It wasn't always like that."

"We wanted to be on top and there could only be one throne. You know the rest."

"Still... there was a lot of bad blood between us, it went way further than it should have."

"Yeah. I know." She paused and looked away. "I'm sorry... about the Beth thing. You know, I said those things because I was so furious. Maybe not exactly with you, but with what happened. Because really. Getting knocked up, especially by Puck? It's reserved for girls like me, not you. And I was so disappointed and angry with everything so Snix took over."

Quinn listened to her and her expression was changing with every sentence. She held back the tears and Santana sent her an apologizing look.

"I can understand that, yet... I needed support back then and you, person that I considered my best friend, left me just like everyone else. I had no one Santana, completely no one."

"I know. It must have been so hard for you, but I ignored it. I just couldn't fully accept that it happened. Then things only went even worse."

They fell silent, listening to the acoustic song which soft sounds were calming. The brunette snuggled closer to the other girl in almost comforting gesture and Quinn looked at her once more. Pain in her eyes was replaced with sympathy and regret.

"I didn't tell the coach about your surgery."

"What do you mean?"

"I didn't tell anyone. People noticed and you know how things spread. Jacob probably wrote about it on his blog, she must have learnt about it one way or another, but not from me."

"Why didn't you explain yourself?"

"I don't know. You attacked me and I fought back because this... this is what we are, this is what we do. We fight, we yell, we push and accuse each other without thinking or justifying. When we should sit down and talk things through, instead of letting our emotions get the better of us."

"Yep, that's us." Santana admitted and they chuckled to themselves. Quinn sighed, staring at some point on the sky.

"I was angry back then that you assumed immediately that I had told Sylvester about it. I didn't judge your decision, how could I? Given my history... I later wondered why you didn't use Lucy against me. If you thought that I was the one who told the coach, you could have easily got your revenge. You knew my past before anyone else after all."

"That was tempting, but it would be a little bit too much, even for a bitch like me. No, I decided that making you look like a cheater and stealing your boyfriend would be a better plan. Sorry about that too, by the way. Sam was actually a nice guy despite his dumb sense of humor."

"Don't worry about it. As much as he was good to me, I don't think we would work out in the end. We lacked something."

Another several quiet moments passed as they lay lost in thoughts. It was quite late and the effects of alcohol made them dazed. Santana yawned audibly and Quinn pinched her arm with a lazy grin.

"I missed you. I missed my best friend, my equal." The Latina confessed after a while.

"I missed you too. Since Beth I felt so alone, so I replaced one guy with another just to have any company."

"You deserve better than some small town boys, you know that." They glanced at each other, their eyes seeking truth and comfort.

"So do you." Quinn declared as Santana found her hand under the blanket. "I missed that as well. Us, just talking, hanging out. All we did last year was arguing, which I strangely didn't enjoy at all."

"I know what you mean. When we fell apart, I felt like I was missing something. I got almost everything that I've ever wanted, I finally owned the school. At first it felt good, but later it wasn't as fun as I thought it would be. Without you... it just wasn't the same." The blonde squeezed her hand.

"We can't change the past, what happened between us is done. But we have influence on the future."

Santana didn't answer her, she turned her head to look again at the stars. Quinn suddenly smiled.

"Remember how we used to go to the meadow every time we had a rough day? When we were tired after the training, fed up with boy drama, upset with parents?"

"Yeah. We always sat down under those trees with little white blossoms. I didn't know what their name was, so I just called them the white trees." The happy memory filled their hearts with nostalgia.

"I haven't been there for ages."

"Me too. Perhaps we could go this week, unless you have some other plans?" Santana suggested, seeing her wistful expression.

"No. I'd love to."

It took them a couple of days spent indoors because of rainy weather to finally find the way back to their little plain on the outskirts of the school. The old log which they used to sit on was in the exact spot as always, and besides a new bonfire spot, little had changed. They rested under the tree, smiling at the white flowers above their heads. The summer heat was noticeable, but breeze cooled their skin.

"It's like we were here just yesterday."

"Passage of time works differently for nature."

"Don't get all philosophical on me, Fabray." She smirked, earning a glare from Quinn.

Sipping ice smoothies, they caught up on everything that happened during their radio silence. Instead of bringing up embarrassing situations and arguments, they focused on random glee events. Within fifteen minutes they laughed more than they did during several previous months.

"What was that Karovsky thing? That whole project to protect gay students? Don't get me wrong, it was noble and all but so not you. This came completely out of nowhere." The blonde joked, taking off her sunglasses as the shadow reached their position.

"What do you mean not me? I love protecting the weak." She stated and Quinn sent her a meaningful look. "What?"

"I can understand dating Sam or Puckerman, but him? What was exactly going on with you? Your behavior was really weird." Santana sighed and looked down at grass.

"I was dealing with some personal stuff."

"Such as?"

"I can't tell you."

"You can't or you won't?" The brunette silently began toying with the hem of her shorts and Quinn scooted closer to her. "Listen, I want to put all bad things behind us. I want us to be friends again, the way it was, the way it should be."

"You had your past as a secret, I have mine."

"I told you about Lucy and everything, despite my insecurity. I trusted you with that, why can't you trust me with your worries?"

"It's not that simple. I... I haven't told anyone yet." She admitted in a low voice, her dark eyes still focused on anything but her.

"Then you can tell me and we will deal with this together."

"This is not something you can deal with, Quinn."

"It must be bothering you since you can't speak about it, thus, we can solve it somehow. I'm here for you. I want to be." She brushed her arm against hers and Santana met her gentle gaze.

"I think... I-I'm gay." She whispered after a while. The blonde's lips curled very slowly into a smile.

"I kind of knew. I mean... I suspected, that's all. Don't be that surprised, I know you, S. Or at least I like to think that I know you."

"And you are okay with this?"

"Why wouldn't I? It doesn't change anything, you are still you."

"Thanks."

"You haven't told your parents yet, I take it?"

"No. You are pretty much the first to hear it from me, apart from Dave."

"Thank you for trusting me. I want you to know that I'm perfectly fine with that." She patted her shoulder and frowned at a sudden thought. "Is that why you were acting so strange?"

"By strange, you mean trying to be as much straight as possible? Yeah." Santana laughed, before telling her in a nutshell about the idea of beards with Karovsky.

"You know, what I've learnt about keeping secrets is that sooner or later they will be made public and the effects are terrible when you are not prepared to let everyone know."

"Well, that's why I'm not going to let that happen."

"It's better to break the news quietly in your own way to let it all sink in." Quinn softly expressed and the other girl immediately scowled.

"What the hell, break the news? There is no way I'm coming out. Imagine the consequences."

"So you want to pretend the whole time, date guys, be unhappy for the entire senior year?"

"Who said anything about being unhappy? I will keep my mouth shut and that's all." She declared, digging her sneakers into the ground. "I can't come out, I can't do that."

"Kurt and Blaine are open about their relationship." Quinn hinted and Santana rolled her eyes.

"People always knew about Kurt, let's face it. My situation is different. You might be accepting, but do you have any idea how people will react? Comments, stares, gossips... I won't face that. I just can't. Why do you think Kurt was bullied, besides his choice of wardrobe?"

"Guys survived it all, so can you. Especially taking into consideration that you are the top dog, unlike Kurt. No one sane will try to say a word. Why are you afraid of being yourself?"

"I will be the only girl in the entire school. Kurt has Blaine, I'm all alone. And everyone will take advantage of that. I won't give them any satisfaction or reason for tearing me down."

"You are not alone, Santana. You have friends, I bet that the entire glee club will support you as I do." She scoffed at her words, crossing her arms.

"Friends? Please, do you truly believe that? We both know that they don't care about me, they will be happy to see me getting what I deserve."

"You don't know that."

Santana shifted, the log got uncomfortable after sitting so long. Her brown eyes were stubbornly staring into space in front of her, her face hardened and distant. Quinn averted her thoughtful gaze to look at the clear sky. The chirpy birds were singing among the trees and the air smelled of forest. She sighed and faced Santana again, taking her hand in hers.

"There's more to it than pure fear of being out, isn't it? I don't think that you entirely accept yourself, cause if you truly did, you wouldn't be so scared of letting people know."

"I do accept it, okay? Brittany helped me realize it, but just like you she wanted me to be open about it. It didn't work with her and it won't work with you either. No offense." She added quickly, Quinn's expression remained calm.

"Brittany, huh? Are you two together?"

"No. That's a long, messed up story and I don't wanna talk about it now."

"Alright. You're basically saying that you're afraid of what people would think, aren't you? I can't understand why. You always spoke your mind, did your thing regardless of results, and I don't know any person bolder than you." Santana's eyes lost their rigidity at her words. "I know that you don't want to go through what Kurt went, but you're not him, and that's why it would be different. You could actually change something, you have influence on people. I won't deny that the first days would be tough, but things always die down. After a week or two it would be over, and you won't have to be uncomfortable with yourself anymore."

"I don't need to come out. This is the last year and after that I'm outta here."

"Precisely! That's another reason why you should do it now, for the sake of the future. You would get this done and even if things went wrong here, you would leave it all behind."

"Why are you so concerned about it? I'm fine staying in the closet, thank you very much." She answered with a sneer, trying to pull her hand away with no effect.

"I don't think you are. I want you to feel good about yourself, S. When my secrets were spilled all over the school, it was really hard. Now I'm relieved that I have nothing else to hide. I'm free."

"I'm not that strong as it looks like, Quinn. I'm not ready for that."

"And you will never be. Yet if you break it gently to everyone, gradually, the outcome will be less terrifying than you think. I'll be right beside you the whole time, I promise." Santana snorted again, not convinced by her assurance and honest eyes.

"Easy to stand aside and watch when you're not the center of attention."

Quinn bit her lip, looking away in defeat. The delicate wind blew off a few white petals on their heads. She smoothed her hair and realized that she was still holding Santana's hand. With interest, she examined her tanned skin which next to her white one made her look even paler. The brunette's fingers were long and slender and she caressed them briefly, enjoying the softness. Santana was absentminded for she didn't move a muscle. Quinn looked up, her eyes brightened with abrupt realization.

"I can pretend to be your girlfriend." The Latina turned her head to stare at her with expression somewhat between amusement, shock, and disbelief.

"I'm pretty sure that you have no idea what you've just said."

"No, listen me out! We could begin right now before school starts to make you comfortable among public, less conscious about the whole thing. It could work – you would test the waters and I'd be there for you."

"This is crazy. Why would you even do that? Why would you put yourself in a position to be shamed for being someone you're not?"

"I don't care what people would think or say about me anymore. I've been through so much stuff that I have nothing to lose by helping you. My reputation is long gone. And I said before, I want to spend this last year doing something right, not chasing after popularity."

"This is not something that can be fixed, it won't go away just like that. There will be consequences." Santana focused all of her attention on Quinn who was unaffected by her firm glare.

"Whatever may come, we will face it together. Remember good old times? Separately we're strong, but together we're unstoppable. Nobody will dare to even look at us in a funny way. And people outside school don't know us, so there is nothing to worry about anyway."

"What about our families? They would hear about that."

"It would be the best if you told your parents." She suggested, and Santana withdrew into herself.

"Maybe after several weeks."

"Take your time. If they learnt by accident, you could always tell the truth. That we're not dating and this is just a big misunderstanding."

"I can handle my parents. What about you though?"

"Same for me, simple explanation. My mother owes me a lot, she won't be making any problems."

"This is crazy." The brunette repeated with a shake of her head and Quinn steadied her fidgeting hand.

"No, it's not. Please, at least think about it."

"Fine. I will." She replied in a whiny voice, allowing the other girl to put her arm around her, regardless of heat.

"I'm here for you and I want to help."

Santana kept silent, directing her attention to surroundings. They continued resting until the impatient calls reminded them of family time. Quinn returned home, giving her some time and space to think, while she took the evening off to jog around the town with her favorite music. While running through random places she ignored irritating stares of men and sat down to catch her breath. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw a couple holding hands. The sight made her knit brows in contemplation.

The next day she showed up at Quinn's doorstep, nervously tapping her foot on the porch's floor. When the very surprised blonde opened the door, she looked behind her to check whether they were alone.

"Is your mom in?"

"No. What's wrong?" Santana stepped inside, her face serious, but her eyes insecure.

"I agree." It took Quinn a second to understand what she meant.

"Okay. How do you want to play it?"

"Casually. I have some conditions, though." The blonde raised an eyebrow. "No paying for each other and no kissing."

"Trust me, I wasn't going to do either. Anything else?"

"Dropping the act in front of people we know." She declared without hesitation, and the other girl frowned.

"Well, isn't it contrary to what we want to achieve?"

"At least until school. I'm not ready for that right now." Quinn searched her eyes for a moment and nodded.

"I won't press you. Everything is going to be okay, you know that, right?"

"Whatever. So, wanna go to the cinema tonight?"

—

Since the place was nearby their district and the evening was warm, they decided to walk. Santana was waiting in front of Quinn's house wearing jeans and loose white top, not slightly taken aback by the blonde's beige sundress. She nodded to get moving and the other girl cleared her throat.

"What?"

"Didn't you forget about something?" Santana looked around, puzzled.

"Like what?"

"My hand." She frowned and Quinn sighed to herself. "My hand, Santana. Take my hand."

"What for?"

"Ugh, seriously? It's what couples do. They hold hands when walking. Did I really have to spit it out for you?"

"We aren't together." Santana replied decisively, watching her eye-roll.

"Yes, I'm well aware of that. You seem to forget what and why we're doing this in the first place."

Quinn extended her hand in almost dominant gesture and the brunette took it with defeat painted all over her face. Whenever people passed them Santana wanted to pull away, and Quinn instinctively brought them closer. They didn't speak the entire way to the cinema and let go of

each other only when buying tickets. Santana sighed with relief, which made the blonde glare with reproach.

They chose a comedy, because Santana immediately refused to see any romance. It was fairly enjoyable and both of them visibly relaxed, concentrating on the movie rather than on people around them. When the closing credits appeared, Quinn suggested buying some drinks and walking through the old birch park. The brunette wordlessly agreed and within ten minutes they were strolling down the beautiful lane illuminated dimly by the yellow light of the lanterns. It was silent and peaceful, and seeing that there were no crowds, Santana looped arm with her friend, savoring the blueberry milkshake.

"Oh my God, it's so damn good. Taste of my childhood."

"I knew where to go." Quinn smirked, taking a few sips from her own cup.

"You have your moments of intelligence."

"Why, thank you very much."

"You're welcome."

"Bitch."

"Takes one to know one."

"Shut up." They laughed, and the old couple that was walking from the opposite direction smiled at them warmly. "It's not that bad, isn't it?"

"Because none of the people we met know us. Imagine if we showed up like that at school."

"It doesn't matter if they know us or not. It's all about the potential outcome and reactions."

"Okay, so tonight was pretty good, but flowers and rainbows won't last forever. And when bad things happen, you'll take back your offer."

"If."

"When. Because they're going to happen, sooner or later."

"Even so, I'm not going to take back anything." She stopped walking and turned towards her. "I told you, we're in this together, so you wouldn't be alone. And I won't change my mind."

Santana stared back at her with a look full of uncertainty.

They were joined at the hip for days, but Santana's eyes didn't lose anxiety or doubt. Quinn was the one who shamelessly hugged her, grabbed her hand, entwined their fingers, and snuggled up against her. As much as the brunette was trying to warm up to her, she didn't stop being conscious about the whole thing.

Sitting under an umbrella in a cafeteria during one sunny afternoon, Quinn reached for her hands across the table and brushed fondly the tanned palms with her fingers.

"A little smiling won't kill you, you know."

"Let's not check it, shall we."

"I don't understand why you are being so hostile. You've known me for years, I'm not that bad looking, and I certainly don't stink. What's the problem?" Santana took a deep breath and averted her eyes.

"It's not you."

"Oh right, it's not you it's me crap, right? I've never seen you having such problems with Brittany. As far as I remember, you two were touchy-feely all the time." She retorted angrily, letting go of her hands. The brunette kept her still.

"It was different with her. We weren't... officially dating, for most of the time we were just being best friends, nothing more. No romantic feelings. Not until certain moment anyway."

"We aren't official. And there are no feelings." Quinn spoke under her breath.

"Y-yeah..."

They sat for several seconds in silence, looking blankly at each other. The blonde shook off the weird mood first.

"You're making a problem when you think about it. So don't. Stop analyzing everything."

"Says the most rational person ever. Well, maybe not ever."

They exchanged playful smiles and Santana squeezed briefly her hands. The young waitress approached the table with their coffee and put in front of them a cup of ice cream, which caused them to frown.

"Excuse me, we haven't ordered that."

"Oh, don't worry, it's on the house." She replied cheerfully and they gave her a confused look. "My brother is gay and he went through so much in his life. You're very brave to be open about your relationship, I admire that. Enjoy your dessert, girls. You're such a cute couple." The woman smiled at them one last time and left.

Santana's eyes were about to pop out of her head while Quinn was on the verge of laughter.

"See? We are a cute couple." The brunette closed her mouth and glowered.

"Don't be so smug, it's not even for real."

"The point is that not everyone has the attitude you're concerned about. There are good people out there, even in a small, provincial town like ours, and you're wrong to assume otherwise."

Santana focused her attention on coffee for quite some time before she looked up at Quinn who was observing people without a wrinkle of worry on her face. It was an unusual sight.

"How can you be so cool about it all?"

"I survived my dose of humiliation, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. I learnt that everything is temporary, so why worry, especially ahead of time?"

"You're really not upset about being taken for a lesbian, not even a little?"

"I don't care what people assume and I don't think that being not straight is a shameful thing." She suddenly grinned. "Not to mention we were given free ice cream which shouldn't go to waste."

They dug into the dessert, chatting on different topics connected with food. Quinn couldn't stop smiling and Santana found it contagious. Different things were happening around them, yet their attention remained aimed at each other.

"I can't remember the last time I ate something so good." The blonde sighed appreciatively, dropping her spoon into the empty cup.

"So I've noticed." Santana smirked, looking at her lips. "You missed a spot. Here." She carefully slid her thumb over the corner of her mouth to wipe off the remains of cream.

"Thanks."

Quinn was slightly distracted, watching how Santana looked up slowly from her lips to her eyes with unreadable expression. They sat like that for a while when someone nearby spoke their names. The brunette pulled away in a flash and Quinn's face fell.

"Hey guys! Nice to see ya." Mercedes and Sam showed up at their table, both in high spirits.

"Hi, what a surprise. Please sit down with us." They took additional chairs and ordered themselves some iced drinks. "So, what you're doing here? We thought that everyone is out of town."

"We have a date." There were bright smiles on their faces. "We are kind of ... together now."

"Wow, congrats then! That's unexpected." They exchanged astonished glances.

"Yeah. It just happened while we were away. What about you girls, decided to hang out?" Quinn glimpsed briefly at Santana, but didn't answer. The Latina nervously laughed.

"Ah you know, we were both bored so why the hell not."

"Glad to see you on better terms."

"Best friends forever, right Q?" She elbowed her, taking no notice of the fact that Quinn clenched her teeth. "So, how are yours holidays?"

They talked briefly about friends and school, but the girls left soon, considering how much time had already passed. Their way back was quiet as Santana was fidgeting with her sunglasses and Quinn was psychically absent. The blonde's house was closer and when they reached the narrow lane leading to the entrance, Santana swiftly turned towards her.

"Look, I know what you're gonna say. I blew up, I know. And I'm sorry." She blurted out with shame. Quinn sighed quietly.

"Santana... I don't think this is working out. I'm obviously not the right person to help you."

"What? No."

"Perhaps you should speak with Kurt and Blaine or seek some professional advice. I'm sure there are many groups of support which offer a proper guidance."

"No. I don't need any counseling or other crap like that."

"Yes, you do. I want to be there for you, but you're the one who must take a first step. And you refuse to do it. In that case... I can't help you." She admitted, her eyes full of sadness, and moved back. Santana grabbed her hand.

"You... I can't do this on my own. I can't do this without you."

"Of course you can. Maybe you need more time."

"It's not the time I need." They were standing motionlessly on the street. Despite the late hour, it was still bright. "Please."

"Come here." Quinn murmured and embraced her warmly.

"I don't want to make you feel awkward, but please... don't go." She whispered into her short strands of hair.

"You don't. It's not about me, I told you that it doesn't bother me. I just want you to overcome your anxiety, any way that fits you."

"This fits me." They drew back and Quinn suddenly beamed.

"That was probably the first time I've heard you asking politely for something." She teased and Santana rolled her eyes.

"Well, don't get used to it. I better get going, we're having some family for the evening and my dad has been complaining that I'm never home these days."

"You can let them know to blame me for it."

"I know, right? Who knew that having a girlfriend would be that time-consuming." She smiled and kissed her on the cheek. "See you tomorrow, Fabray."

Quinn entered her house in a much better mood.

—

Somewhere along the way, 'they' became a habit. Hand holding, brief kisses, cuddling, and discreet caressing came easily as breathing, without hesitation. Santana stopped thinking about it and Quinn no longer had to initiate any interaction between them. They mixed active days with lazy ones, spent in the bed watching comedies. Sometimes they couldn't keep quiet at all, sometimes they barely talked. People were returning from their holidays, yet they didn't socialize much apart from brief phone calls and text messages. That would mean leaving their little bubble and facing the world, which they weren't entirely ready for.

One of the last summer days they decided to spend in their favorite park. Santana left Quinn on the bench to get iced tea and out of the blue a young man sat beside her.

"Hello, gorgeous. What a girl like you doing here all alone? Don't worry honey, I will keep you company." He flashed a confident grin at her and she scowled in return.

"Thanks, but no thanks."

"Come on, you don't know what you're missing." She took in his gelled hair, leather jacket, and mischievous look in his eyes.

"Oh, I'm pretty sure I do. Now if you were kind enough to go away..."

"Feisty. Just what I like."

Quinn was ready to lash out at the man when Santana returned. She quickly glanced between them and stiffened within second.

"Leave my girlfriend alone." The blonde subtly smirked at her growl while he widened his eyes.

"Woah, girlfriend? Sweet. Can I watch?"

"Get lost creeper or I will make sure you won't be able to reproduce. Which would be quite a blessing to the world."

"No need to get violent, ladies. We can reach a compromise. Threesome?" Santana gave him the dirtiest look she could pull off before spilling the drink on his head. "The heck?!"

"If you don't move your stupid ass right now, you will face far worse things than that."

"Crazy bitch." He muttered under his breath and stood up, wiping the liquid off his face.

"That's right, back off before I do something drastic." The brunette warned loudly, watching him leave. Quinn chuckled.

"Nice job, he was asking for it. Although you wasted a perfectly good drink."

"It was worth it. I missed slushies so when I saw the opportunity, I took it." She sat down beside her, cuddling up to her arm, and the blonde rested her head on her shoulder.

"You haven't been that open about our relationship before. I'm proud of you."

"What I'm going to say next will make you even more pleased. I hope so."

"You've got my complete, undivided attention."

"I'm gonna tell my parents." She stated, toying tenderly with Quinn's fingers.

"That's great. Do you want me to come over?"

"Thanks, but I don't want to drag you further into this. I need to do that one thing alone."

"It's okay, feel free to call me if you change your mind." She paused, observing the leaves moving with the wind. "Do you plan telling them about us?"

"Probably. They already sense that something is going on."

"What will you say?"

"... The truth."

They fell silent and only their eyes betrayed confusion of their thoughts.

September came quicker than they expected and in the morning they prepared to return to school. Santana one more time fixed her cheerio uniform, which she received back along with captain rank, and sighed at her reflection in the wardrobe mirror. She took her bag and drove to Quinn's place. The blonde was waiting for her with cups of coffee and smiled encouragingly to go. They pulled into the crowded parking lot, spotting a few familiar faces. Santana bit her lip and Quinn reassuringly touched her shoulder.

"It's an ordinary day, just like the ones we had during those last weeks. Think that nothing has changed, no matter whether we hang around the town or here."

"I still think this is crazy to be conspicuous at school. Nobody will believe us anyway."

"And why's that?"

"I'd never date you, obviously." Santana gave her an explicit look and the blonde made a resentful face.

"Why not?"

"We're like apples and oranges. Besides, you're annoying and bossy."

"That's not what you said at Rachel's party." Quinn responded calmly, watching her freeze.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Let me refresh your memory. You should be happy to date me cause – a. I'm blonde, b. I'm smart, c. I'm awesome." She counted with a smirk. Santana angrily winced.

"I wasn't thinking straight, alright?"

"Do you ever?" Her grin widened in a wicked way.

"Har-har Fabray, what a wonderful gay pun."

"What can I say, you're rubbing off on me."

"Careful. It almost sounds as if you enjoyed my company."

"I'm your girlfriend, that means something." Santana involuntarily smiled, shaking her head.

"Come on, we will be late."

They walked hand in hand to the main stairs exchanging greetings when suddenly someone embraced them in a tight hug.

"There you are! I missed you guys!" Brittany yelled with joy, almost suffocating them.

"Hey, we missed you too. But you can let go now, Britt."

"Oh, sorry." She glanced between them. "It's good to be back. I'm so happy we're here all together."

"This is our last year. I can't believe how fast time goes."

"It will be epic." The tall girl beamed before looking down at their entwined fingers. They immediately caught her confused look. "Are your hands cold?"

"I'm helping Santana with coming out. We're... fake-dating." Quinn uncovered, having noticed that the brunette was tongue-tied.

"It's like... pretending, right?"

"Yeah, something like that. If you can, please keep it to yourself for now."

"Okay then!" She enlivened in a second and took Santana's free hand. "Let's go, I can't wait to meet the rest of people. We have so much to talk about. Did you hear that they found a portal to the elven world?"

They entered the school together – Brittany cheerful, Quinn bitter, and between two of them Santana, embarrassed.

The first lessons they spent separately to later meet up for uneventful lunch. To their surprise it wasn't awkward at all because nobody noticed any change. They swapped stories about holidays and girls left earlier to get their things from lockers.

"Oh God, this day takes too long." Santana whined, stuffing notebooks into her bag.

"Stop complaining, only two hours left."

"Don't remind me, I have damn math now with a teacher who hates me."

"You're exaggerating."

"I'm serious, whenever she looks at me, I swear she vividly images various ways to make my life miserable. I can see it in her eyes."

"I'm sure you will survive somehow. Now, escort me to the classroom."

"See? You're bossy. Why won't you see me off?" She argued when they walked down the hall.

"Because my class is closer." Quinn turned towards her. "We finish quite early today, do you want to go to the meadow after school?"

"Fine, but you owe me this escort thing."

"You're an ass. See you later." She kissed her cheek and went inside.

Santana managed to ignore raised murmurs and intrusive stares for the rest of the classes.

They met afterwards nearby schoolyard to take the familiar path leading to the wooded area. Before they crossed the pitch, Brittany caught up with them.

"Hey, where ya going?" Quinn turned her head to fix her eyes on some unspecified point, forcing Santana to answer.

"We have some free time before dinner so we decided to hang out. Enjoy the weather while it lasts."

"Can I come with you?"

"Uhm, don't you have biology soon?"

"Right, I knew I forgot about something. My timetable mixes me up."

"Don't worry about it, you will get it in time." Santana patted her shoulder and the blonde smiled.

"I hope so. Maybe some other time, then?"

"Maybe. Have a nice day."

They watched her skipping back to the building before resuming walking. The brunette took Quinn's hand and they silently strolled to the secluded spot. It seemed that someone recently had a bonfire party because new stumps were placed. They sat down on the biggest one and stretched towards the sun.

"I finally came out to my parents last night." Santana murmured, and Quinn opened her eyes to look at her with awe.

"I told you, you can do that. How it went?"

"Better than expected. They said they were okay with whoever I dated, as long as it's a good person."

"I'm happy for you." She placed her arm around her neck, bringing them closer. "It must be a relief. Did you speak about us?"

"Mom asked whether I'm seeing someone. I didn't want to expose you so I said I'm not interested in dating for now. That I need time to myself."

"You aren't?" Santana looked at her questioning expression and smiled.

"No. I'm good this way."

"What are your thoughts on school?" She sighed at her question.

"People definitely noticed. They're already gossiping, but nothing more than that. So far I don't care... Thank God it's Friday, maybe it will somehow die down during the weekend, although I doubt that."

"You handled it well." Quinn commented, examining her face.

"I've been preparing for it for weeks, remember?" She reminded her almost bitterly, but her eyes were tender. "You're the one who deals with it far better than I do. I can't help but wonder... why are you going through all of this? You could have walked away. You can always walk away."

"Because I know how it feels to be alone in troublesome situation." She replied, turning her head in the other direction. Santana stroked her thigh to get her attention.

"I appreciate that, but... I know when you are not telling the whole truth, Q." The blonde hanged her head, looking blankly at her shoes.

"I guess that I'm not that selfless how I want to be." She broke off. "Don't get me wrong, I wanted to help you. Yet I wanted to make myself feel better as well."

"Tell me what's going on." She clasped their hands together and the blonde met her troubled gaze.

"I'm good at pretending. To be honest, I didn't get over everything, as much as I wished I did. I still think about Beth, all mistakes that I've made, all my hopes... I lost everything. All my reputation destroyed, family abandoning me, guys turning their back on me. Whatever I do, I'm never the one." Quinn whispered, staring into her brown eyes. "I wished to leave it all behind, to move on. And I wished to be someone's choice for once."

"I know that we only fool around and it's just an act. But it feels good. Surprisingly good. And you... us... makes me happy. Makes me forget. I'm really sorry, I didn't want to use you that way." Santana hugged her in response, rubbing softly her back to calm her shaky breath.

"It's okay. You don't have to apologize to me, ever."

They sat like that for several long minutes, listening to the surroundings. The brunette pulled away to look at her with a shy smile.

"You know what I do to please my bottomless ego? I repeat to myself how awesome I am and how pathetic all those peasants are in comparison with me." The corners of Quinn's mouth lifted. "You reminded me to return to that tactic, and now I'm telling you to do the same. You're better than those idiots and you're too good for any losers who broke your heart. Screw them all, you don't need this."

"We're going to rock this year and everyone else can go to hell. You hear me?" Santana shook her a bit and the blonde nodded.

"So... no regrets, regarding our scheme?"

"None. I'm glad we're doing this. Together."

Soft clouds lazily moved on the sky and the birds chirped among the branches. Autumn was nowhere to be seen which made them sigh with delight.

"How does... kissing girls feel like?" Quinn faintly asked and Santana knitted her brows.

"Depends."

"On?"

"How straight you are. It's different, good different, but I suppose that hetero folks don't enjoy kissing the same gender the way non-hetero do." She narrowed curiously her eyes. "You've never...?"

"No."

"Where were you during spin a bottle games?" There was no reply. Santana slowly turned towards her and Quinn apprehensively lifted her gaze. "I can show you, if you want." She offered in a nonchalant tone and the blonde bit her lip before barely nodding as if she was surprised by her own behavior.

The brunette glanced between Quinn's uncertain eyes and mouth, and cupped gently her chin, bringing their faces together. She moved smoothly her lips against hers without hurry or aggression until they parted to catch their breath. They searched each other's eyes with disoriented expression.

"You... made me broke my rule." Santana murmured after a while.

"Don't tell me you're complaining."

"I won't." She all of a sudden straightened up and nervously chuckled. "With your limited experience, I must have been awesome. Finn and Puck are terrible kissers."

"You weren't that good." There was a smirk on Quinn's face.

"Sure, sure."

As Santana predicted, she and Quinn became the main topic of school conversations. During the weekend their social pages got overrun with dozens nosy questions and they gave up on opening any communicators or checking their phones. When they showed up on Monday, Jacob ambushed them right at the entrance. They pushed him aside and walked through the corridor with heads held high.

The most upsetting thing was the random encounters with boys who were harassing them over and over with sexist comments and rude suggestions. In most cases Quinn was the one who got rid of them using vicious words, since Santana had moments of uneasiness. It was hard to avoid all of their friends, but they dismissed everyone with short remarks to quickly took off in another direction. During the break they hid around the corner in order to slow down a little.

"God, what's wrong with these people? You admit to dating a girl and everyone loses their minds." The brunette muttered, glaring at anyone who dared to look at them.

"Because it's us we're talking about. I would've reacted the same way. I mean, if you stop to think about it... it's quite unimaginable. Us."

"Yeah, but they're overreacting. Thank the Lord we have some time until glee."

"I think that our friends are the least of our problems. Can you believe that some assholes bothered me with stupid offers to make me straight?"

"I know what you mean." Santana averted her eyes which Quinn instantly noticed.

"Hey, remember our conversation? Those morons don't matter." She pecked softly her forehead. "Just keep away from them and don't engage in any uncomfortable discussions. See you after your practice." With one last handclasp, they went separate ways to survive the remaining lessons.

Santana's cheerio training was at first awkward, but she swiftly set everyone in order. The leader position gave her a boost of confidence she needed and obnoxious behavior of people around became more manageable. Some of the girls were noticeably displeased with sharing the locker room with her, but several others spoke to her freely without any mean commentary. When she entered the main hall to find Quinn, Brittany joined her and they talked briefly about plans for the week.

"So now that everyone knows you like sweet lady kisses, we can finally be together." She blurted out without warning and Santana did a double take.

"Wait, what?"

"Me and Artie are long over and now as you're now brave enough to be public, you can be public with me."

"I'm kind of taken, you know that." She stated slowly and clearly, looking into her blue orbs.

"But Quinn isn't your girlfriend-girlfriend, anyway."

"No, you can't do that Britt!" Santana hurriedly untangled her arm from hers. "When I wanted to be with you, you turned me down."

"You know I wanted to be with you too, but I couldn't do that to Artie."

"Yeah, but you could do that to me and demand that I come out, instead of supporting me. You can't pretend that everything is alright and declare that now you're ready to be my girlfriend." She tried to keep her voice down, but she was unmistakably shaken up.

"I wanted to support you Santana, but you pushed me away when I wanted to help you. Several times."

"How did you want to do that? Having a boyfriend on the side, shoving a disgracing shirt into my hands? Quinn at least is together with me in this, you weren't."

"What you have with Quinn is not real."

"What makes you so sure?" The brunette exploded, unable to suppress her intensified anger. A few people turned their heads to look at them. Seeing Brittany's upset and puzzled face, she composed herself. "Shit, I'm sorry. Look, I can't talk about this right now. The thing is, you hurt me, you really did. And I'm not sure anymore how I feel about us or where we stand... I gotta go, Quinn is waiting for me. I really wish it turned out differently. I wish I could do what you want me to do."

She looked around with downcast expression and walked away. Her feet carried her quickly through the building in search of the other girl to finally spot her storming through the exit. She called her name, but Quinn didn't turn around, heading straight for the parking lot. Santana ran up to her before she reached her car.

"Where are you going?"

"Home."

"What about our plans?"

"I'm sure you can find someone to entertain you. Brittany seemed rather interested."

"What the hell are you talking about? Could you stop walking for a damn moment and look at me?!" She yelled and Quinn faced her with a serious look. "Thank you. Now explain what the deal is."

"There is no deal. Since you're out and doing well on your own, my job here is done. We can stop pretending and you can be at long last with Brittany, the way it was meant to be." Her voice was dripping with bitterness as she stared into her eyes. Santana looked like someone slapped her across her face.

"Pretending? Is that all what you think we did? Was everything just a huge act to you?"

"Well, it was obviously to you since you've already forgotten about it and moved on without telling me." The blonde countered and Santana narrowed her eyes in complete confusion.

"I'm asking again, what on earth are you talking about?!"

"Stop playing dumb! I saw you and her walking like an old married couple down the corridor. Congratulations, you don't have to hide your relationship anymore."

"See? Again! Annoying. If you had heard what we were talking about or even looked more closely, you would've known that I couldn't care less about dating her."

"Somehow I find it hard to believe. You want to know why? Because Santana always choses Brittany. She always did and always will. Some things never change." Quinn stared at her impassively.

"Guess what, miss know-it-all. You're wrong! Everything has changed. I don't recognize myself anymore! This..." She gestured between them. "This makes me wanna do and say things that shouldn't have even crossed my mind! I've been having thoughts that I should've never thought, I had to restrain myself from speaking them out loud. That's what you're doing to me." Her voice fell to a whisper as she looked at the blonde's astounded features just inches from her face.

"You said that you're good at pretending. Well, I'm done pretending." Santana breathed, decreasing the remaining distance between them to crash her lips against hers in a completely different kiss than the first one.

She rested her hands on Quinn's hips to keep her as close as possible and her every move was filled with such intensity that the blonde dropped the notes she was holding. They were standing in the middle of parking lot, completely oblivious of everything except themselves. People stared at them with open mouths, watching how Santana gradually drew back to lean her forehead against hers. Quinn dazedly opened her eyes, meeting the anxious brown orbs.

"You asked if everything was an act... I think that it hasn't been for quite some time now." She murmured breathlessly, raising her hands to caress her face.

Santana smiled with relief and Quinn reciprocated her affectionate gesture. She entwined her fingers on the back of her neck and brought their lips together once more. Applause and cheering yells reached their ears and the blonde pulled back with a scowl.

"I swear, every guy in this school is a pervert." Santana touched her chin to make her look back at her.

"Who cares, they can watch as much as they want. Let them get used to it, cause I plan to do this very, very often."

"That's a serious violation of your condition." Both of them wore playful smirks on their faces.

"You know how I feel about rules, Q... they are made to be broken."

Lucy (2), by Brittanyismyunicorn

Quinn's P.O.V

"Why did I agree to this? Why couldn't you be satisfied with a fucking puppy like normal people?" Santana asks as she sits on the couch. I roll my eyes and sit next to her.

"We only have three more months then it'll all be worth it." I say as I put my hand on Santana's protruding stomach.

"You can say all the shit you want because there's not a fucking demon spawn inside of you who finds it fun to kick one of your internal organs every fucking five minutes." She says with a groan and tilts her head back.

"Don't be like that San. I had to go through it."

"Then why didn't you do it again?"

"That wasn't our agreement. We both wanted this." Santana groans and tilts her head back to the ceiling.

"I have to think things through more." She says which causes me to chuckle. She places her hand on top of the hand I have sitting on her stomach and I kiss her cheek.

"This is all your fault. Where is my daughter?" She asks as she turns her head towards me.

"Napping, you know that." I say and she shrugs.

"Well I'm waking her up. I like her better than you right now." Santana says then stands from the couch, with a little help from me and walks to Arielle's room.

I don't know why I thought Santana getting pregnant would be a good idea. She's scary when she doesn't have raging hormones. Santana and I both wanted two kids and agreed I'd have the first one. Now that Arielle is almost three, it was time to have another baby and after a few invitro sessions, another baby was made and so was this monster I'm married to. It's only a few more months then Santana will be back to normal, I just have to remember that. Santana ignored me for the next few hours and played with Arielle. I don't know what I did to piss her off but I'm not going to ask.

"Quinn!" I hear Santana yell from the living room.

"What?!" I respond.

"Come here!" She says and I sigh and stand from the bed. This past week has been insane because of Santana's hormones. She's either all over me, super distant, pissed at me or...I think that's it. We haven't been in the best place lately.

"What?" I say as I walk into the living room. I stand by Arielle, who's in her play pen, to be safe. Santana threw the remote at me the other day and then cried and apologized about it for the next hour. I don't want any repeats.

"Take Arielle to Brittany's." She says.

"Why?" I ask.

"B wants to see her." She says and I sigh. Now I'm going to be alone with this woman. Lord have mercy.

"Okay." I say and pick up Arielle from her play pen. I gather her things and drive her over to Brittany's. I decide to stay over Britt's for a little just so I can have some time away from Santana. I almost said yes too quickly when Britt asked if I would stay for a little while.

"Is San still cranky?" Brittany asks me as she colors with Arielle on her living room floor.

"Cranky? That's Santana on a good day." I say with a sigh and sink deeper into Brittany's couch.

"Bad day?" She asks.

"Bad week. It seems like Santana is just stuck on angry and sad. I don't know how to make her happy because I set her off almost every time I speak." I say with a sigh.

"It'll get better. You were emotional when you were pregnant too." Britt says.

"I wasn't that bad. I cried more than anything else and I was content for the most part."

"Well...everyone is different I guess. Maybe she'll get better as time goes on." Of course B would be optimistic about the situation. I guess...I should try to be too. I mean it is only temporary.

"Hopefully you're right. I'm still scared to go home though."

"Don't be. It'll be okay Quinn, I promise." She says and I shake my head. I stayed at Britt's for at least a hour then left to then took the longest route possible home. I never thought I would dread going home. I should have asked B if I could spend the night too. I reluctantly get out of my car and walk to the front door. Here goes nothing. I open the door and notice all the lights are off and the living room is littered with candles. Did Santana have a romantic evening by herself? As I push the door further open so that I can fully step inside, it stops. I look to see a caramel colored hand on the door then Santana steps into my view.

"Hi." She says softly as I step into the house.

"Hi." I respond then she wraps her arms around my neck and pulls me into a hug. I wrap my arms around her waist and hug her back.

"I'm sorry." She says before squeezing me tightly and pulling back.

"For what?" I ask. Santana takes my hand and pulls me away from the door so she can close it.

"For being such a bitch. These fucking hormones are driving me crazy and you didn't deserve that." She says as she leads me to the couch. She gently pushes to sit down and I oblige.

"I didn't but you don't have to apologize. I know how crazy hormones can make a person." I say as she sits in my lap.

"So am I forgiven?" She asks.

"Hmm? I don't know. You haven't really shown me that you're sorry." I say with a smirk.

"Well...I cooked, set this up to give the house some ambiance, I plan on giving you a massage and something else a little later."

"What's the something else?" I ask and Santana shrugs.

"You'll see. So now am I forgiven?" She asks again.

"I'll let you know by the end of the night." Santana rolls her eyes with a smirk and pecks my lips.

It's hard to be mad at Santana, no matter what she does. She knows really knows how to make it up to me when she messes up, even though I don't consider this messing up. Santana fed me, gave me a back and foot massage while we took a bath together.

"Now are you ready for your surprise?" Santana says from the other side of the room as she walks in. I sit slightly from my spot on the bed and look at her.

"Is it a lap dance? Because I've been hoping it's that since you told me I had a surprise." I say and she shakes her head.

"We can try that when I'm no months pregnant and I get my body back. Your surprise is something to watch." She says as she takes off her shirt and pants then gets in the bed next to me.

"We're watching porn?" I ask and she rolls her eyes.

"It's not sexual...and people say I'm the perv. Just press play on the DVD player and you'll see." She says and I shrug and grab the remote from the middle of the bed. I press play and skip through the previews to get to the title screen.

"Are you seriously going to watch this with me?" I ask as I feel Santana moving closer to me.

"Yes and I promise I won't go to sleep. We're going to watch the whole stupid saga if it'll make you happy." Santana lays her head on my chest and wraps her arm around my midsection.

"You hate Harry Potter." I point out but she only shrugs.

"But I love you and you love this so for the first time ever, I will watch this nerdy movie. For you." I chuckle and kiss her head. I've been trying to get Santana to watch this since it first came out.

"You are definitely forgiven." I say as I lay back against the headboard.

"I know, now press play." I as she says and wrap my arm around her shoulders. Yeah, it's hard to not be happy with Santana.

You Can Always Change Your Mind, by buffy46143

"I didn't get in." I stated while staring at the e-mail. My eyes went blurry. This was my backup school. If I didn't get in here, I'm not likely to get into my first choice school either. I was sitting on the sofa in Santana's apartment.

"Well, first of all, it's their loss for not accepting you. Secondly, it's only one rejection, Quinn. You applied to 3 grad schools. You're bound to get into one of the other two. Probably both of them. So, I wouldn't sweat it." Santana tried to be comforting, but I was still staring at the screen at a loss.

"I went to Yale."

"Yes, you did."

"How is NYU turning me down?"

"I don't know how it all works, Fabray, but like I said it's their loss. We can get drunk tonight if you want. Dull the pain."

I was visiting New York for the weekend. I only had two more weeks of school left and then I'd be a Yale graduate. I had planned to spend the summer here so I could start looking for an apartment since all the grad schools I had applied to were here. Santana was going to let me stay at her place until I found one of my own. She and Brittany used to share it, but when they broke up, Brittany moved out and Santana took this place. It's only a one bedroom, but the sofa is comfy and she's not making me pay rent since her parents are helping her out.

"What if I don't get into any of them, San?" I paused when I realized that wasn't even a thought months ago when I started applying. "My whole plan for the future is to go to grad school so I can be a teacher. If I don't get in, what the hell am I supposed to do?"

"You'll stay here a little longer then and we'll figure it out." She stood and walked toward her refrigerator and pulled out a bottle of water. She had just returned from a dance class she started taking recently when I was about the open the e-mail.

"This is my future, Santana. I can't just wander around New York if I don't have any plans for my life."

She sat back down after taking a drink and looked at me.

"What? You mean like me?"

"That's not what I meant and you know it."

"I'm not in school. I don't have any definitive plans for my life."

"It's different. What I want to do, I have to go to school for. You want to work in music."

Things got hard for Santana when she lost Brittany for the second time. Brittany moved to New York and started getting backup dance gigs right away while Santana still went to the

NYADA extension classes and kept working on the side. Mercedes even used her connections to help her get a demo made and it had been sent to every record label in the known universe, but she hadn't gotten any positive responses. When Brittany went on a tour, it killed Santana. Not just because her girlfriend was gone for four months, but because she felt that should be her. She wanted that life and it just wasn't happening. Her jealousy reared its ugly head a few times, but they worked through it until she left for another tour and then another and it just wasn't working. About a year ago, they broke up for good and a few months after that, so Brittany could have time to find another place, Santana was heartbroken and living on her own. She hadn't really dated anyone since and I couldn't blame her because I hadn't dated anyone since Puck and I broke up around the same time.

He was gone a lot too. The military keeps people busy and even though I said I wanted to do hard with him over easy with anyone else, the reality of how hard it would be just didn't sink in until he was deployed for 13 months and home for another couple of months, but home was Lima because he didn't want to move to New Haven since I knew by then that I wasn't staying there permanently. Then, he went to training in California and after all that time together, we realized we'd only actually spent a small amount of it physically together. He ended it officially. He met a girl in San Diego that he liked. He called to tell me about it. Said he felt like he was getting more and more tempted to cheat since we're never actually together and I told him that he was right and we should end it. I figured maybe we'd find our way back to one another when he was done with his service and I was more settled, but that was less and less likely since he was still with her and I no longer thought I wanted to be with him.

"It's cool. I get it. I'm wasting my life away while everyone else around me grows up and moves on." She was joking, but there was definitely a seriousness there too. "Hey, do you remember how we used to do those potluck things weekly with everyone?"

"I remember how *you guys* used to do those potluck things. I've never been to one though." I told her and stole her water to take a drink.

"Let's get everyone who's in town together tonight. It'll take your mind off of not getting into NYU and we can have some fun. And since we're actually old enough now, this one can have alcohol and will therefore be more fun."

"I don't recall age being a limitation for us before, Rosario."

She laughed.

"But Emily, we had to buy because no one else could. This time, they can do all the work and we can have all the fun." She stood. "I'm hopping in the shower and then I'm calling Hummel. You call Berry so I don't have to. Tell her to invite Artie and I'll call Mercedes too."

"What about..." I faded, not knowing if I should say her name. They had an amicable break-up, but they hadn't talked in a while. They both needed time to adjust.

"She's not here. She's in Dublin." She looked at me. "Facebook." She explained. "Oh, and I'm not stalking her. It's just she posts a lot of pictures of Lord Tubbington on tour with her and they're always tagged with locations."

I smiled as she walked into the bathroom. I picked up the phone and searched for Rachel's number to give her a call. We were going to get the old gang back together and hopefully that combined with alcohol would be enough to distract me from the worry going through my brain right now. If grad school doesn't work out, I don't have a backup plan and my parents won't help support me if I'm not in school so I'd be totally on my own for the first time. I just need to stop thinking about this.

"Hey Rachel, you busy tonight?"

It was about 6 when people started showing up. Artie was first, followed by Rachel who had the night off from her show since Broadway was dark on Mondays. Mercedes and Sam were next followed by Blaine and Kurt. The evening started off with hugs and all of us trying to catch up. Mercedes and Sam had just gotten engaged and were in the process of planning the wedding. Artie was about to premiere one his short films at a festival in the city. Kurt and Blaine had just gotten back from their spring break vacation they went on and had pictures for all of us to see.

"Stop boring Quinn with your vacation pics, Hummel. They're all probably the same. You wearing miss-matching floral patterns while sipping an umbrella drink." Santana sat next to me at the makeshift long table we'd put together with a borrowed card table and her actual table.

"I, for one, like looking at Kurt's pictures." Rachel said and took a drink of her wine.

"That's because you haven't been on a vacation in like 3 years, Berry. You're living vicariously through those two."

"So Quinn," Rachel ignored Santana. "How are you? I didn't even know you were in town."

"I got here on Friday. I leave tomorrow. I don't have any Monday classes and my only class on Tuesday is at night so I figured I'd stay the extra day."

"Are you ready to make the move here for good soon?" Mercedes asked while scooping some kind of casserole Blaine had made from a dish.

"Um... yeah." I hesitated because my plans seemed so uncertain at the moment and I didn't want to bring it up.

"Any luck in the dating department or are you just waiting until you move her to look for Mr. Right?" Blaine and Kurt had been engaged for years now, but they were waiting until they were both done at NYADA before actually tying the knot, which I applauded considering I thought they were getting married at 18 and would have been divorced by now had that been the case.

"Haven't really been worried about that lately. Kind of focused on just finishing school and the move." I lied. I had been focusing on that a lot lately, but not in the way the people at this table think and this wasn't really the right time or place to bring it up.

"Sam and I were kind of thinking about maybe setting a date for the wedding. We were thinking about doing it in Lima just because our families are there. Would you guys be up for heading back home next spring?" Mercedes asked.

"I'm really not up for heading back to Lima ever, but for you two, I guess I can make an exception." Santana told them with a wink and a smile before taking a drink of the screwdriver she made for me, but has been periodically taking drinks from since we sat down instead of her rum and coke.

"Good. Cause I'd like for you and Rachel to be bridesmaids. You too Quinn." She announced.

"Mercedes, I'd be honored." Rachel told her while holding her hands together and giving a little fake bow.

"I'm not wearing a tacky bridesmaid's dress, Cedes so you better make sure it looks good on me." Santana expressed.

"I thought you could make anything look good." I mocked while elbowing her.

"Doesn't mean I should have to though." She retorted with a lift of her eyebrows and I laughed silently. "Q, you wanna be my date to this shindig? We'll both be standing up there anyway. Might as well go together."

I was a little taken aback by that question.

"Please Santana, you'll probably have gone through like 2 girlfriends by then and have the 3rd with you." Kurt offered and took a bite of the casserole he seemed to like, but no one else was really touching.

"Fabray, you gonna leave me hanging here or what?" She asked me while ignoring Kurt's comment.

"Sure. If neither of us has anyone by then, we'll go together." That's not exactly what I wanted to say, but the wedding was over a year away and knowing Santana, a lot can change in a year.

She gave me a look of uncertainty and I took a long drink of my screwdriver and thankfully Sam changed the topic of conversation to the bachelor party.

3 drinks later for me and several more for the rest of them, we were all sitting around Santana's living room talking and laughing about old times. Rachel brought up how hard it was to get slushy out of your hair and Santana brought up how hard it must have been to get the Ryan Seacrest tattoo of mine removed. I was sitting next to Santana on the sofa and Rachel was on my other side while Mercedes and Sam were sharing the oversized comfy chair and the rest of them were sprawled on the floor.

"So you two are actually going to live together this summer until Quinn finds a place?" Kurt asked. "I'm taking bets on who kills whom. I've got Quinn taking Santana out by week 2. Anybody else?"

"Please, Santana is going to murder her by like day 2. As soon as Quinn touches her favorite boots."

"We're not even the same shoe size, Mercedes." I told her.

"I think she was just making a general point there, Q," Santana explained to my semi-intoxicated brain and then used her index finger to move the hair I had just cut short again behind my ear. She'd been doing things like that a lot lately and she'd always done things like that in the past, but recently given how I've been feeling, I've noticed it more and more. I could feel the familiar flush on my face from the alcohol, but I knew it was also there because of that touch.

I had to just come to terms with it. I liked Santana. Not just as a friend. I really liked her. I've been fighting it for a long time now. When we both became single again, we started spending a lot more time together. She took trips to Yale and I took trips to the city. It started as a once a month thing that turned into seeing each other almost every weekend. We basically spent most of last summer together since I made the choice to go to a school in NYC. We'd gotten very close and the past few months, I've been feeling like maybe I could be with her. Like really with her. The problem is that I already told her no. I told her it was a one-time thing. And now, now she's been hurt by Brittany and she hasn't dated since and what if I tell her and she says no way and it gets awkward and screws everything up?

"Earth to Q. You with us, Fabray?" She asked me when she noticed I'd zoned out. "I think I'm cutting you off. Water for you, girl." She took my half-finished drink and downed it herself.

"Santana, I wasn't done with that and it's not like I'm driving anywhere."

"Fine. I'll make you another one." She stood and as she did, my phone beeped and I pulled it out of my pocket. It was an e-mail.

"It's from Columbia Admissions." I announced to the room.

"What?" Santana sat back down next to me. "Open it, Quinn."

"I can't. What if they say no?" I looked at her.

"Then they're stupid too. They can go screw themselves just like NYU."

"Wait? What happened with NYU?" Rachel asked, but Santana and I were not paying attention.

"Quinn, no matter what happens, it's going to be fine. You've figured out everything else in your life and you've made it this far. There's still one more school anyway. So, just open it."

Yeah, I could definitely be with this girl.

"Okay." I opened the e-mail and stared down at my phone as I scrolled through it.

"Fabray? Yes or no?" She prodded impatiently. She was sitting cross-legged now facing toward me.

"Dear Miss Fabray, Congratulations! We are pleased to inform you that you have been-" She reached out and hugged me before I could finish and I heard the others clapping in the background.

"You did it, Quinn." She said in my ear. "I knew you would." She pulled back and looked at me. "First choice school, you overachiever."

I wasn't sure if it was the good news or the alcohol or the fact that I'd been holding it in for so long, but I leaned forward and wrapped my hand around her head and pulled her toward me. I didn't wait for her to resist or question it. I just kissed her and after a few seconds, she started kissing me back. I think I heard the others gasp in surprise, but I didn't really want to pay attention because I'd wanted to kiss her for months and the fact that she was kissing me back made me think she'd wanted to do this too. I moved her so that I could climb on top of her on the sofa and her arms went around my neck.

"Um... hello?" I heard Kurt wonder. "We're still here."

"This is new." Mercedes announced.

"This is hot!" Sam stated and was promptly smacked on the shoulder by his fiancé.

"I second that." Artie testified.

I stopped myself when I realized there were people watching us and leaned back.

"Sorry." I told her.

She leaned up and I returned to my previous sitting position.

"Um... Q, can I talk to you for a sec? Privately?" She asked me.

"Are you two together?" Kurt asked.

"Lady Hummel, zip it." She fired at Kurt. "Quinn, bedroom?" That was a little more on the gentle side and I followed her in the bedroom.

"If you two are just going to have sex, I'm going home." Kurt continued.

"Kurt..." Rachel stopped him.

I closed the door behind me and turned around to find her standing right in front of me.

"Was that just an impulsive, in the moment kind of thing out there?" She asked me while fiddling with the hem of my shirt.

"No." I had gotten brave with my acceptance. "I've wanted to do that for a while now."

She looked up and smiled at me.

"Really?"

"Yeah, I've been thinking about it a lot lately."

"Why didn't you say anything?"

"Because I told you it was only one time after-"

"We hooked up at Schuester's wedding? Quinn, that was like 3 years ago. You can change your mind in three years. We're women. We can change our mind whenever we want. Hell, I have."

"You've changed your mind?"

"Have you not noticed that I pretty much spend every waking hour with you, Fabray?" She paused and put her hand under my chin to get me to meet her eye. "Do you think I went to New Haven a thousand times because I liked the cramped quarters of a Yale University dorm room?"

I smiled at her.

"How long?"

"After Brit and I ended things and you and Puck ended things and we started hanging out, I thought about it, but I didn't think you'd be into it."

"I'm not sure I was then, but I am now. You've really been there for me, San and I think I was worried about school earlier in part because if I didn't get in anywhere here, I'd have to leave New York. I can't afford this city without my parents helping and they won't help if I'm not in school and if I left, I'd be leaving you and-"

She kissed me this time and pulled me closer. My arms were around her neck and she was pulling at the back of my shirt, not trying to take it off. It was as if she just needed to grab a hold of something.

"I love your brain sometimes, Quinn, but other times, I just want it to shut the hell up." She told me before leaning back in and kissing me again, this time sliding her tongue in to meet mine.

There was a knock at the door.

"Guys, do you want us to go? Cause I'm afraid if we don't, we'll have to hear whatever sounds you make when you start going at it." It was Kurt again.

We pulled back and laughed at him and I reached back to open the door.

"We're not having sex, Kurt. We're having a conversation." I told him and turned to open the door the rest of the way. I felt Santana take my hand as we walked back out to the living room.

"Quinn Fabray, I never knew you had it in you to actually go for it." Rachel was standing in the kitchen putting glasses in the sink.

"I'm full of surprises, I guess." I told her, not really thinking about what she was saying.

"So, are you two like... I mean... are you like girlfriends now? I'm trying to be PC about it. Is that how you ask about this kind of thing?" Sam asked the group, but the last part was to Mercedes who just nodded at him.

"I think we've got some talking to do before we go changing Facebook relationship statuses or anything, right Q?" She looked at me and squeezed my hand.

"No, I'm good." I told her. "Be my girlfriend, San." I turned back to look at her and I heard the rest of them gasp as they were waiting on her reply as was I. I was a little more nervous than they were, I'm sure because I sort of just stated it instead of asked and it's not like we've talked about this.

"Demanding all the sudden, aren't you? That's really not going to work for me. I don't do demanding girlfriends." She smiled.

"So, I'm your girlfriend?"

"You're demanding." She took my other hand. "And I guess since we've both felt this way for a while now and we've known each other for years and you're an amazing kisser and I kind of like looking at you, you can be my girlfriend."

"I gotta tell ya, I did not see this one coming." Mercedes divulged.

"I did." Rachel admitted.

"You did?" I asked and then turned to look at her. She made her way back toward the living room.

"Yeah, a few months ago, Santana told me how she felt about you."

"Berry!" Santana was clearly embarrassed.

"What? It doesn't matter now. You guys are together." She paused and then looked at me. Santana's head went to my shoulder with her head facing the floor so no one could see her face. "She said she had a dream about you and that you guys were together and..." She faded out.

"Oh my God!" Kurt exclaimed. "You had a wet dream about Quinn?"

"Hummel, I will axe murder you!" She looked up while everyone laughed. "It wasn't like that. I mean we did stuff in the dream, but it wasn't all dirty like that. It was... nice." She looked at me. "We were just like together." She looked at Rachel. "Snitches get stiches, Berry. Snitches get stiches."

"I've been watching you two ever since and I knew Quinn felt the same way. I wasn't sure she'd actually go for it, but I tried to get her to tell you."

"No you didn't." I argued.

"Yes, I did. We were watching *Pretty in Pink* at my place and Santana went to the bathroom and I asked you what it would be like to Ducky, the best friend in love with Molly Ringwald, but he's not able to say anything. Remember? You said it must suck."

"That's why you brought that up? Rachel, I wasn't really listening to anything you were saying that night. You'd already spent an hour talking about how much you loved *The Breakfast Club* and the symbolism and the characters and John Hughes and then you somehow segued into how you wished we would've performed more a cappella numbers in glee club like the Warblers because it would have really shown off our range. By the time you got to talking about Molly Ringwald, I was about three seconds away from strangling you just to get you to shut up."

Santana just looked at me and smiled while shaking her head.

"Yeah, you two are perfect for each other and we're gonna go." Kurt announced and took Blaine's hand to help him up off the floor. "I have an early class tomorrow. It's been... eventful. We should all do this again. Like old times."

"We should go too. I think you two could use some time alone anyway and I have songs to write and a wedding to plan." Mercedes stood.

"But if you two want to make out again in front of us before we go, I mean, I know I'd be okay with it." Sam shared after he stood up next to her.

Mercedes laughed and linked their arms.

"I can stay... if you guys are gonna..." Artie offered and Mercedes used her other arm to start pushing his wheelchair in the direction of the door.

"Good night, guys." She said while continuing to laugh and walking her fiancé toward the door with a little bit of force.

Kurt and Blaine followed them out and Rachel grabbed her purse that had been hanging on a chair in the kitchen.

"I like to think that even though you may not admit it, that I played a little part in you two getting together."

"Oh my God, Berry! Take the damn hint. Quinn and I want to be alone." Santana ushered her toward the door and Rachel just kept smiling as she was practically shoved into the hallway and had the door slammed in her face.

Santana turned around and looked at me. The sofa and about 10 feet separated us. We just stood there awkwardly, each of us awaiting the other's words to ease the tension.

"Soooooooo, this is not the way I thought this evening would go." She finally offered and took a hesitant step toward me.

"How did you see it going?"

"I don't know. I figured I'd get you drunk and you'd forget about not getting into NYU for a couple of hours and then I'd kick everyone out and I'd put you to bed in my room so you could sleep it off and I'd take the couch tonight because I'm a good friend like that and then tomorrow, we'd figure out what to do."

"What to do?" I smiled, wondering what she meant by that last part, but liking the first part.

"Yeah, with your life? You know that whole identity crisis thing you were having earlier? I thought maybe we could talk about it and I could help you figure out what you'd do if you didn't get in. I mean, I knew you would. Total confidence that you'd get in, but just in case all three turned you down, I wanted to try to pitch you staying in the city anyway."

"And why is that?" I asked, knowing the answer. She walked around the sofa, but leaned against the back of it, crossing her arms over her chest.

"You know why. Don't make me say it."

I smiled and walked toward her. I reached out for her arms and uncrossed them for her.

"Please."

She rolled her eyes and put her hands on my hips.

"I like ya, Q. Okay? I wasn't going to say anything because I didn't think you'd be playing for team girl and I thought I'd just feel crappy for a while and eventually I'd have to get over it, but then you jumped my bones in front of a crowd so I think it's safe to say that we're feeling the same way about each other."

"Well, you did have that wet dream about me." I joked with her and put my arms around her neck.

"It wasn't a wet dream and Berry's understudy is about to get her big break because I'm going to kill Rachel. Kurt too. Blaine will find another queen to marry eventually."

"I know earlier I kind of threw you under the bus with the whole girlfriend thing. I blame my over confidence on the alcohol, but I'm okay with whatever you want. This is new for me in a lot of ways and I know it's weird because we're friends and-"

"Don't go backing out on me now, Quinn. You got me to be your girlfriend already. Do you have any idea how lucky you are?" She pulled me into her and kissed me deeply.

A few minutes later, we were putting the dishes in the sink and turning the lights off. She used the bathroom to get ready for bed while I e-mailed my parents and some other close friends from Yale about my acceptance since it was too late to call everyone. When she was done, I changed and did my nightly routine. I turned off all the lights and locked the door as I always do when I stay over and I grabbed my blanket and pillow from the closet and laid them on the sofa. As I was about to lie down, I heard her clearing her throat. I looked up to see her standing in the doorway of the bedroom.

"Um... Q?"

"Yeah?"

"You're not sleeping out here anymore."

I laughed and shook my head sideways.

"Oh yeah, sorry. Habit." I explained and walked toward the bedroom toward my girlfriend. I knew I'd never be sleeping on that sofa again.

"So forgetful, Quinn. I can't believe they let you into Columbia." She took my hand as I approached the door.

"You should tell me more about this wet dream you had about me." I leaned in and my lips hovered over hers.

"Oh yeah?" She asked in a wicked tone while trying to connect our lips.

"Yeah, since you made fun of me, that's probably the closest you'll be getting to reality for a while."

I moved away and walked into the bedroom, knowing she was smiling behind me and that despite what I had just said, her dream was definitely about to meet reality.

Verdict, by comfortablyobsessed (CorvusCorvidae)

It was a big day for Toffee Books, what with new stock arriving, the displays needing to be updated, and the book signing set up for the afternoon. All hands were on deck, as it were, trying to get the place looking great, and ensuring that not too many displays would be in the way later if more people than expected were to come by.

That's how Santana found herself perusing the shop one last time before they needed to welcome the author for the book signing, ensuring nothing was out of place because she knew how anal her boss was about that sort of stuff.

It was a job well done, and she intended to pass on her remarks to Mike, the other staff member in today, for doing most of the heavy lifting and getting it looking great. He was most likely in the back room, and heading that way, Santana spotted someone else in the shop.

It was a woman, taller than Santana was, with blonde hair covering her face. She definitely wasn't staff, nor was she with the owner, which meant customer. Glancing at the door, she saw that, yes, they were still open, although she thought by now they should be closed for lunch as they needed to finalise things, but whatever.

Moving closer, Santana saw the woman eying the books laid out on the display table, picking up last year's best seller, and reading the back of it. She looked to be debating the purchase, and Santana had enough opinions about that book to last her a lifetime, so approached.

"I wouldn't buy that, if I was you," Santana supplied, coming to stand opposite the woman at the display. It was only after she spoke that she wasn't exactly giving the best customer experience, and was going to back track.

"Oh? How come?" the woman asked, looking curious, waiting to hear Santana's verdict on the book. And okay, for once she felt like being honest, because so many people had bought that book and then whined about it. The last thing Santana wanted was another unsatisfied customer, or so she told herself as she replied.

"Starts off great, but the ending, it sucks balls, like 'I want my money back' bad." Yeah, that wasn't the best language to use around customers either, but the woman didn't look offended. "Don't waste your time on it. There are better books out there," Santana finished, pointing over to another display in the corner, where she believed the truly underrated books lay.

"Thanks for being honest, it's rare." Santana shrugged, knowing how true that was, and knowing how lucky she was to have gotten away with saying all that and not getting bitched at.

The woman made to speak again, only to be interrupted by the door opening, and in coming three more people. Santana assumed they were for the book signing and was going to call Mike, when the three people stopped next to the woman in front of her.

"Quinn, are you ready? Everything is set up for you. You can start signing now, and the doors will open in an couple of hours or so, is that right?" the smaller woman asked, turning to Santana as she spoke, leaving her rather bewildered.

"Yeah, that's correct, everything's back here," Mike answered, coming out from the back room, smiling brightly and making introductions.

In doing so, Santana learn that the woman before her, the woman she had advised not to buy that book was also the author of said book; and she was there to promote the follow up in the series.

Fuck.

Quinn Fabray, she'd just insulted Quinn Fabray's best seller, to her face. And she'd used the term 'sucks balls'.

Holy fuck.

Of course, her startled, deer in headlights look was not easy to mask, and just before Quinn and her posse headed to the back of the store, Santana saw the tell-tale signs of a smirk on her lips.

Well, that was surely one way to welcome an author to the book store; and if Santana didn't lose her job after today, she'd be stunned.

—

It felt safer to avoid Quinn for the remainder of her visit at Toffee Books. It was the smart option, rather. Santana knew that. She knew it was best to leave it alone, to stay out of Quinn's way, and to pretend she hadn't said her work was basically crap.

So, for the life of her, she couldn't work out why she was standing before Quinn.

The book signing had been a success, and they'd closed the store, giving Quinn time to finish signing the required number of books before she could leave. Her posse of people had disappeared, along with Mike, leaving Santana alone with her.

There were a million other things Santana could have been doing, like sorting out the mess in the back room, or cleaning up the stacks where people had messily handled them, but no. Instead, there she was, like an idiot, standing in front of the table Quinn was seated at.

"So...I guess the ending isn't that bad," Santana murmured, unsure what to say, causing Quinn to laugh.

"It's okay," she began, halting what she was doing to smile at Santana. "I'm not offended. You were actually politer than my worst critics, so don't worry." That was kinda sad, and also made Santana briefly think she could easily be a critic.

"Yeah but...I mean, it really wasn't that bad an ending, in the grand scheme of things." Okay, so maybe she was trying to be nice. She did feel bad about it, after all.

"How so?" she asked, once again looking genuinely interested, like she had before. Only this time Santana knew not to insult her, or at least, attempt to not insult her.

"Well, it could have been worse, I guess." That was true.

"There is something worse as 'sucks balls'?" Quinn asked, trying to hold back her laughter. And yeah, now she wished she'd never used those words.

"Whatever. Does this one have a better ending?" Santana wondered, feeling a lot like an idiot, and pointing to the books on the table.

It was Quinn's newest book, one critics were raving about, and the follow up to the 'sucks balls' ending book. Surely it had to be better than the last one.

Quinn hummed in thought for a moment, keeping Santana waiting, before biting her lip and grabbing her pen.

"Why don't you read it and tell me," she answered, reaching for one of the signed books and jotting her phone number down inside.

Santana narrowed her eyes, to see if Quinn was being genuine, but it looked like she was. Accepting the book with a thanks, she stood, unsure what to do next. But the move was not hers to make, as Quinn's people came in and began gathering her things for her, telling her the car was ready.

"It was lovely meeting you," Quinn said politely, smiling goodbye, and Santana nodded, rather perplexed. "Oh, and before I forget!" Quinn reached into her bag, pulled out her purse and took ten dollars out.

Now Santana was fucking lost.

"Here's your money back, plus compensation, for reading my awful book." It was said with jest, and there was a smile playing on Quinn's lips, but shit, Santana didn't know what to make of that gesture. She really couldn't tell if Quinn was taking the piss or not, but then her hand was in hers, wrapping her fingers around the note. So it seemed she was for real.

With a parting smirk, Quinn headed for the door, leaving Santana once again feeling like an idiot.

Santana wasn't sure whether she was actually meant to call Quinn. That day had been so surreal, there was no telling what the right thing to do was. Her friends told her that she was being played, and were convinced the number in the signed book was a fake. Mike just about wet himself when she told him what had happened, and thought it best she leave it alone. And surprisingly, she kept her job, which meant Quinn never mentioned it.

That act alone made Santana want to call her. Not to thank her for keeping quiet about it, but to tell her about the book. And okay, when it was said like that, it sounded ridiculous, but whatever. It felt like Quinn wanted her opinion on it, so she was going to try and give it.

It didn't matter that she hadn't finished the book yet, it really didn't.

"Hello?" a voice answered after several rings, and Santana was left standing in her living room, struggling over what to say.

"Hi...eh...Quinn?" Surely it was her, right? She wouldn't have given Santana a fake number, right?

"Speaking?" she replied, and okay, a weight was lifted from Santana's chest.

"It's Santana...you know, the 'your book sucks balls' girl?" That was definitely the best way to describe herself.

"Santana! Hey!" Quinn said suddenly, her voice going from cautious to excited. "How's it going? Have you finished my second book? Any better than 'sucks balls' or have I reached a new low?" she sounded so happy as she spoke, so relaxed, as if they were discussing the weather, and not Santana's ability to insult Quinn's livelihood.

"I actually...I've not finished it yet, but I have a bone to pick with you in regards to one of your characters." That was the main reason she hadn't finished the book, after all.

"Which one?" Quinn's smile could be heard through the phone, and it didn't take Santana long to go off on a spiel of all the flaws in Quinn's leading lady.

Quinn listened, she hummed and hawed, she interjected with her own opinion, and before Santana knew it, they'd been talking for four hours. It was certainly unexpected.

Unexpected, but nice.

"I better let you go," Santana finished, running a hand through her hair, realising she'd probably kept Quinn so much longer than appropriate.

"Yeah, I have some stuff to finish off. However, I do want to hear more about what you think, and if we could, I'd finish this conversation. Though, the time might do you some good, as you need to finish the book before I'll listen to any more of your outlandish comments," Quinn teased, and Santana chuckled, shaking her head.

"You just don't like that I'm willing to show you what's wrong with your work," Santana said, offhandedly.

"Actually, I really do like that." Santana paused, unsure what to say, because Quinn's honesty was a little surprising. "Anyway, take care, Santana, and I hope to hear from you soon. Try and enjoy the book."

"Why, did someone else finish it for you?" Quinn's bark of laughter had Santana grinning as she bid goodbye, and once disconnected, she grabbed the book and went to finish the damn thing off.

So, Santana wasn't going to start saying she was friends with Quinn Fabray, but it really seemed like she was friends with Quinn Fabray. That day they spoke on the phone was just the beginning. When the call ended, Santana figured that would be it, she'd not hear from Quinn again, but that certainly was not the case.

At first, it was the odd text; Quinn asking if she'd read anything good lately, if she listened to music while she read, etc. But then they started talking about Quinn's travel plans, where she was off to next, where the book was being promoted. They were neutral topics, easy topics.

Next, it was the phone calls. If Quinn was stuck in some random town for the weekend, doing a big promotional push, she'd call up Santana at night to talk, to find out about Santana's day. And then this moved to being a phone call every week, to every couple of days, to talking every night on the phone.

When Quinn's promotional tour ended and she was back in town, it was agreed that they'd meet again. Rather than go out for something to eat or to get coffee, Santana put the 'closed' sign over the door at Toffee Books, and locked it behind Quinn.

They hadn't seen each other in months, but with how much they'd gotten to know each other in those months, it was like welcoming back a friend. So the hug shouldn't have been surprising, even though it was.

Quinn's arms were enveloping Santana's body, holding her against her, and Santana's arms were on Quinn's back, gently rubbing up and down. God, it was strange, but she felt connected to Quinn, and having her back again, seeing her again, was just unbelievable.

Eventually, they moved from the front of the store to the back, where the table was set up with some food. It was simple, easy, and private, exactly what Quinn had said she was looking for after months of parading around in front of people.

And like the many conversations before them, it was easy to talk to one another. Getting past the whole 'your book sucks balls' was rather easy, especially when Quinn seemed to blasé about it all. Therefore, with no grudges held, Santana could joke and tease, and Quinn could roll her eyes and return the favour.

"Do you know why I gave you my number?" Quinn asked, smiling at Santana softly. The question took her a little off guard and she shrugged in response.

"Because you're weird and you like people insulting your work?" That really was the only reason Santana could think of, and she even loved the little eye roll Quinn did before answering.

"Because you were willing to give me an honest opinion, even though it would have meant the possible loss of a sale; and at a small time book shop, that's a daring move."

"You do remember that I wasn't exactly being very professional when I gave you my opinion, right?" Definitely unprofessional moves on her part that day, absolutely.

"Yes, but I'm glad you did," Quinn replied.

"Well, I'm glad I did, too, but why are you glad?"

"I know that I can trust you to be honest with me, and you're not just going to tell me what I want to hear." That was definitely true, but Santana couldn't see where this conversation was going.

As if knowing Santana unasked question, Quinn reached into her bag and pulled out a manuscript and placed on the table between them. She looked at Santana expectantly, only to see that she wasn't moving a muscle.

"What's that?" Santana asked, narrowing her eyes at the offending object.

"My next book." It was such a simple answer, and yet it was so complicating.

"You just published your next book." She had, because Santana had spent hours upon hours telling Quinn about how that ending to the series was not great but definitely better than the first ending.

"No, this is my next project," Quinn clarified, sliding it closer to Santana.

"...what?"

"This is my next project," she repeated, only to have Santana shake her head and push the book back towards Quinn.

"No, I heard what you said, I just don't understand why you have it here." Nor why Quinn was pushing it back across the table again towards her.

"I want you to read it." Oh right, of course, like that was going to happen!

"No!" Santana barked, shaking her head, looking at Quinn like she was crazy. Hell, she was crazy, she liked Santana because she insulted her work, that is freaking crazy!

"Yes, please, you must," Quinn argued, tapping the top of it, like that was going to make a difference.

"No!"

"Santana, you have been nothing but honest, and you've raised a lot of valid points about my work. So, I want you to read this and I want your opinion on it, just like the last time."

"No!" she repeated, still shaking her head, with a disbelieving laugh coming out of her mouth.

"Why?" Quinn laughed, unable to stop herself. The pure shock and horror on Santana's face was certainly unexpected, but she should have known the other woman wouldn't have been predictable.

"Because what if you change it! What if you think my ideas have merit and change it and it sucks?" To Santana, that was enough reason for her not to read it, but Quinn wasn't satisfied.

"And what if you think of something and it becomes my next best seller?"

"It'll do that anyway," Santana said, raising her eyebrows at Quinn, trying to see if she would get on the same page of her here. Instead, she was met with a soft smile.

"Your confidence in me is refreshing,"

"Why, because I keep telling you that your work sucks?" Santana joked, and Quinn chuckled, nodding.

"That, and most people would jump at the opportunity to critique a bestselling writer."

"Well, I'm not most people." Quinn certainly knew that.

"So I can't convince you to read it?" she tried, one last time.

"No way. I'll buy it when it comes out and read it then, just like everybody else," Santana finished, pushing the manuscript back to her.

"Okay." Quinn put it back in her bag and then continued on with lunch like nothing had happened.

To Santana, though, something had definitely happened. The gesture alone was crazy, but sweet, and yeah, Santana could definitely now say that she was friends with Quinn Fabray.

A year later, on a dreary Thursday morning, Santana was pulled from her bed by the doorbell going. Stumbling her way through the house, feeling half dead to the world, she pulled a hoodie over her head and grabbed her keys. It was a delivery for her, and after signing her name, she wandered into the living room, package in hand, wondering what the hell she'd ordered off Amazon now.

Last she recalled, it was that fancy blender, but that was already on the kitchen counter, and there was nothing else after that. Or if there was, she'd done it in her sleep, and clearly had a problem that needed addressed.

Opening the package up, she saw it was a book, which she certainly hadn't ordered because hello, work discount. It wasn't until she turned it over and saw the name on the front that it clicked into place what this was.

To Santana, may the ending exceed your expectations, like my life has since meeting you.

"So what's the verdict?" Quinn's voice called, coming up behind her quietly, stopping behind the couch to watch.

"You're a dork, and I love you," Santana replied within seconds, her fingers tracing over the words on the page, like she really couldn't believe they were there.

Getting up, book in hand, Santana came round the couch and leant up on her tiptoes, kissing Quinn soundly. It was enough to leave Quinn panting, her hands on Santana's waist, wanting to return her to bed immediately. But that definitely wasn't going to happen from the looks of things.

"Be good," Santana teased, pecking her lips once. "And leave me alone to read." With those parting words, Santana moved past Quinn, heading back into the bedroom.

That wasn't what Quinn had in mind when she wanted Santana back in bed, but she wasn't going to complain, especially when she was as excited about hearing Santana's verdict on this book as the last.

And she wasn't disappointed, as the moment Santana finished she was out of the bedroom, lifting Quinn's laptop off her lap, and moving to sit on her lap instead. Her lips were then on her, her hands in her hair, and Quinn sat, accepting each kiss with vigour.

"Now that, that's an ending," Santana murmured, kissing her again, smiling against her lips, a move mirrored by Quinn.

Now Santana could happily say that Quinn's book was worth buying, and definitely worth reading, and no, she wasn't the least bit biased, no matter what anyone said.

The One Where They Fall In Love, by empresskris

She knew it was dangerous to agree to that first date with Santana. And she definitely knew she was in trouble after Santana kissed her on date number two. After their first intimate night together, on date number four, she knew there was little hope left for her. But it wasn't until date number seven when Quinn knew she was helpless to fight against it.

She was rapidly falling in love with Santana Lopez.

Quinn watches as her finger traces over the scar that stretches two inches long underneath Santana's ribcage. She is fascinated with it, speculating if it was childhood accident or if she had some sort of surgery. As her finger drags across the slightly raised skin, she wonders if today will be the day Santana discloses its origin.

"These are really good, Q," Santana says as she looks from one 8x10 to the next.

Quinn sighs, placing her hand over top of the scar. Today would not be the day. "I don't know. A few of them I think are pretty decent," she shrugs. "I'm just not sure I captured their emotion."

"Oh you totally did." Santana quietly examines the next photo. "I mean I'm not even sure I agree with this protest and even I'm getting pissed off on their behalf," she says turning around the photo so Quinn could see which one she was referring to. "These are incredible."

"I think you're biased," Quinn says with a smile.

"Why would I be biased?" Santana mumbles as she takes in the last of the photographs.

"I don't know, maybe because you're sleeping with the photographer?" Quinn teases as she drops a kiss on Santana's breast.

Santana peers around the photos. "I'm never biased."

"Never?" Quinn challenges.

"Okay, maybe a little, but never about your work. You are extremely talented." She carefully places the stack of photos on the nightstand. "Truly, you are."

"Thank you," Quinn says resting her head back down on Santana's chest. She lets out a sigh of contentment and closes her eyes, the sun peeking in from the window warming her skin. "I love Sundays."

Santana rakes her fingers through Quinn's hair. "It's because we have Thai for dinner, isn't it?"

Despite being able to hear the teasing smile in Santana's voice, Quinn chooses to correct her. "Because we're alone together and all day we lounge around like a couple of lazy cats."

"True," Santana agrees. "And lucky for me, you're usually naked."

Quinn lets out another noise of agreement. As Santana's hands continue to run through her hair, Quinn thinks back to the night they met, how confused she was when the stunning woman handed her a drink. Butterflies had filled her entire body as she hoped the woman was her date and how her stomach dropped when she learned she wasn't.

Of course Santana hadn't been there to meet her. None of her dates lived up to her expectations. None of them excited her or aroused her like Santana was able to do with a simple smile.

She thought about throwing her hands up and yelling, "Why not?!"

But Santana had waited. She had watched her the entire night, stirring the butterflies within her with each glance in her direction. And that night ended up being one of the best night's of her life.

She thinks about it often and wonders if Santana knew they could've had something special. She wonders if that's why Santana stuck around. Because she just *knew*.

"Did you think that when you saw me at the bar the night we met that we'd end up like this?" She asks.

"Naked? Of course I did," Santana says confidently.

Quinn lifts her eyes and pins Santana with a look. "You know what I mean."

"Oh, *that*," Santana says, her hands still tangled in Quinn's hair. "Well you know, I didn't want you for just one night. I wanted you for as long as I could have you. And I wasn't about to lose you to Carlo Rossi."

Quinn laughs. As if Lacy stood any kind of chance against Santana. "I was just wondering since you didn't even kiss me after our first date," Quinn says as she pulls herself up Santana's body. "I'm curious as to why that is."

"Hey, I had to make you work for these lips," Santana says pointing to her mouth seriously.

"I see." Quinn leans down with a smile. "It was worth the wait," she says as she drags her lips across Santana's.

"Damn right it was," Santana smirks before pulling Quinn down for a kiss.

Quinn pulls away and settles back down on top of Santana having no intention of moving. She closes her eyes with a sigh as Santana presses her lips against the top of her head. "What time's your flight tomorrow?"

"Eight," she mumbles against Quinn's head.

Quinn lets out a frustrated groan. "That's so early."

Santana pushes the hair away from Quinn's face and runs her hands down Quinn's shoulders and along her back, gently massaging her skin. "I know. But it's ten hours to Moscow."

"I just don't understand why it's going to take you *two weeks* to sell this guy high risk life insurance," Quinn whines. "I mean, what does he do for a living to make this trip last two weeks?"

"You'd be surprised," Santana responds evasively. She drops a kiss on Quinn's forehead and shifts underneath her. "I'll be back before you know it."

"Not likely," Quinn pouts. "I just hate it when you're gone that long."

"Me too," Santana says softly. She pulls Quinn tightly against her. "How about I make you lunch? Would that help?"

Quinn grins. "You mean peanut butter and jelly sandwiches?"

Santana lifts her head to look down at her. "I'll have you know, I make the best PB and J on the entire East Coast."

"Yes you do," Quinn agrees even though she's pretty sure there's no wrong way to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

"What about a dog?" Santana says suddenly.

Quinn's brows furrow. "A dog sandwich?" She asks disgustedly. "Like a hot dog?"

Santana laughs and props herself up on her elbows, making Quinn shift above her. "No I mean, what about getting a dog so you're not alone when I have to go away on long trips."

Quinn lifts herself up to look down at the girl below her. "Seriously?"

Santana shrugs. "Yeah why not?" She reaches out and pushes the hair from Quinn's face. "I worry about you when I'm not here."

"I wouldn't mind a puppy," Quinn admits as her smile grows.

"Then it's settled. When I get back from Russia, we'll get a puppy." It hits Santana then how big of a step that might be. Three months in and getting a dog together? Is that too fast?

Quinn reaches for her shirt left carelessly on the floor, Santana's eyes never leaving her. She takes her in: Quinn's messy hair, slightly smudged eye makeup from the night before, and her perfectly flawless skin and it hits her hard.

She sits up, reaching out to stop Quinn from slipping her shirt over her head. "Hey," she says gently. Licking her lips nervously she knows now is the time to tell her. That waiting any longer would be stupid and realizing that she doesn't *want* to wait any longer. "You know how much I like you, right?"

Quinn's smile is lopsided and playful as she turns towards her. "No, I don't know."

"I like you a lot," Santana elaborates. "You asked me about the night in the bar? Well, halfway through drinks with that blind date of yours, I knew you were different. I knew I didn't want anyone else buying you drinks."

Quinn's brows lift. "Halfway huh? It took you that long?"

Santana shrugs. "Well, you know, I had to do a background check on you just to be sure."

"Find anything interesting?" Quinn asks curiously.

"Maybe," Santana smirks.

Quinn smiles and links her fingers with Santana's. "Do I get to run a background check on you?"

"You can try. But you won't find anything," Santana says seriously. "But for real, I more than just like you." She looks down at their joined hands and takes a deep breath. "I love you." Her eyes lift to Quinn's slowly.

As the words spill from her lips, Quinn swears she stops breathing. She doesn't know whether she's going to laugh or cry. "I love you, too," she says breathlessly.

Santana regards her carefully. "You're not just saying that because I said it first, right?"

Shaking her head Quinn leans forward. "No," she says against Santana's mouth before kissing her.

Santana sighs. "Good, because I was really nervous."

"You? Nervous?" Quinn teases gently.

"I know. It's a new thing for me. Not sure how I feel about it," Santana says thoughtfully. She looks at Quinn and smiles. "I'm not very good with the whole verbally expressing how I feel," she admits with a timid smile.

Quinn's own smile grows as she shifts closer to Santana and pushes her backwards the on the bed. "Well you know, you can always *show* me," she suggests straddling Santana's waste.

Santana wastes no time flipping Quinn onto her back and hovering over her with a devilish grin. "Now *that* I can do."

Comfort/Fluff, by headcannonwip (headcannon)

First came the screeching of tires. Then came the banging on the door.

When Santana was finally able to turn the doorknob - after what seemed like an eternity - Quinn pushed her way into the house and looked around wildly. The white box she held was pressed tightly to her chest.

"Where's Brittany?" she asked, slightly out of breath.

"She's out - "

"Passed out?" Quinn asked for clarification.

Santana squinted, her lips pulling back as she shook her head in confusion. "On a date - out. What the hell, Q?"

"What do you mean 'what the hell'? You're the one who told me to - and I quote- 'get the first aid kit and your ass over to B's; it's an emergency.'" Quinn loosened her hold on the white box and held it up by its handle. "I'm here. Where's the emergency?"

Santana scratched her head and averted her eyes - the floor seemed like a good place to look for the time being.

"Santana." Quinn's voice was cool and thick with warning. "Is this an emergency?"

"At the time it was!" Holding up her index finger for her friend to examine, she pouted. "And that's just my finger. He got my legs not even two minutes after Britt left."

Taking the time to calmly set down the first aid kit, Quinn pushed out a long, even breath. This was not the emergency she'd expected when one of her best friends called and asked if she was still CPR-certified - a requirement for Sue's head Cheerios.

"I called when I couldn't find any band-aids," Santana explained thinly.

Straightening her back and standing to her full height, which wasn't much but was still taller than her friend, Quinn sucked in her cheeks and pursed her lips.

Santana winced and added, " ... or the cat."

"You lost Tubbington?" Quinn's eyes widened and immediately started sweeping around the room in search of Brittany's feline bestie. "How is that even possible?" she asked. "He's a 30-something-pound cat, Santana. He can't even fit in most hiding places."

"He's a demon-cat, Quinn! He's full of evil juju and can disappear or camouflage himself or something." Santana's voice rose in pitch and she pointed to the stairs. "He was there and now he's not! I don't know how he moved his fat ass so fast but he did and Britt's gonna be home in an hour!"

Quinn clicked her tongue and spun on her heel, her hand already reaching out to grab the door handle "Good luck."

"You can't go!" Santana stepped in front of the door. "Would you have come over if I told you I lost Lord Turdington?"

"Probably not – no."

Santana raised her brows as if to say "see?"

"Fine." Quinn rolled her eyes. "I'll help find him."

The strategy was to maximize their time by covering as much ground as possible. That meant splitting up - Santana took the upstairs and Quinn checked the ground floor for the over-sized tabby. They agreed not to call for him because Santana insisted he would just ignore them out of spite.

After her mission turned out to be fruitless, Quinn went into Brittany's room with the intention of helping her friend search. The sight that greeted her made her chuckle under her breath.

"This is what best friends do," Santana muttered to herself, half-way under her friend's bed. "They cat-sit on a Saturday night so their friends can go out with other people. Not like I should be able to have a life ... ow! Dammit!"

Santana shimmied out backward from under the bed and rested her back on the nightstand. With her finger in her mouth, Quinn could barely make out the garbled "fuckin' fat-ass cat" her friend ground out.

"Found him?" Quinn asked unnecessarily. She pressed her lips together in an attempt to keep her smug grin at bay.

Santana narrowed her eyes dangerously, glared at the other girl and continued to suck on her injured finger. Not it would do anything to sooth the scratch. With years of battles with this particular cat behind her, Santana knew there was no ointment, lotion or plant goo that would take the sting out of a fresh cat scratch.

"C'mon, it can't be that bad." Quinn pushed herself off of the doorframe and knelt in front of her friend. She put her hand out and calmly said, "Let me see."

Pulling her finger out of her mouth, Santana looked at the wound first, pressing on it when there wasn't nearly enough blood to go with the amount of pain she was feeling. Extending her hand to allow Quinn to see the damage, she turned a sharp glare to the hidden recesses in which the cat waited, she was sure, to attack again.

"You better pray a fur ball takes you out before I get my hands on you," she threatened idly. Turning her eyes to her best friend, she asked, "How's it lookin' doc? Are we gonna have to amputate?"

"I think you'll live," Quinn said with a roll of her eyes and a pat on the back of Santana's hand.

The other girl shook her head in disagreement. "Not if we don't get the Dark Lard out and lookin' happy before Britt gets home."

"Oh, please." With another roll of her eyes, Quinn leaned down so that her head was near the floor and she had a good view of under the bed. Spotting Tubbington's glowing eyes, she made soft kissing noises and patted the floor in front of her.

Santana's frown deepened when, right after Quinn righted herself into a cross-legged position, the demon-cat emerged from under the bed. It turned into a full-fledge pout when he tried to make a space for himself in the girl's lap. Quinn had to lean back as she curled himself into a large ball against her legs.

She watched in astonishment when Quinn scratched behind the cat's ears and the creature actually started purring. "How are you doing that?" she demanded to know.

"There isn't a trick, Santana."

"I've tried for years just to get him to let me to pet him and he always attacks me," the other girl argued. Slowly extending her hand, she winced the closer she came to actually touching the cat. Just as she was about to make contact, his paw came down in a quick swipe.

Pulling her hand to her chest, Santana pointed with her other hand. "See?"

"Don't be ridiculous." Quinn reached over and grabbed her friend's hand. Maneuvering it toward the cat's nape, she guided their joined hands in a petting motion. After a few test runs, Quinn let go to allow Santana to try on her own. She got about one-and-a-half strokes in before Tubbington started tensing.

"Maybe if you stopped glaring at him?" Quinn suggested.

Santana rolled her eyes – which was obviously the wrong move. This time when Tubbington swiped, he made contact.

Standing up with such a large cat on her lap was no easy task. But the pitiful look her best friend kept shooting her as she investigated yet another battle would had Quinn rolling the cat off of her. After heaving him from the floor onto the bed – it took a lot of muscle to pick up the heavy cat when he went into rag-doll mode – she tilted her head in the direction of the bedroom door.

"C'mon," she said, putting out her hand. "First aid kit's downstairs."

They settled on the couch and as before, Quinn put out her hand. She winced when she saw how deep the scratch was. "He really got you that time," she said causally.

"Good thing I told you to bring the first aid kit, huh?" Santana asked, pursing her lips. Her sense of superiority vanished the moment Quinn dabbed her finger with the antibiotic pad.

Ignoring the way her friend sharply inhaled through her teeth, Quinn asked, "And the CPR? Do you think that's going to be necessary tonight?"

Santana tilted her head and crooked a brow at the idea that the night could be looking up after all. "Is that an offer?"

"Not at all," Quinn replied with a laugh. She secured a band-aid around one finger and moved on to the next.

Leaning back heavily on the couch and closing her eyes, Santana sighed. "I remember when you used to be fun."

"No you don't." The other girl laughed again and shook her head. "You never thought I was fun."

Santana cracked open one eye.

"It's true. Brittany is the fun one – the one you play around with," Quinn explained. "I'm the one you call when you're bleeding."

"I called you tonight ..." the other girl reminded her friend.

Quinn simply looked down at the array of band-aids decorating her friend's hands. "I think you just proved my point." Closing up the white box and piling the band-aid wrappers, she added, "You wouldn't have called if you didn't need my help."

"Would have."

"Never have before."

"If I wasn't gonna call you," Santana said, opening her other eye and sitting up, "would I have Valley of the Dolls cued up on Netflix?"

Quinn tilted her head and squinted at her friend in suspicion.

"It's our thing. You know Britt always interrupts and asks when the dolls are gonna show up," Santana explained.

"And what's your thing with Brittany?"

Santana laughed and shook her head. "You don't want my thing with Brittany." Meeting the other girl's eyes, she seriously said, "Trust me."

It wasn't like Quinn didn't know what Santana and Brittany did when she wasn't around – or thought she wasn't around. It confused her, of course, but not because it was her two best friends.

"Doesn't it bother you that she's on a date?" Quinn asked.

"No. Why would it?" Santana's brows pushed together.

Rolling her eyes, Quinn said, "Because she's with someone else right now."

"So am I."

"We're not on a date," Quinn clarified, looking meaningfully into her friend's eyes.

Santana shrugged. "What – because I'm not buying you dinner? It's not like there isn't a movie," she teased. "Totally a date."

"Except it isn't. I'm only here because you were bored and-slash-or hurt," Quinn noted, trying to keep her voice even. She wasn't even sure why she was getting upset.

Santana sighed and pushed her lips together. "Okay, honest to God truth here," she started. "And if you tell anyone, I'll deny it and then make up something about you getting a butt implant or something."

Quinn crossed her arms over her chest and waited.

"I called you because I was feeling miserable and when I'm feeling miserable I think about you," Santana explained.

The other girl stared at her in disbelief before haltingly offering, "Thank you?"

"No, I mean – if I had to choose someone to feel miserable with, I'd pick you," she said. "It's kind of like you said before. It's all fun and games with Britt and I'm the one who takes care of her, right? But when I need taking care of – "

She stopped and leaned back against the couch, again. Forcing herself to meet Quinn's eyes, she said, "I know I can count on you to make me feel better. And I'll kill you if you ever repeat that."

Quinn crossed her heart.

With her lower lip firmly caught between her teeth, Quinn busied herself with grabbing the television and Apple TV remotes. Santana watched, a little nonplussed at the other girl's silence. Quinn shifted on the couch, at first nudging Santana with her shoulder and then lifting her arm to allow her friend to lean against her.

"Let's do our thing."

Two Truths and a Lie (2), by holdontohope

Quinn stared out the window of her Yale dorm., watching the rain fell. She felt like it matched her insides. She was sad, and feeling guilty. She couldn't believe that Finn was really gone. And that she had not had the courage to go home for his memorial service. Lack of courage aside, she also couldn't afford to miss classes, her semester was tough. She was sure Rachel must hate her for having not gone. She sighed and tried to her attention back to her homework.

A gentle knock at her door gave her a welcome distraction. It must be Lydia from across the hall, wanting to borrow a movie.

"It's open Lydia! Come on in and pick a movie out!" she called.

The door swung open and instead of seeing Lydia's blonde hair she saw a dark haired figure enter her room, which made her gasp in surprise.

"Santana, what are you doing here?" Quinn asked, getting to her feet.

Santana walked across the room and embraced Quinn in a long hug.

"Because I know you. You are probably sitting here beating yourself up for not coming back to Lima." Santana said softly. Quinn tried to fight back the tears forming in her eyes as she embraced her friend/two-time fling.

"I'm ok, really I am."

"Yeah, and I'm Rachel Berry. I know you, and I don't mean that in a dirty way," Santana said, not unkindly.

"Fine." Quinn sighed. "I hate myself for not having the courage to go, and for not being brave enough to ask for leave from school."

Santana gently guided them to sit on the bed. "It was terrible, so sad. Berry is more of a hot mess than she normally is. Everyone's just a mess. Kurt...." Santana said shaking her head.

"How about you?"

"I feel terrible for always being such a jerk to him. I was so mean." Santana said shaking her head.

"He knew you cared about him, through all those remarks. I feel guilty for how I treated him...I cheated on him with his best friend...and got pregnant." Quinn said, not caring that the tears were falling now.

"He cared about you too. About all of us, he was a good person, it doesn't make any sense why he had to die so young." Santana said, letting her tears fall as well until the two were both sobbing and clinging to each other.

As they continued to hold each other, Quinn felt herself melt into Santana's arms, and before she realized what she was doing, she was kissing Santana, sloppy, tear-stained kisses. Santana returned the kiss, and Quinn felt her pain somehow lessening, which each nanosecond that their lips touched.

"Quinn....." Santana said pulling back and Quinn was afraid she was going to freak out and leave. "I missed you so much. I came because I wanted to see if you were ok...but also because I just needed to see you. We have hardly talked since....well...yeah."

"I know. I think I was confused or scared you wouldn't like me. But seeing you in front of me now, it is all crystal clear...." Quinn said breaking off.

"What's crystal clear?" Santana asked meeting her eyes.

"That I adore you," Quinn whispered which earned her a soft smile from Santana.

"Right back at you," Santana retored, meeting her lips once again. "All I kept thinking about in Lima was you. How life is so short, we never know when it's going to end. And I don't want to spend another day without you, without kissing you, without telling you how you are the most amazing woman in this world."

Quinn was touched by Santana's rare display of emotion. "You have no idea how much it means to hear you say that.....do you think we can give being together a try?"

"Hell to the yes!" Santana exclaimed and the two burst into giggles that died off and led them into another set of kisses.

"Cuddle with me tonight?" Quinn asked, hopefully.

"Not just tonight, every night babe." Santana said.

Parallel Love (2), by ive-gotta-gay-go-go-ive-gotta-go

(FabrayQS)

December 27th, 2018

Santana's POV

I could not find anything else to stare at besides her stunning face. Her blonde locks hang freely, resting on her shoulders. Her back was perfectly straight; she was a classy and attractive woman. Her fingernails were painted a peach-cream color. Her eyes were like glittering, it struck me a few minutes to divert my gaze from beautiful golden piercing eyes. She was wearing a black blouse that contrasts with her beautiful skin. She looks calm, stunning.

"Whoa." A word escaped my lips in a whisper. She lowers her gaze, pink lips forming a lopsided grin. "You are stunning."

Anxiety ran in my veins, I could feel how my body countered at her crimson color cheeks. I smiled; we smiled at each other. She took a deep breath, placing a strand of hair behind her ear, nervously. I could easily lost myself in her amazing eyes. I have never seen such flawless human being. Her complexion was beautiful, her lips, everything about her was gorgeous.

"Thank you." Moreover, her voice, if I recollected it was sexy yesterday; I cannot find a word to distinguish it today.

I lowered my head, remembering I was only in my underwear and a big shirt. "Hi." I face palm myself. A simple hi? Where was your charm, Lopez?

"Hello." She said, licking her lips. My eyes traced the wet muscle and I had to blink and focus on something else.

"So, last night when I said, I'll see you tomorrow, I'd never realized that it could be possible." She smiled again and my stomach felt warm. "If I knew you were going to steal my milk, appearing on my time, I would've dressed for the occasion." She giggled and immediately it was my favorite sound.

"I am sorry, to interrupt your breakfast, Santana." She said playfully, her lips parted.

I shrugged, closing the refrigerator door. "Can I move?"

"Where?" She asked, inspecting her watch.

"To the table?" I said looking at the floor.

"Try it." I moved one leg, walking toward the table. Nothing happened; I still had a beautiful woman a few feet away. "The energy must have grown at night."

"So technically, this is a reaction of the accumulated energy?" I stuck out and took hold of a bowl from the cabinet, followed by a spoon.

"Um, yes." She said, wrinkling her eyebrows. "I don't get why the energy is changing. It will grow from time to time. We lost contact last night and now you are in my time." I served cereal in my bowl and she smiled. "Apparently, the energy is not evading anything in your time or mine."

"Example, you are drinking my milk." I said smirking.

"Actually, you are eating my cereal."

"I guess we are even." I stretched my hand across the table. Her eyes follows my movements carefully. "Is this okay? May I take the milk?" The white gallon was in the middle of us. She extends her hand sliding the gallon toward me. "Thanks."

She shuts down her computer and I proceed to consume my breakfast. My eyes met hers from time to time. Her shy persona continues to eat breakfast and I could not help but grin. "You can talk, I will not bite."

"I was just thinking."

"About how you need to close the portal?" She coughed followed by a laugh.

"I would like to search the main intention under all of this, first."

"Do you want me to be your experiment?" I said chuckling. "I will agree. Unless you will have to inject blue liquid injections and make me run on a treadmill." She laughed. "I mean, I'm okay with running, just don't like to sweat." My hands felt cold for a second. She is so incredibly beautiful.

Her watch clicked, making us halt the stare followed by her phone; she excuses herself and answers the call.

"Yeah?" She answers the call, looking over her plate. "Okay, I'll be downstairs in a second." She bore on her phone ending the call and grinned toward me. "Well, stranger. It's nice to put faces to the voice."

"No, the pleasure is mine. Thank you, it's nice indeed to put a beautiful face with that sexy voice of yours." She blushed, standing from the table. I studied her figure. She was taller than I was, with an impeccable body and an impressive ass.

"Nice to meeting you, S." She grabs her laptop. "I guess I'll see you later. Good luck with your realtor." She says, walking to the door.

I nodded, "Hey Q?" She turned her body. "Nice meeting you too." She flashes a shy smile, followed by an awkward nod. She took a few more steps to the door before she disappeared in front of me. The energy in that area must be not strong enough for me to see her leaving the loft, but I was not complaining.

I brought my hands to my face, Fuck. How am I attracted to someone who is not in my same timeline? I must be absolutely insane. I smiled ruefully and shook my head. "Hate you, portal." I filled my lungs with air, scratching my nape. "And thank you portal."

I stood from the chair and got ready to meet the Realtor, thinking if I this will be the only time I will see the blonde beauty.

"Good morning, Miss Lopez." I sat on the chair in front of my Realtor. She has my file in her hands. "I didn't expect to see you so soon. Have you changed your mind about selling the loft?"

"No, it's the opposite. I would like to finish the process today. I would like to send all the papers."

She removed her glasses and smile surprised. "May I ask why the sudden change?"

"I left my greedy side behind. I know someone will buy the loft... eventually."

"Of course, it's a beautiful residence. The only trouble we experienced was the timing; you wanted this to sell in a few weeks. Normally it takes months, sometimes years."

"I understand, my obstinate self wasn't allowing me to sleep. Nevertheless, I know everything will be all right."

"Well, this is perfect. We can finish the process and send the documents this afternoon."

"Thank you. Oh," She raises her gaze from the papers in front of her. "I will like to sell it furnished."

"Are you sure? Most of the clients get an extra twenty percent when they trade their personal things."

"I don't care about the money anymore." Was I going insane? Yesterday I was scared, thinking I would never sell the loft. Considering that I had to rent it to the lazy ass man, who will never meet me at the end of the month, because he is unable to compensate the high New York rent. Now, Quinn washed away my stress.

"Okay, sign here."

My phone says its seven forty in the afternoon. I just got home from work. I've never rushed to the subway as today. Just the idea of a possible merging with Quinn was enough to sit in that smelly seat. I sighed inspecting the loft, there are no signs of Quinn anywhere. I walked to the bathroom, my make-up is flawless and my hair is perfect, definitely better than this morning.

I have thought all day about her, about that beautiful stranger in my kitchen. I could not work; all I was picturing was her perfect smile, beautiful eyes and how pathetic I was for looking forward to someone who I did not know.

Where my life turn now? Yesterday, I met this stranger, who suddenly evoke things in me I didn't know it was possible to wake. I felt comfortable around her, simple as that. Maybe the fact that she is living here in the future makes me feel some type of way. I rub my lips with each other. Sliding my finger slowly in them, spreading my lipstick.

Here I was. Looking perfect as if I was going for a date; hoping the portal opens and I can see her again. What if she is not at home? What if the merge doesn't happen? I then walked back to the kitchen. This is where I saw her for the first time, this is where the merge occurred, and this is where it might occur again. My hands were shaking, as I pace like an idiot. The only sound in the loft was of my heels hitting the floor. I don't need heels at home. I shook my head, taking off my shoes. Now I'm smaller than she is. This was stupid. I grabbed my shoes, putting them back on.

I didn't even recognize myself. I walked again to the living room and then rearward to the kitchen. I was uneasy, nervous and I must tell you, I am never anxious, I am Santana Lopez. I don't get nervous. Period.

Focus.

Focus.

"What if she spreads out that door? She will see you pacing around like an idiot." I opened the fridge, seeking for anything that could distract me. "She'll know you are waiting for her." I grabbed the jug of water and placed it on the counter top. I filled the nearby glass and drank. "She will know you are acting like a fucking dork." I placed the glass on the counter. "At least you can pretend you are drinking water and not look pathetic Lopez!"

My heart speeds up its pace when I picked up the sound of the door opening. I turned to my right, looking at my closed door. Silver circles were expanding slowly in the area. It took me a few seconds to understand the energy and how it looks. I quickly grabbed the cup and drank the water, I smirked taking deep breaths. My confidence was back, I can do this.

Maybe, just maybe I was able to see her again. The circles were coming my way and I stood still, seeking for her.

"Santana?" She calls my name, bringing a smile to my face. I couldn't see her; probably the portal wasn't strong enough for her to combine places.

"Hey." I responded. I could hear the door of the closet opening and closing. She must be taking her jacket off. I looked at the microwave time, eight twenty.

"How are you?" She said and her voice was getting stronger with every step she took on the floor. I leered; she appeared in front of the kitchen. Her fingertips caressing her scalp and her head, looking at the opposite wall. She seemed exhausted; her body leaned close to the wall and she curved her back removing her boots. She hasn't noticed my presence. She puts the boots neatly next to each other's and place some other things on the board.

"Good and you?" I stated, walking closer to her. She notices the difference of the tone, as I did with her voice. Golden eyes find mine for a short second. She eyed me up and down discreetly. "Hi." Quinn was like three feet out from me and her beauty was still more noticeable today.

"Hi." She smiled and I met red cheeks again. "You look nice." She said, holding her hands in her front. "Not that you didn't earlier." I folded my arms, playfully and she rocked her head. "I mean, this morning." She shrugged and I laughed.

"Thanks, Q." Quinn takes a deep breath, finding her hands more interesting than my face. "May I ask you something?"

"Sure." She raises her head, crossing her arms.

"How high is the energy around us?"

"High enough for you to merge in my time. It depends, the energy level is between contact and places."

"Contact? That means you can't touch me?" She laughed.

"The energy might not be enough," She stated. "I can see you, because the portal is creating a merge, however, physical contact can dissipate energy."

"Want to try?" I said stretching my hand. "Hello again." She smirked, looking at my exposed hand. Her watch clicked and she pressed a button stopping the sound. Her hand finds mine and I felt electricity running to the nape of my neck as soon as I touched her tender skin. My stomach felt agitated and easy at the same time. She looked at our linked hands, biting her lip. God, she was killing me with simple gestures.

"Hello." I released her hand and she checked her watch. "According to my watch, the energy keeps increasing."

"Why?," I said, walking back to the kitchen. "Is it because of me? The energy must be sensing how hot I am." I open the cabinet, seeking for glasses and wine. I could hear her laughter behind me.

"Are you always this confident, S?"

"Yes?" I said, looking over my shoulder. She smiled wearily and sat down at the table. "Wine?" She nodded and I handle her a glass. "You seem tired."

"It was a tiring day." She took a sip from her glass. "How was your day? Finished everything with your realtor?"

I sat across the table like this morning. She didn't feel like a stranger at all.

"Yes. I guess your future self will get the loft furnished."

"Oh well, thank you for that." She replies cheekily. "I am certain the future version of me in your timeline will appreciate not having to take everything from Boston."

"See? You made my life easier, I did yours."

"Guess we are even."

—

A bottle and a half later, our conversation became fluent. She explained how she likes her job. That she and her sister are partners; and how she wanted to be a time traveler. Our conversation was running; I was addicted to her eyes and perfect smile. Later we completed the second bottle, the energy was decreasing and the room was slightly spinning, or that could be the effects of the wine.

She vanished in the middle of our conversation and I quickly searched for the silver rings.

"Quinn?" I called her. "Did you close the portal already?" I asked and I could hear her laughing. Everything seems funny around her.

"No. Where are you?" Her voice was sweet and rough.

"In front of the table. I can see the circles around you.

"Move closer to me." She said.

"Where are you?" Suddenly, I saw her. "There you are." She clapped and I laughed. Understandably we have drunk and immediately we were experiencing the effects. "Are you drunk?"

"No." She answers, fixing her hair in a messy bun.

Our gazes keep finding each other's. It was a game neither of us dared to stop. Her presence felt warm, her company was right, as if we were not alone.

And we weren't.

I sat along the floor, resting my back along the cabinets next to the fridge. "If you are closer to me, you can't disappear." I tapped the floor, inviting her to take a place next to me. A sweet vanilla scent crossed my path. There was no distance between us. I gaze at her eyes, shades of green blend with rich gold, beautifully. "Your eyes are beautiful." I whispered and she smiled.

I felt slightly light-headed. Her voice sounded loud and clean with our proximity, "Thank you."

I poured more wine in her glass and she sips slowly. "You smell good too." I said nudging her.

"I know." She responds with a smirk on her face.

I laughed. "What, you are Miss Confident now?"

"Always." She winked and pushed me. "Move." She placed her glass on the floor, accommodating her body on the floor and resting her head on my lap. "That's better. Your ceiling is spinning."

I raise my hands. Where should I place them? I put my glass on the floor and place a strand of hair behind her ear. She removed the rubber band from her hair, letting her golden locks rest on my lap.

"Why New York?" She shuts her eyes resting her hands along her belly.

"My friend Rachel moved here after high school, I wanted a change, something big. A city that could run at my pace. I came from a small town in Lima, Ohio."

"Lima? My dad was supposed to station there."

"Really? I mean is quiet, everyone knows each other. It's a right spot if you are not extroverted. Not for me."

"So, you decided to move in with your friend?" I looked at her golden locks spread on my lap. I slowly intertwined my fingers in her hair and she smiled, approving of this.

"She rented this loft. We lived here with my friend Kurt. It was fun and full of drama. Too many gay people around. Then more people started living with us. It was just crowded." She chuckles. "We were young and wanted a dream. Kurt married his boyfriend Blaine and left the loft. Rachel became a Broadway star and eventually it was just me. Rent was expensive, my mom saved money for me to get to college and I bought this place instead. Then it was me studying at NYADA, working at a diner and all that."

"Seems a lot." I started running my fingers slowly in her scalp.

"It's over now. I love this place, but I don't feel like New York is good for me. Now I feel like going back to a different place."

"Yes, I understand. My sister and I traveled a lot when we were younger. My dad being in the military, made us move every two, three years. I never felt comfortable in single place."

"Until now?" She nodded.

"Yes. I love this place. Love this city and surely love my job." She chuckled. "Well, sometimes I enjoy it. My sister started working in the department first. Two years ago, I was studying at Harvard and I wanted to work with her. I wanted to be able to control the past and present." She said fixing her gaze with mine. "I wanted to find out what was possible. To see if second chances were possible." She counted up to the roof. "My parents died in a car accident, two years ago."

"Sorry to hear that."

She smiles and resumes her talking. "My sister taught me everything about time elapses and zones." She took a deep breath. "We worked for months, trying to gather energy to go back in time, to prevent my parents accident."

"Did it work?"

"Yes and no. Frannie and I merged back in time, illegally of course. We managed to make them stay at home that day." She cleaned a tear that escaped her eyes. "We tried everything, but at the end of the day, they weren't there."

"My sisters' asked me to work with her one more time, I declined. I couldn't see them like that again. Still, I knew someplace, deep in the past, they were wholly right and perhaps one day, I can get backward and see them." Her look changed with her speech. I can honestly feel the craving she has to see her parents again. "It's extraordinary all you can do with energy." I gaze in her eyes; I could see everything in them, from love to hate. From hate to sadness. From sorrow to love. From love to hope.

I bopped her nose and she blushed. "It is. And I bet you'll see them again." Her hands covering her face. "Tell me more about yourself." She shrugged one shoulder. "Come on."

"Well, I love bacon." She said fist bumping the air. "I hate not owning a parking place in front of the edifice. I drink coffee twice a day. I go to the café a block away from here; they let me pay my coffee weekly. Every afternoon, my coffee is ready and I only walk in and walk out."

"You drink that much coffee? How can you sleep at night?" She laughed cheekily.

"Sometimes I ask that myself. Today, my coffee for the week was paid."

"You have a secret admirer?"

"Who knows, I got flowers yesterday."

"Perhaps your co-worker." She furrows her brows, chuckling and shaking her head. "What was her name?"

"I don't tell people white carnations are my favorite flower. Oh," She puts forward her body a little and looks at the time in the microwave. "My birthday is in twenty minutes."

"Tomorrow?" She nodded. I looked at the time, it was eleven forty.

"In twenty minutes." She repeats, sticking her tongue out and turning over her eyes. "Don't mind me, I'm kinda drunk."

"Oh, I can't tell." I said playfully, my voice drenched in irony.

"Whatever, S. You are too. Plus, you're caressing my hair... Let's say it's not helping."

"I didn't know that triggers your drunken state, Q."

"It's a mystery." She shuts her eyes once again and I stare at her beautiful expression. "Tell me more about yourself." She says, holding her eyes shut. "What's your favorite color?"

"Red and black. Yours?"

"Purple, I think."

"You think?" She shrugs.

"I think."

I smiled, holding a lock of blonde hair in my fingers. "Your turn. How many boyfriends have you had?"

"Two."

"Girlfriends?" I said, angling my head.

"None." My eyes widened.

"None?"

"Just random girls here and there, nothing official. You?"

"Well I dated most of my male friends in high school." She covers her mouth.

"That's a gay thing, S."

"Ironic, I know. Then it was me and my best friend." She stares at me with a grim face. "I broke it off two years ago. It wasn't working."

"One day I'll work. You'll find someone special." She smirks and closes her eyes for a second time. "Quit staring." She muttered.

"Do you mind?"

"Not really. I can stare too." I grinned affectionately at her. "We can stare at each other."

"Really? Just like that?"

"Yes. Let's make it a staring contest."

I burst out laughing and she squints her eyes, attempting to stay sober and concentrated. "You are not helping, Q. What are we five?"

"You are distracting me. I will not lose."

"I did not agree to this game." I said, but never breaking eye contact.

"My rules."

"I don't know the rules." I smiled, looking straight at her. "I just know the basic rule. Stare."

"My rules are different... and I'm winning." I laughed shifting my eyes from hers.

"Winner!" She yells. "Thank you, thank you!"

I looked at the time. It was almost midnight. "I certainly don't recognize what you won. Never learned your rules." I said taking a sip from the wine.

"There are no rules."

"You said you had rules."

"Did you trust me?" She says, poking her chest.

"Well, yeah."

"Shame on you. Rule number one, never trust a stranger." She holds her weight on her shoulders and drink the rest of the wine in her glass.

"Even though that stranger is not a stranger anymore?"

"Rule number two. Never question a stranger." She snickered and I couldn't help but to join her. The contented silence came back. She closes her eyes on my lap and for a second I thought she was asleep. I could gaze at her face all night long. Everything about her was perfect. Her complexion, the way she talks, her sarcasm and humor. Not to mention her raspy and sexy voice. I could not be more grateful. She changed my life in a simple way. For some cause, I won't mind merging in her time every day, as long as I can see up her beautiful face.

I notice the time and I poke at her shoulder blade slightly. "Hey, beautiful." She hums in response, her lips parted. "Happy birthday."

"Thank you." She whispers. "Rule number three, you can give a gift to the birthday girl." She opens one eye and quickly closes it again. My heart was running; her smell was all over me. Was she giving me permission to kiss her? I leaned down toward her. Her eyes stayed close. I diverted my gaze to her lips. She slowly licks them and I moved forward cautiously, pressing a fond kiss onto her cheek.

A gentle smile crosses her face and for a second, I regret not kissing her pink lips. Hazel eyes meet mine, her cheeks turning hot as she bites her lips. Perhaps, she thought the same thing. Maybe she asked for a kiss on her lips. How stupid was I?

"Can we try that again?" She barely whispers.

She lifts her head from my lap closing the space between us. Her soft lips peck mine in a swift movement. My body felt like it was flying, her hand finds the crook of my neck holding me still. I grazed my lips with hers tenderly. Her soft lips guided me through the kiss flawlessly. Her right hand resting firmly on my neck, her breathing, everything was perfect. My heart was rushing along, I was dizzy and I knew the wine was not causing my drowsiness.

"Are we still playing?" I whispered in her lips and she hummed in reply. "Rule number four, don't close the portal."

Stinky Love, by KatieMacLove

"Santana!" I yell. I swear I'm dating a barbarian.

"Quinn! I can't do this!" She holds the diaper out and starts hacking and rasping for breath, gagging every time she inhales shit smell. "Why is there so much shit coming out of such a tiny asshole?!"

I can't help but laugh at the big bad Santana Lopez brought down to her knees by a diaper... literally.

"Come on, Pumpkin-Pie, she doesn't know any better and she can't help it! Just wipe her tooshie and put some powder and a new diaper on. It's not rocket science." I say from the other side of the room.

"Why can't you help me instead of standing there?!" She fumes, holding her stomach. "Damn it, Quinn! Stop laughing! This is not funny!"

"I AM helping you! I told you what to do!" I laugh. She growls and tries to threaten me by cutting me off. Like she can go more than a few days without some ass.

"Why are you over there then, huh? Why the fuck can't you clean this shit up?" She pokes the baby's ass.

"Because, this is the future of us being parents, San," I walk up and wrap my hands around her waist. "I want us to be parents together. When I see you changing Lilly, I see you changing our kids. I thought you wanted to be parents with me, Baby. Why can't you just change the diaper?" I pout as I kiss her shoulder.

She sighs heavily as she put way too much powder on Lilly. "Q, don't try to guilt trip me. You and I both know I want to be a mother with you. I just didn't know they would smell so bad. I promise you if our kid isn't so smelly, I'll change the diapers. "

"San! Be serious!" I laugh and smack her arm. She giggles while scrunching her nose. She grins that smile I love, making her dimples show and me swoon. Its times like this I want to freeze and store so I can remember them forever.

"It's true! I can't handle that every day! Okay, how about I make you a deal?" She puts the dirty diaper in the trash and motions for me to pick Lilly up so she can go wash her hand. "I'll carry our first born and *you* change the stinky diapers."

"Tana, that's awful of you!" I laugh. Lilly giggles and shows her gummy smile while reaching out for Santana. "See! Even Lilly agrees with me. Don't you, Lilly?" I laugh while tickling her stomach and Santana reaches for her.

She holds Lilly to her chest away from me and dramatically says, "Lilly, don't listen to the Ice Queen. She's full of false statements and bad blueberry muffins."

"Well thanks, Santana! You really know how to make a girl swoon." I deadpan. She laughs and makes the baby high five her with her other hand. Sitting on the couch, she holds Lilly above her head.

"That's right, Lilly. Aunty Tana still gots it! I'll teach you and you'll have the whole school at your feet, baby girl!" Lilly just laughs and grabs at Santana's face. The door opens and we all look over.

"Hey guys! There's momommy's girl!" Frannie walks over and kisses her head while she puts her purse down and sits on the opposite couch. "How was she?"

"Santana or the baby?" I ask. Frannie laughs while Santana pouts and hides her face in Lilly's belly. "Baby, I was just kidding."

She sends a playful glare towards me and Frannie, "You're lucky a baby is in the room and I can't curse your white ass out!"

"Santana, that makes no sense! You just cursed at me! And it hasn't stopped you before!"

"Santana! Must you be so vulgar?" Frannie asks while laughing and shaking her head. Tana just smiles sheepishly and shrugs.

"Aww, my big baby just can't help it!" I say in a baby voice. She laughs and leans over for a kiss. We share a few pecks before Lilly plants a wet one right in the middle of us making all of us laugh.

"You girls are going to be great parents." Frannie says with a content sight.

Santana looks over at me with a small, content smile and holds my hand.

"I can't wait."

Slave to the Games (2), by lacksubstance

It has been fourteen days time since I've laid eyes on Lady Quintina and I fear my heart is suffering from the lack of proximity. I did not realize just how addicted I was to her till such time has passed. I wonder more and more with each passing moment if she feels the same or if I terrified her by laying my lips upon hers so she would never return. I try; with much difficulty to distract myself from thoughts of her to focus on my training instead. The games are coming up for the Coliseum in Rome. It's said to be able to seat several thousand people and have the ability to change environments by flooding. I know I will be fighting for the opening and I must be ready for it, otherwise any chance I can see her again will be lost.

As I hold my training sword in my hand, I stand across from a Gaul known as Puck by trade. He is strong with the attitude of horse's ass, but though he acts like a fool, he certainly is anything but. He is an excellent Gladiator and an even better sparring partner. He pushes me to my limits and knows exactly what to say to fuel anger within me, so my strength really exposes.

He steps forward on his right foot and strikes at me, forcing a block to my front then steps back, placing all his strength into another set of blows much harder than before, allowing me to deflect them back at him. I spin around him and strike at him as he blocks downward. He focuses on my movements as do I him just as I step forward then step to the side just as he strikes for me, I duck out of his way and smack him right in his calves, forcing him to his knees. I face him again and hold the tip of the wooden sword at his throat, he looks at me for a moment holding his two fingers up to surrender.

"You've got weak knees my brother," I comment as I step out of formation to help him to his feet. He smiles and wraps his big arms around my shoulders as we place our swords away.

He laughs. "I should be aware by now that it is your tactic to go for the weakest points of your opponents," he states as I roll my eyes, grabbing my bowl to anticipate having some food inside me.

"Yes and that is why I am the Champion and you are the lonely Gaul who dreams of such a title," I respond as my food is dispersed to me and take a seat on the bench; Puck following soon after to sit across from me.

"I will one day when you get out of this place. I wish for fame and glory, what you wish for is, what? Love? Children? To be scraping for coin and food each day—that's not a life," he says placing his spoon into the food as he shovels it into his mouth. He is the closest person I have to a friend aside from Dani who lives in the house as a slave to my Domina. She was the first person I ever had that I could trust when I was first brought here at ten. She and I are of the same age and same people; just a different village. I have a great love for her, but not the kind I crave with someone so far out of my reach.

"If it means I can be happy and decide for myself what I want, then what is wrong with that?" I ask curiously, knowing Puck and I's ideals were never the same. Granted I imagine the

country knowing of your name and skills is pretty remarkable as well as appealing, but that isn't for me. In a moment all of that fame and glory can slip from your fingertips as you lay on the burning sand in your blood, waiting for your corpse to be picked up and burned.

"I suppose if it is what you desire, who am I to judge you otherwise," Puck says as he places the spoon in his mouth again. It is much harder to have conversations of a possible future with love and children with Puck because he never really understands. His people were not known to be warm to one another, but being born into a family who cherished one another and tried everything they could to protect one another, I crave for it and why should I not receive it?

I have been away studying in Rome with the thoughts of a woman like no other plaguing my mind. She is but a slave to the games and yet I yearn for the moment when I can lay my eyes upon her again. My heart and body aches for her touch and the soft caress that come along with them. She is more than just a figment of a dream for many to see fight for sport, but a reality for which I sneak more.

I have not thought of another in such a way in my lifetime nor do I believe I will in the future. She's forbidden but I cannot imagine another. I pray to the Gods that her soul begs for me the way I her. The next time I see her she will be gracing the sands of another arena to prove she is still a Champion and I hope that the moment she steps foot upon them that her eyes immediately search and lock to mine.

I sit upon the balcony awaiting for her name to be called and the crowd to chant the name of the woman I've fallen deeply for. She fights against men to show that she is of equal to them because she demands respect. She's prideful for the sake of trying to win freedom and not forcing herself to stay confined behind the walls of a ludus. She aches for more in her life, as she should.

"My Quinn you have been gone far too long. How do you fair?" I turn to the voice of Alba, the Domina of the ludus that holds Santana to such a stature—my newest friend. She greets me warmly as I look up at her and kiss her upon the cheek in response.

"I am well at best," I say sitting back down on my chair. "I was just in Rome studying graciously at my father's will," I laugh casually as she returns it.

"Yes well you were surely missed in the ludus these past few days. I worried you had been scared away by are champion's—rather nonconventional hospitality," she chuckles, grazing her hand on my arm as she whispers of my last visit to her home.

"On the contrary, Santana has been giving much thought," My words escape me before I can prevent them otherwise as I chance a look in direction. She stares at me curiously with a smirk I know all too well—she demands to know the details I cannot spill. She cannot know the truth of my visit nor why I returned to the city just to witness a fight in the arena with Santana.

"Has she now? Do these thoughts have any regard to those strokes you gave?" I have forgotten that she witnessed my act and I try with every fiber in my being to not face her curious eyes. I fear she can hear my heart beating wildly in my chest as I try desperately to calm myself.

I no longer had to answer when the announcements begin the start of the battles. She leans towards me and buries her nose into my curled hair. "You're indiscretions are safe with me, but if you ever decide to fulfill your desires, from friend to friend command it and I shall deliver," she sits back and I can feel the smile splayed upon her lips still as I see Santana step out of the gates.

She's dressed in armor as her tan skin glistens from the sun beating down upon her. Every muscle can be seen down to her gift between her legs. I've heard many whispers in Rome about Santana—the news that she will fight in the opening of the Coliseum. Most try to identify if she is even a woman at all with a cock, but I choose to not involve myself in conversation of what gender she possesses. To me, she is a woman—she possesses curves of a woman, breasts of a woman, the face and beauty of a woman; need it not matter what is between her legs.

She pulls her helmet off and throws it on the sand, immediately searching the crowd while my mind screams for her eyes to find me. Her eyes finally land on the balcony and my heart swells at how her eyes bore into my soul. They stay on me throughout the entire announcement of her opponent, who I can see towers over her in stature and nowhere near does her strength match the build he possesses. I fear for her as my heart quickens at the realization that she could die today and yet her eyes never falter—they never leave me till they're told to begin.

Her realization sets in that this man is a monster as he slams his sword furiously down on her shield. She forces herself to hold it up with both hands, maneuvering around him to regain some control. She regains her footing almost immediately, coaxing him with her eyes, making him charge at her. She steps out of his way and tries to strike with her sword for the first time, but it doesn't hit as he blocks her from his back kicking her to floor.

The crowd yells for her to get up as do I inwardly. I pray to Gods for her safety and that I do not witness her demise today, but as I see her opponent ready to strike her where she lies I'm left to cover my eyes till I hear steel collide with more steel. I reopen them and see her standing and I breathe a sigh of relief.

She runs around him striking him with all she has with her sword blocking his blows at the top, before his elbow slams into her nose. She holds onto his bare arms and he slams his elbow into her again—turning the stand beneath them red. I feel my body deceiving me as the pit of my stomach is left feeling weaker by the minute.

Santana is battered and I see her strength weakening with each passing moment. I'm left wondering how much fight she has left within her till I see her opponent spin and slash her abdomen. She screams in agony and tears well up in my eyes as Alba's husband, Antonius yells for her to get up off the ground and finish him.

I can see her grasping her stomach as she falls to her knees. Her opponent holds his sword up at the crowd which is welcomed with cheers, turning back to Santana who kneels before him. He looks at her with a murderous stare, holding his sword at her chest. He holds this pose for a moment before yelling. "This is who you call your Champion?" He laughs throwing his head back wildly. "You must have had terrible challengers from the start or I am just mightier than the said Champion," he continues gliding the tip of his sword to her abdomen wear she has her

wound prior. I can't stop the fear I feel as I listen to him talk down upon her. I am not sure how much longer I can sit here and anticipate the moment I lose her to the arena.

"You are no Champion—but a thing with a cock," he stares upon her twisting the tip of his sword through her wound as she cries out in what I imagine to be utter pain. He turns back to the crowd, embracing them and then it's like lightening.

No one saw it coming—Santana picks up her sword that laid beside her, lifted it so swiftly and charged at the man pushing it into his back, breaking through flesh, muscle and bone baring itself on the other side.

She falls back to her knees as he lays face down in the sand and the crowd roars happily at her win. Antonius and Alba embrace one another as I am left smiling joyfully at her life being spared, but it is only for a moment that I look down and see her still kneeling, holding her hand to her stomach. Her face is covered in blood, but her eyes are back on me and I try with all my might to will myself away from those brown eyes—but they have hold on me.

"Come Quinn you must return to the ludus, you must tell me of your endeavors in Rome," Alba states as we stand from our seats. She places her arm through mine, linking them together to guide me back to the ludus. If it means I can see Santana as she is being healed then so be it.

—

I stand overlooking the training sands of the ludus with Alba, who continues to watch proudly at the Gladiators that her Antonius built. I can see the love they have for one another; however, I sense they are far more vindictive than the visiting nobles can see.

"Antonius says that the medic expects Santana to be healed before the celebrations of the games—masked with a scar of course," Alba states, expecting I was curious of her health since it's been hours after the battle where she suffered a brutal victory.

"We have something quite exquisite planned for our guests," Alba continues as I watch the men spar one on one with each other. My mind wanders to what they have planned, knowing it has to do with Santana though I am not entirely sure what it is.

"What should I expect?" I ask curiously turning to her, but she is still facing the view of the training sands.

She turns her head. "Oh you know the whispers of Santana fucking like a man. There is no truth to it since her cock has never been inside another, therefore it'll be our great pleasure to let the public witness the first time she does and knowing that she fights like an animal, I doubt not that she will fuck like one," my eyes widen just slightly in shock, but it's hidden by a smirk.

I turn back to the training as my heart aches to have a word with Santana to myself. I am sure she has no idea that Alba and Antonius have plans to have her fuck a slave in front of their guests—in front of me; and my mother and father.

While away I dreamt of seeing her above me, taking away my own innocence as I take away hers. It brought great pleasure inside me to think of her tight body against mine. Her soft

caresses embracing my skin, cupping my breasts while she thrusts in me. I could ache to make love to her every waking moment if I could.

"Where does she rest now?" I ask looking up at Alba, who smiles wickedly before pointing straight ahead to a smaller building. I step away from the balcony. "I would like to see how she fairs. While in Rome, I study to be a healer so I am curious to see what of her wounds," I look up at her and she stares on impressed by my education.

There is truth to my words, though I study philosophy and literature—not of medicine. I just must see Santana up close again.

As we walk to her private cell, I open her door and see her laying peacefully on her bed. "I must be alone, if you can place guards on watch by the door, I will be of much gratitude," I lie as to not be discovered of my true desire, but she nods nevertheless and walks away as I shut the door behind me.

I look on from the door and walk over to her side, kneeling beside her next to a pot of water with a cloth sitting inside. The blood has been washed away and now bruises along with cuts splay across her once unblemished complexion. She is still beautiful though and I would still crave for her as such. Her chest is bare, but her abdomen is wrapped in a dressing that has a hint of blood across it.

I run my hand down the valley of her breasts for a moment to feel her warm skin against mine. She is still as solid as I remember her to be weeks ago. I take the cloth in my hands and ring the water out back in the pot, running it down her skin to cool it down. Droplets dance on her skin as I kiss her collarbone ever so gently. I place it on her forehead, her cheek, and just behind her neck as she stirs from her slumber.

Her eyes look as if they deceive her as she gazes upon me. "Lady Quintina," she whispers, having lost her voice from the lack of a drink. I go and retrieve a cup then pour wine into it, before I'm back at her side helping her take a drink of it.

She accepts it as I smile at her liveliness. "You may call me Quinn. I think we are past formalities when my heart beats for you," I breathe the words of honesty, knowing I couldn't speak it to anyone else. She deserves to know the truth of what I feel for her.

"As does mine," she says, taking my hand in hers, bringing it to her lips to kiss it gently. "My heart ached for your return," she adds as I look down sympathetic that I've been away for so long.

"My apologies—I was away in Rome for education, but do not doubt that my thoughts drifted away from you," I stroke her cheek gently and she smiles softly. I lean forward and place my lips upon hers. The softness of them fills me with great joy as she pulls me deeper into her. I sigh in contentment as I move to the bed, pulling away for the briefest of moments. She watches my every move as I go to stand, lifting my dress a little to straddle her waist. I lean forward kissing her deeply again, placing my hands on her breasts as I roll my hips into her cock, making it stir. I crave for it inside me more when I was away than when I first laid eyes on her.

Though I was gone for my education, it was more to regain my sanity. After Santana placed her lips on me for a moment, it stirred a fire within me that I didn't know how to handle, so I embraced my trip to Rome that way I could focus on my studies; however, being away from her only made me crave her more. I am not for certain that I am in love with her, but I do hold such a deep desire for her.

She moans into my mouth as she moves her hands up my thighs, pulling the fabric with her. She trails her hands up my stomach as I continue my motions against her. Her hand travels down my abdomen, allowing her fingers to slide within me. I know my body is ready for her and she moans wildly, nipping at my bottom lip as I suck hers. I gasp loudly as she enters her fingers deep inside me, pushing them deep in and out of me as I roll my hips into her.

I know her cock stirs even more for me than I ache for it, begging for release. She places one hand upon my breast, cupping it in one hand as she continues thrusting deeper into me with her two fingers. She flicks my nipple with her thumb and I can only moan loudly at her actions.

I feel the tightness in my lower stomach building as she continues to push deeper into me, till finally I feel myself letting go and am forced to endure the pleasure coursing through me. She lets me take its course as I pull her lips to me again as I pull her cock from its confines. She is hard and I see the way she demands the release.

I begin to stroke her in my hands as she sighs deeply. "Do you desire me?" I ask as her eyes bore into me as I continue to stroke her gently.

"Till the day I breathe my last breath," she replies and I'm left leaning forward, licking up her shaft. I know I cannot have her inside me the other way because of her wound, but I will not subject her to not emptying her seed at all. She groans as I lick up to her head, sucking gently on what little she has to offer thus far. I take her entire cock into my mouth and moan at the size, not that I have any to compare to. She hits the back of my throat but I still continue to take her entire length for what it's worth, cupping her balls, running my nails gently against them.

She moans loudly, running her hands through my hair as I suck on the tip of her cock. I can feel her body shaking beneath me as I continue to feed myself her, before I feel warmth inside my mouth. She says my name as she allows me to milk her of all she's worth as I watch her pleasure course through her. Never have I seen such beauty and I take pride knowing I am the cause.

As she lays down spent, I come up beside her and place a kiss upon her lips—she welcomes it openly. "You rest well my Champion," I whisper into her ear as she slowly drifts to sleep. I get up from her side regrettably, before fetching my dress off the floor to place it back on. I fix her to her original setting as I turn to leave; saddened by the thought of her being so intimate with someone that is not me soon.

Quinn's Day, by LazyWriterGirl

Every year, on a certain day in spring, Santana makes a conscious effort to be with her girlfriend from the moment she wakes up until the moment she falls asleep. Usually, it's Quinn who makes suggestions as to where they'll be going and what they'll be doing during Santana's visits, and Santana doesn't mind that as long as her input is heard. On this certain day in spring, however, Santana does everything; it isn't that Quinn couldn't do it, but it does make their lives easier, at least in Santana's opinion. This year is no different, and come Tuesday afternoon Santana finds herself wrapped up in Quinn's arms, the pair of them snuggled closely on Quinn's twin bed. She's been awake for hours, but Quinn had trouble sleeping, so she understands why they're getting a late start to the day. "Today, you and I are going to...", she draws it out for a while, seemingly forgetting the sentence until her girlfriend gives her a playful nudge. She laughs softly and takes Quinn's hand in her own, marvelling at how well they fit together, as she usually does. "Today you're not going to go to class," she says, threading her fingers with Quinn's. The blonde gives a small sound of dissent.

"But Santana, my grades—

"Are more than sufficient to keep you on the dean's list, Q. One day won't change that. Now are you going to let me finish telling you about our day?" On any other occasion Quinn would definitely be unappreciative of the patronising tone of Santana's voice, but today is an exception and the brunette would be lying if she said that she didn't do some things a little differently than she normally would. She just smiles sheepishly and nods, cuddling closer into Santana, the warmth of her spread evenly against Santana's side. "That's my girl. So, today you're not going to classes, and we're going to have a day-out."

"Do you want me to show you around New Haven again, S?" Quinn sounds tired, but not unhappy, which is already better than how she normally can be on this day. Santana shakes her head and pulls away from Quinn slightly, turning so that the blonde can see the smile she's wearing; it doesn't take long for Quinn's lips to curve upwards as well.

"Much as I actually like New Haven, I have a better idea...okay, get dressed, but wear something kinda sporty!" Santana rises, clapping her hands together for emphasis; this is going to be perfect, and if she doesn't continue to use words like 'sporty' it will be even more perfect.

"And what about you, are you not going to change?" Quinn's quirked eyebrow is so adorable that Santana can barely resist the urge to forget about her plans and just take her girlfriend right this second, but she can't. It's not gonna be that kind of day, Santana decides as she stoops to grab her own change of clothes from her bag.

"Oh I am, but in the bathroom. I don't think I'd be able to control myself if we changed in the same room, *amor mio*." Santana finishes the sentence with a wink, winning a laugh from the sad-eyed blonde girl still sitting amongst the rumpled sheets. As the Latina steps out of the room she notices how Quinn's shoulders sag a little and she feels badly, she does, but she just *knows* that she can make Quinn happy today.

"Seriously, S, where are we going?" Quinn asks when they drive out of New Haven. Santana just chances a glance at the blonde, kisses her quickly on the cheek, and tells her to just relax. She almost misses her exit about forty-five minutes later, and then it takes her a little while to find the place, but when she does and she brings the car to a stop she can feel Quinn's excitement. When she turns, the blonde has the most precious smile on her face, like she can't believe it that Santana would take her here; it strikes the brunette that it had probably never occurred to Quinn that her girlfriend had been listening when she'd mentioned what she would like to do during her time in Connecticut. *Niantic Bay Bicycles* the shop says, and as the name suggests there are bikes everywhere.

"So, what are we waiting for, *amor mio*, let's go rent some bikes and take a ride around the bay?" Quinn's eager eyes light up at the idea of a bike ride with Santana, and the brunette grins. She knew that Quinn would like it. If it had been any other visit it probably would have been Quinn who'd taken them here; Santana's secretly glad that she was able to beat the blonde to it.

"Hello ladies, looking to rent a bicycle?" A tall man stands behind a clean counter, smiling at them in a non-threatening manner that Santana appreciates; some years, on this day, she's had to deal with quite a number of creeps messing with her girl.

"Yeah, two please," Santana says kindly, handing the man the money he asks for without another word. He gestures for the pair of them to pick out whichever bike they like, mentioning how regular rental fees cover up to two hours. With another smile, as if he can tell that Quinn in particular could use some friendliness today, he hands them a couple of route maps and explains which ones would be best for a refreshing ride through some beautiful scenery. Santana studies the map for a moment, waiting until they're outside and alone with their bikes before she asks Quinn, "So which route would you like to take?"

"Uh... I think maybe the forest path, if that's okay? It's a little shorter, and you know with my back and all—

"Hey, yeah, of course." Santana leans in a little, pleased when Quinn holds her closely. "We can do whatever you want, Q. So let's go!" They walk the bikes to the start of the path, which is thankfully not too far away, and then, with a quick glance to her phone for the time, Santana motions for them to start riding. It's been a while since she's used her muscles like this, she thinks, remembering the days of Sue Sylvester and her suicidal workout routines. She's about to make a comment about it to Quinn when she catches the way the blonde looks in the flecks of sunlight pouring in past the trees. Santana doesn't know how poetic she can be about shit like this; it's always been a bit much on the effort side of things to think in poetry. Still, she knows for sure that whatever kind of animal or flower or moment of artistic clarity Quinn's eyes are reminiscent of, they're the most beautiful things she's ever seen.

"That was so much fun, Santana, thank you," Quinn says once they've returned the bikes and gotten back into the car.

"Oh baby, the day has barely begun," Santana winks, rewarded once more with the ringing of Quinn's laughter in her ears.

"Well what's next?" Again, Santana doesn't respond right away, just shooting Quinn a cheeky grin underneath falsely innocent lashes. She doesn't miss the way the blonde's eyes roll good-naturedly and even though both of her hands are on the wheel of Quinn's Nissan, in her head she's giving herself the world's most badass fist-bump. You, Lopez, are a fucking fantastic girlfriend. And it's not even noon.

"Are you hungry?" She's kind of hoping the answer will be "No" or even "A little".

"A little...", Quinn says. Santana gives herself another badass mental fist-bump.

"Okay. How about some ice cream?" As she says it, she pulls the car to a stop in front of a cute little ice cream parlour. Quinn laughs.

"Ice cream?"

Santana smiles. "Yeah, whatever you want...but take it in a cone, 'kay?" They end up getting the same thing, a simple butterscotch ripple, and Quinn's confused face only grows even more so when Santana pulls her outside. "You're wearing comfy shoes, right babe?" Quinn looks down at her feet and shrugs, eyebrow quirked; she doesn't even need to say it, but Santana's sure she wants to know why the hell they're standing outside with ice cream in hand. "I was thinking we could go for a walk," she says, moving to stand beside Quinn so that, for the first time, the blonde notices the lovely long, nearly empty boardwalk that sprawls out alongside Niantic Bay.

"Oh... Santana, you're wonderful!" Quinn's lips are cold and sweet, and Santana savours the kiss for a moment before linking her arm with Quinn's. "But still...the boardwalk and ice cream, in April?"

"It's warm enough, isn't it? And if not, why do you think I'm here?" She winks and Quinn laughs again so Santana knows that she's doing a good job of being awesome. "Let's go! I want to see what's so great about this boardwalk." Of course, Quinn being Quinn she launches into a softly spoken semi-sermon on the cultural and historical relevance of the Niantic Bay boardwalk, and the whole village in general. It's endearing, the way her blonde hair flies around in the breeze and her tongue pokes out at her ice cream every so often in between sentences and Santana doesn't want to spoil the moment by taking a picture, nice though it would be to have one. They walk for a while, enjoying their ice cream (well, she kind of enjoyed hers and half of Quinn's, but whatever) and their shared presence, until Quinn stops at a spot near a bench and just stands, looking out toward the bay.

Santana can tell that the blonde is probably wishing she had a notebook and a pen, anything to write down whatever thoughts are swirling about in her head; she writes so beautifully, real poetry, and Santana once again can feel that there's something more to Quinn in this instant. It's in the gentle curve of her lips as she watches the sun reflecting off the water, Santana thinks, and she knows that if she were Quinn she'd have already captured the beauty of it in a verse. "You know, Yale is nice and the scenery is great, but I've never seen anything there that made me feel more than I feel standing here." Santana isn't looking at Quinn, but she nods her agreement anyway; the bay really does create this beautiful view. It makes you want to think, she supposes as she leans up against the railing.

"Well the bay is gorgeous, Q," Santana says. She can practically feel Quinn's smile at the words.

"It is... but it wasn't the bay I was talking about, S." Oh. *Oh*. Santana can feel the heat tingling against her cheeks as she turns to Quinn, the breeze leaving whispers against the warmed skin. She's glad that they ate all of their ice cream a little earlier, or it'd be melted by the power of her blush. She knows it won't really show up, but all Quinn has to do is touch her cheek to know how much of an affect her words have on the Latina.

"Charmer," she jokes, furiously trying to fight the blush. Quinn just laughs and takes her hand, continuing their walk, every so often casting a sly glance at Santana; she knows. There's a lot to look at though, and they look like a pair of owls, heads turning every which way trying to take in everything at once. Quinn is mostly silent now, though she does take the opportunity to point out things that interest her. When they reach a certain point close to the main street she asks Santana if she wanted to do any shopping today. Santana shakes her head because she can tell that Quinn just wants to keep on exploring the boardwalk, and today is all about Quinn.

They end up going home a few hours later, right after dinner; Quinn has pushed her body a little too much and she's tired, Santana can tell. The drive back to New Haven is mostly quiet and peaceful, with one of them pressing light kisses against some part of the other's skin every so often. Santana feels sorry when she has to wake Quinn from her nap, but she doesn't know which exact keys are needed to get back to Quinn's room.

"Did you have fun today?" She asks Quinn when they've changed and are just sitting together on Quinn's bed, watching *Sailor Moon* or something along those lines; there's anime girls transforming and fighting shit, but Santana's more interested in her girlfriend than the laptop screen.

"I did...Santana, thank you," Quinn says as she takes the Latina's cheek in her hand. It's a light kiss, and Santana doesn't attempt to make it anything more than what it is; Quinn is *tired* she thinks, and besides, thank-you kisses are sweet.

"You gonna call?" Santana asks. Quinn shakes her head. "Why not?"

"I actually called earlier, when I couldn't sleep. Shelby said she was glad that I called. She was hoping I could have been there, but I told her I wasn't ready." Santana rubs her girlfriend's arms slowly; it *is* Beth's birthday, of course Shelby would want her to be present. Every year on this day someone calls, and every year she isn't ready, and every year Santana pulls out all the stops to make sure that the girl she loves doesn't go more than a few seconds without enjoying herself; Quinn deserves to be happy every day. She also deserves, however, to be a part of her kid's life, in whatever capacity she and Shelby can agree on.

"You will be though, right? You should try it next year." Quinn turns the cartoon she's half-watching off and looks Santana straight in the eyes.

"How can I? Yes I want to be a part of Beth's life, but S, I feel like I can't. This is our special day; every year since I had her you've always done something so incredibly, unbelievably nice for

me and I can't help but feel like I'd be trading you for her..." Quinn sighs. "That's kind of messed up, isn't it? Shouldn't my child, even if she's not connected to me by anything more than biology, come before everything? Even the person I love?"

"I don't think that's messed up, Q, in fact I'm flattered." Santana threads their fingers together, as she'd done that morning. "But really, I think it would be good for you." Quinn nods and then it seems to click. Santana sees it and can already feel her own shaky laughter building in her throat.

"Have you been doing this every year because you don't want me to be sad about Beth?" Santana grins shyly. She knew that Quinn would figure it out eventually, but every year she hasn't has been one more year where she doesn't need to explain why she's done it; how can she possibly tell Quinn, as in HBIC Quinn Fabray, that she's so desperately, totally in love with her that even the thought of her being upset is akin to a whole new level of heartbreak for Santana.

"Well...yeah..." for some reason Quinn doesn't seem to look impressed. "I thought, you know, you were sad about it, so that's why I—it's not that I wouldn't have done those things anyway but—are you mad? Don't be mad Q, I—

"Oh, Santana, I'm not angry. I knew there was a reason I loved you so much." Quinn throws her arms around the smaller girl, squeezing softly. For her part, Santana smiles. "But you know, you do owe me half an ice cream and a shopping day...and that's only for this year! There was also the vase you accidentally broke last year and the—

"Hey, what! Q, seriously? I did all these awesome things and then—

"San, I was kidding!" They laugh together and it's wonderful, Santana thinks. "But in all seriousness, thank you Santana; I'm so glad that somebody could love me as much as you do, to give a day towards making me happy."

—

Every year, on a certain day in autumn, Quinn makes a conscious effort to be with her girlfriend from the moment she wakes up to the moment she falls asleep. The rejection of Santana by her abuela still hurts the Latina deeply. She's glad that somebody could love her as much as Quinn does, to give a day towards making her happy.

Baby Steps, by lightblue-Nymphadora

The First Step...

Santana and Quinn sat with the laptop open, screen already showing the subject of the day. Both were nervous, but for completely different reasons. Santana, because she was afraid Quinn wouldn't want to do this - and Quinn because she was terrified that she actually *did* want to.

"We can't just sit here staring at each other all day," she said gently after a while.

"Guess not," Santana agreed, laughing a little.

"Do you really want to do this?"

"Yeah. Do you?"

"I do." Quinn blushed and smiled when she saw Santana's happy grin. "I'm just...worried, I guess."

"About what Beth will think?"

"No. We've talked before. She understands about us wanting to have kids one day. But I'm worried that this is us just - I don't even know how to explain it."

"I do," Santana said. "You're worried that kids are just the logical next step for us, so we're taking it. You're worried that we're seeing our friends start families, so we're subconsciously pressuring ourselves into doing the same. Keeping up with the Joneses, with rugrats. I get it."

"Does that make me horrible?" Quinn asked, crawling over to Santana and snuggling close to her.

"No, it makes you smart and realistic - as always. But you don't have to worry. Ask me how I know."

"How do you know?" Quinn asked, smiling.

"Because I never got the 'Oooh, babies!' feeling seeing our friends' kids. Not in this way. When I really started thinking about starting our family was when Rachel was in the middle of the adoption process for Tianna. I was one of her character references. It got me thinking about what type of parents we'd be. So no - I know some people see kids as a status symbol or an accessory, but that's not us."

Quinn nodded and leaned over Santana to grab the laptop. She kissed her as she settled back onto the couch. "Okay. We're doing this?"

"We're doing this."

—

The Next Step

"Are they...serious?"

"This is the basic weeding out process," Quinn answered as she and Santana looked over the adoption application. Anyone too lazy or scared to fill this out, probably don't want them in the system anyway."

"True...but look at these questions!" Santana said. "I mean, I get it, but...do you think it hurts our chances that both of us were spanked when we were little?"

"No way. They're just going to want to know that we don't think getting locked in an attic for the day is a normal method of discipline."

Santana snorted. "Right, got it."

"San?"

"Yeah?"

"Do you think we...do you think I need to tell them about Beth on here?"

Santana, who'd been skimming the questions, stopped to think. "I'm not sure. I mean, technically we could put it in the bit about 'other children' but Beth doesn't live with us, and...."

"I'm not actually her mom. How about we call the agency before we submit this."

"I'm down for that plan."

Three Steps Forward

Santana was leaving the gym after her last training session. Her client, an uptight soccer mom with too much time on her hands, had wanted to talk forever after they'd worked out, so she'd be smack in the middle of traffic. Since she'd have to sit and wait any, she decided to do so in the parking lot. When she got to her car, she checked her phone. Seven messages from Quinn.

"Oh god, I'm in trouble," she groaned, speed dialing her voicemail.

"Santana, I heard from the adoption agency! Call me back as soon as you get this!"

"Okay, I know you're at work, but seriously! It's good news!"

"Santana, I'm dying here! Of all the days for you to not obsessively check your phone!"

"Santanaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

By the last message, Santana was laughing hysterically. Reassured that Quinn was neither dying nor mad at her, she dialed her wife. "Q?"

"Oh my gosh, where have you been all day?" Quinn nearly screeched.

"At work, calm down," Santana answered, still laughing. "What happened? What did the agency say?"

"Twin boys! Out in Fort Collins!"

The world went fuzzy for Santana. Twin boys. She knew she should respond, but.... Twin boys. In Fort Collins. It was really happening. Twin. Boys.

"Santana?"

"Er," she squeaked, and cleared her throat. "Oh my god."

"I know, right!"

"Twin boys? How old?"

"Three."

"Do we know their names?"

"Kona and Kai."

"And...what happens now?"

"There's still a lot to do, but Troy said we're a great match for them, and as long as our home visits go okay, everything should progress smoothly."

It took all of Santana's willpower not to whoop into the phone. "I'll be home - damn, it's rush hour - I'll be home as soon as I can okay? Love you!"

"Love you too. Drive like you've got a baby to look forward to!"

"Or two," Santana said, grinning as she pulled out of the parking lot.

—

Two Steps Back

"For the love of Tywin Lannister, Kurt, you do NOT get to decorate the kids' rooms!" Quinn said, fumbling with her house keys.

"Come on! I could be out there this weekend!"

"We already have a theme, a plan, and a method of execution. We're good, and I promise to send you pictures when it's done."

"Fine," Kurt whined. "But I'm holding you to that picture promise. I have to go - Kendrick's outside building our new deck and he needs help."

"Okay. Talk to you soon."

"Toodles, Q!"

Quinn finally got the door open and stepped into the house, dropping her bags by the coatrack. "Santana?" she called.

Santana came out of the kitchen. "Hey, I thought I heard the door open."

Immediately, Quinn knew something was up. "What's wrong?"

"I had a call from the agency today," Santana said wearily.

A little chill of fear stole over Quinn. "What happened?"

"Nothing yet. Come in and I'll explain."

Santana led the way into the living room, where the pair assumed their "We're about to have a not so fun talk" position of spooning on the couch.

"Kona and Kai's mom successfully completed rehab, and she's petitioning to get the boys back."

Quinn spun around in Santana's arms to face her. "You've got to be kidding!"

"No. Troy explained everything, and apparently this is going to take a while."

"But...she can't do that!" Quinn said desperately. "They were officially eligible for adoption - the court revoked all parental rights. Can she seriously just...?"

"She's appealing the court's decision. We can keep going with things on our end, like the home visits and stuff, but we're going to have to wait to see what the appeal brings up. Best case scenario, for us, is that we go through the next few months in a state of constant worry, and the court upholds their decision. Worst case, is that we go through the next few months the same way, and the court gives them back to her."

"But we've met them!" Quinn raged. "We've spent time with them! They know us! It's not fair," she trailed off, memories of her senior year flashing back to her. She wanted nothing more than to fly out to Cincinnati and hug both Shelby and Beth.

"I know. We just have to wait and see," Santana said, pulling her closer.

—

Step Into the Light

"I'm sure this is difficult for you, with everything that's going on."

Quinn smiled and said, "Incredibly. But we're trying to look at it as us continuing to move forward. "They haven't decided yet, so that just means we have more time to get everything in order on our end."

"How are you coping?" the social worker asked.

"This might sound a little strange, but we're trying to keep everything normal," Santana answered. "I mean, we've been talking about it and all, but really it's just a day by day thing. And we've both started going to church again."

"Oh really? That's lovely. A church community can be a wonderful support system. And of course, many people believe strongly in the power of prayer."

"It's not so much that," Quinn said. "We both...well, we were passing Calvary Baptist a couple of weeks ago, and it said the sermon that day was on forgiveness. We know they're an affirming church in terms of our lifestyle, so we popped in on a whim. We'd been dealing with...a lot of anger about this whole thing. Both of us. We both come from religious families, and have had good and bad experiences. But we thought it might help."

Sandra, the social worker, nodded. "I understand. Really, I do. I adopted my eldest daughter, and went through something similar. It's easy to hate the birth parents sometimes, or to judge them harshly - but the fact that you're recognizing that and working through it is a very good thing. Now, not to change the subject, but I do have a few other things we need to get to before your hour is up. How is your support system doing?"

For the first time in a few days, Quinn laughed.

"I'll take that as a positive," Sandra said.

"Well, Nana Judy is already looking up summer camps to send them to when they're school aged," Santana began. "Abuela, that's my grandmother, is planning a family reunion to welcome them to the fold this summer. My mom and dad are in a month long argument about what the boys will call them - because my mom outright refuses to be called 'Grandma' or any permeation thereof."

Sandra laughed at this.

"Then we have our friends," Quinn continued. "Kurt and Kendrick are itching to decorate the nursery and start buying sports equipment, respectively. Dave and Blaine want to throw a baby shower. Mercedes and her husband, Devon, both just want to know when they can come babysit. And Matt's already started buying toys."

"Goodness."

"We've tried to tell them not to get their hopes up, but it's not working. It's not really working with us, either," Santana added.

"Hang in there. You seem to have a great group around you."

Stepping Forward

Santana knew that in the coming years, she would forget about the details of that next month. She wouldn't remember what she and Quinn had worn each day, or the meals they'd had. She wouldn't remember the weather, or the books and toys the twins brought with them for the car ride. All she would remember were two things: the phone call, and fear.

The phone call was first, on Monday night. It had taken Santana and Quinn three rings to answer, because they were both nearly sick with worry. But all Troy had said was,

"We're good! You can go ahead with the adoption."

Well, that wasn't all he had said. Quinn had taken the phone and probed for details while Santana cried for a bit.

That was when the real fear had set in. The fear that something else would go wrong. But nothing had. And they were at the end of the process, other than the last bit of legal stuff. And, on October 29th, two days before the twins' birthday, Santana and Quinn had driven them home from Fort Collins.

As they carried their sleeping sons into the house, they both felt the fear melt away.

Comfort, by noiseinallthequietspaces

“Sannnnn...” Quinn whined quietly, nudging the younger girl’s shoulder gently, her eyes peering upwards imploringly.

Santana glanced down at Quinn’s face, forcing her lips to remain pressed into a flat line as she watched the girl snuggle up on her lap and bury her head in her thighs. “What do you want Quinn?” Santana asked with a raised eyebrow as she lifted her hand to smooth the fine strands of golden blonde hair away from the girl’s forehead. “Not that I don’t like being used as a human pillow, but I do have things to be doing tonight you know.”

“I want ice cream.” Quinn mumbled, rubbing her cheek against Santana’s bare thigh as she spoke. “I hurt.”

Santana’s lips twisted into a frown, her fingers stilling in Quinn’s hair as she soothed the older girl. “Where do you hurt baby?”

“My lungs ache.” Quinn said her voice a soft whine, as she pressed closer to Santana’s radiating warmth, smiling at the feeling of Santana’s hands in her hair.

“Your lungs ache?” Santana muttered the words. “Have you taken your meds recently Baby?”

“I don’t think so?” Quinn answered with a slight shrug of her shoulders. “I took something at breakfast.”

Santana rolled her eyes affectionately, tapping her finger against Quinn’s forehead. “That was four hours ago, no wonder you’re starting to hurt again. Come on, I’ll make you something to eat and then you can take your painkillers.”

“But I just want to snuggle.” The blonde haired girl murmured softly, twisting onto her back to look upwards into Santana’s soft brown orbs. “Please?”

“How about you eat lunch and then you can come back to bed and we’ll snuggle for an hour or so?” Santana asked, lifting her eyebrow as she moved to shift off the bed. “Because you’re not getting away with missing any meds Love, I know you don’t like them, but the Doctor said that you needed to take them to get better.”

“I’m only going to need another surgery in like six months’ time anyway.” Quinn grumbled despite moving to slide out of the bed with Santana. “I don’t like the meds.”

“I know you don’t.” Santana rolled her eyes affectionately, wrapping her arms loosely around Quinn’s hips to draw the girl into a gentle embrace. “But you’re going to take them because perhaps if you get better sooner your lungs will be stronger and we won’t have to do this again next year. I hate seeing you in pain Quinn.”

Quinn frowned, her intelligent hazel eyes glancing sideways to take in the curled edges of Santana’s mouth and the gentle brown eyes framed by rich black lashes. “I’m sorry.” The girl

murmured as she lifted her hands to cradle Santana's jaw with her palms. "I don't mean to upset you."

"You don't upset me Baby." Santana whispered, leaning forward to press a tender kiss to Quinn's lips. "Quite the opposite really, but I hate seeing you in pain when I can't do anything to fix it."

"You do more than the meds could ever do." Quinn replied, her eyes burning with a fierce sincerity that forced a pulse of warmth to spread through Santana's chest. "I love you."

"I love you too Quinn." Santana sighed, tightening her hold on Quinn slightly.

Stay, by ofendlesswonder (ConflictedCalypso)

*Something in the way you move
Makes me feel like I can't live without you
It takes me all the way
I want you to stay*

"Fuck my life," Santana mutters, darkly, and Quinn laughs as the woman sitting two seats over, cradling a young child in her arms, throws a withering glance in their direction. It's loud, in the waiting room, the buzz of voices making it so noisy that Quinn can barely think.

"It's your own fault," Quinn replies, eyes scanning the leaflet she picked up from the low coffee table that's set out on the floor before them, just for something to do. It's been two hours, and she's *bored*.

"It is *not*!" The brunette scoffs, indignant, and Quinn can feel her glaring at the side of her head so she glances up, raising an eyebrow.

"*You're* the one that broke your hand," she points out, nodding at the brunette's left wrist, which is resting kind of pathetically across her lap. It's already swollen to twice the normal size, and she knows from the various injuries she'd seen girls pick up during Cheerios practice that it's pretty bad, and must hurt a *lot*.

"Yeah, but it was your fucking fault." Santana's expression is sour, but Quinn shakes her head vehemently because she's so *not* going to be blamed for this, mainly because if she says it *is* her fault, Santana will never forgive her.

"Was not! I was nowhere near your arm when it happened." She smirks a little, because maybe it hadn't ended well, but previous to Santana's shout of pain, her head had been between the brunette's thighs, and yeah, she wasn't ever really going to be sorry for that.

"Which is why it's precisely *your* fault."

"Why, cause I'm so good in bed?" She doesn't say it loudly, but judging from the scandalised look on the face of the same woman before, she obviously overheard, which just makes her smirk widen.

"Watch it, Fabray," Santana growls, "don't get too cocky." She turns, but Santana doesn't look annoyed – her eyes meet Quinn's and she smiles, though it turns into a grimace when she accidentally moves her injured arm. "Ow, Jesus fuck."

Quinn laughs again, as the woman close to them heaves a huge sigh before standing dramatically and moving to the other side of the waiting room. The blonde reaches for Santana's right hand, twists their fingers together and squeezes gently.

"I'm sorry you're hurting," she murmurs, as the brunette leans to rest her head on the blonde's shoulder, letting out a sigh of her own. "But it still wasn't my fault."

"I hate you," Santana groans.

"No, you don't."

"Yeah, you're right. I don't," she replies, quietly. Things left unsaid hang in the air between them for a moment, but neither of them pushes the issue. They've been sleeping together for months, ever since the failed wedding, neither of them able to stop. That's what brought her to New York for the summer – she's been there for over six weeks, now, and on more than one occasion they've been asked if they're a couple by their friends. Rachel, especially, seems intent on getting them to admit to it – she knows about the sex, because she and Santana live in a house without freaking walls – and refuses to drop it, even when they tell her that it's nothing more.

That's a lie, though, and they both know it. It started off that way, right in the beginning: Quinn would crawl into Santana's bed, or vice versa if the brunette came to visit her at Yale, and then afterwards she'd be kicked out, left to go sleep on the couch.

Now they slept together, wrapped up in one another, the idea of staying separately never brought up again. They went on dates (though they never called it that), out to dinner or to a movie or a museum (much to Santana's dismay, but she always went with Quinn, when she asked).

There's just something... real about putting a label on what they have, calling it a relationship. And when things are real, that's when they become scary. She's never been good at relationships, always ended up heartbroken and alone at the end of them, and the thought of losing Santana... at this point, it's unbearable, and she doesn't want to wreck whatever fragile thing they have.

"I hate hospitals," Santana breathes against the side of her neck after a few moments silence, and Quinn has to agree.

"Yeah, I haven't been in one since... Since the accident." She hates talking about it, those awful few weeks where she'd been trapped in a bed, barely alive, after she'd been so stupid. And the terrifying time after, when she feared that she'd never walk again.

"Oh shit." Santana runs a thumb along the back of her hand, soothingly, and when she glances down the brunette's brown eyes are looking up at her. "I didn't mean to bring up bad memories, Q, I'm sorry. God, I shouldn't have even asked you to come with me, I'm such an *idiot*."

"Hey, hey, it's fine, okay? And you didn't ask me to come with you, I *dragged* you here, remember?"

"I shouldn't have let you come."

“Now *you’re* the idiot, as if I’d let you come here alone. I’m fine, I promise.” And she’s not lying – sure, walking through the doors to A&E had initially sent a shiver of fear along her spine, but she needed to be there for Santana, her not-girlfriend, because that was just what they *did*.

“Do you think it’ll be much longer?” The brunette changes the subject, and Quinn is glad, because even though she knows she can bare her heart and soul to the woman at her side, it doesn’t mean that she *wants* to talk about those few dark months, or of her previous hospital trip, where she’d had to give up her baby, her only perfect thing, and Santana just *gets* it, and God, she thinks that she loves her, really, *really* loves her, and that’s scary, too.

“I don’t know. Is it still hurting?”

“Like a motherfucker.”

“I told you to take some aspirin - ”

“I don’t think that an aspirin or twelve is going to help *Mom* - ”

“You are *so* - ”

“Careful, Q, don’t insult the invalid.” Quinn just rolls her eyes, glad that at least despite everything else, Santana’s humour was still in-tact. “I am so fucking hungry, do you think we could sneak like, a burger in here or something?”

“I’m gonna go with probably not.”

“Damn.” It’s only a few minutes later when a doctor appears, calling Santana’s name – Quinn has to drag the reluctant brunette after the guy, who leads them to an empty treatment room, takes one look at Santana’s hand, and then promptly calls a nurse to take them to get an x-ray.

“More waiting?” Santana whines when the nurse leaves them in another room, where three other people already sit. “How about instead we waste away a little time in that closet we just passed?”

“You cannot seriously be thinking about sex right now.” Quinn shakes her head as she pulls Santana down to sit on one of the uncomfortable wooden chairs, picking up another leaflet when she notices that they’re different ones, here.

“Uh, when am I *not* thinking about sex?”

“Well... okay, good point. But seriously?”

“Yes, seriously, I never even got to finish before.” Quinn can practically *feel* the brunette pouting, but she studiously ignores her, attention fully on how to spot the signs of lung cancer early. “I’m horny and in pain, and maybe it’ll make me feel better.”

“No.”

“You *suck*.”

“Only when you ask nicely.” Thankfully, they don’t have to wait nearly as long before Santana’s ushered away for an x-ray, shooting Quinn a panicked look as she’s separated from the blonde, who can only shrug helplessly and collapse back onto the chair to wait until the brunette returns.

She checks her phone for the first time in a while, sees that she has several *where are you??* texts from Rachel, along with several missed calls, and decides that now is as good a time as ever to let her friend know what’s going on.

She sends her a quick text *we’re fine, just had a little accident – I think Santana’s hand is broken but we’re just getting it checked out to make sure. Please don’t worry, we’ll be home soon. Oh, and if you could order a pizza or something for when we get back I will love you forever, and I’m sure Santana would feel the same.*

Do I even want to know how that happened? Comes the reply, a few seconds later, and Quinn bites her lip to stop a smile.

Yeah, probably not.

Won’t ask then – text me when you’re leaving and I’ll order food :)

Quinn’s glad, to have Rachel in her life. She’s glad that Santana has her, too – she knows the brunette must be pretty lonely, with everyone else off at college, when she doesn’t really have any idea what she wants to do. She’s still taking her dance classes, but Quinn knows that she doesn’t really enjoy them as much as she claims to, is trying her very best to convince Santana that she doesn’t *have* to have her life planned out at their age, but surrounded by Rachel, who’s known what she wants to do since she was a kid, and Kurt and Blaine, who are both pursuing their dream, she knows it must be hard.

When the brunette finally re-emerges, it’s only to beckon Quinn into a side room, where a different doctor from before stands inside, setting up the image of Santana’s arm on the screen on the wall. Quinn’s always been fascinated by stuff like this, by how technology is advanced enough to be able to map the contours of bones beneath skin, and she gazes at the black and white film intently, searching for something that doesn’t look quite right.

“Well, Santana, the good news is that it’s not a break,” the doctor finally speaks, tapping at a point on the x-ray around the brunette’s wrist. “But you do have a slight fracture – it’s not the easiest thing to see, but it’s just here.”

He taps at a bone, but Quinn can’t make out anything that looks like a fracture, and judging from Santana’s frown she doesn’t, either.

“Can I ask how you damaged it?”

“I, uh, fell on it. Kinda.”

“With your hand outstretched? That’s how it most commonly happens.”

“Yeah, I guess so. I don’t really remember.” Quinn remembers, though, feeling Santana’s weight shift ontop of her – she’d had her hands wrapped around the framework of her headboard, thighs on either side of Quinn’s head – as her hand had slipped, slammed into the

wall behind hard, bearing the brunt of her weight as she'd fallen, quickly followed by a howl of pain.

"Okay, well, you're going to need a cast, I'm afraid – not a full one, just over your hand and about halfway up your lower arm. It'll take about fifteen minutes to apply from start to finish, okay?"

"Yeah, alright."

"And I'll also prescribe you some pain medication, to help manage it over the next few days – the pain should lessen over time, as it starts to heal itself. Have you taken any medication yet today?"

"No."

"Well, you might want some before we start putting the cast on. I'll just go and get a nurse to help set things up – stay here for a moment."

"I can't believe you fractured my wrist, Q," Santana says as soon as he's gone. "Dick move. You'll be making it up to me for at least... until I get the stupid ass cast their sure to put on off."

"Again, not my fault!"

"That thing you did with your tongue? *Totally* your fault."

"Not my fault you can't handle me in bed." Santana's mouth drops open, astounded, and Quinn smirks, because it's not very often she gets the upperhand when it comes to sex – Santana has all the experience there, but she's learning.

Before the brunette can retaliate the doctor returns with a nurse in tow, and after handing Santana two painkillers they get to work on setting the cast on her arm. She tries to keep the brunette talking, seeing the grimace of pain that spasms across her face as they straightened her hand out in order to make sure everything sets properly, and grabs for her other hand, twisting their fingers together.

"So not part of today's plan, for you to see me crying like an idiot," Santana mutters when they're done, but Quinn just shakes her head, wiping the tears of pain that had split from the brunette's eyes away gently.

"If not friends, who can you cry in-front of?" She teases, just trying to make Santana smile again, but instead the brunette is just regarding her with an usually serious expression. "What?"

"Nothing. I just..."

"Juuuust?" Santana throws a furtive look over her shoulder, to where the nurse is clearing away the unused pieces of cast, and where the doctor is typing away at a computer in the corner.

"I love you." A beat passes, where Quinn can only blink – if not for the blush that stains Santana's cheeks as she hastily looks away, then she'd be sure that she'd misheard. "Don't make a big deal over it, okay, if you don't feel the same then just - "

“*Such* an idiot,” she breathes, squeezing Santana’s uninjured hand slightly between her own. “Of course I love you – do you think I’d brave a hospital for you if I didn’t?”

“Well you did put me here in the first place, so really it’s just common courtesy to come with me - ” She cuts Santana off with a kiss, feeling unusually bold, and feels the brunette smile against her lips – she doesn’t remember the last time she’s been quite so... *content* with life, despite their setting.

Maybe it’s not the best place to say their first I love you’s, to cement the start of a relationship that should have started months ago, if only they’d been able to admit what they were becoming to one another – but then, they’ve never been ordinary, together or apart. Unusual is, sometimes, what they do best.

And besides, it’ll be a good story to tell the grandkids, one day.

Sunrise Over the Cape, by Onceforthefun

Quinn was on the train heading to New York, her stomach twisted in anxious knots. She needed the train to be there now. Why was it taking so long? Had the train ride to New York always taken this long? Quinn didn't think she would survive the almost two hour train ride, so she pulled out her cell phone, rereading the series of text messages that had set her on this journey in the first place.

October 14th, 2013

You (9:00 a.m.): How'd opening night go?

You (10:00 a.m.): Oh come on, Lopez. Are you still asleep? Get up!

You (10:05 a.m.) Are you pouting because I didn't say good morning to you first? Good Morning, Santana!

You (10:10 a.m.): Fine, lazy bones. Stay in bed! :-(*

You (3:15 p.m.): Are you still in bed?

You (3:40 p.m.): Brittany must have really worn you out on Lesbos. ;-)

You (6:33 p.m.): Don't forget to stretch!

You (10:45 p.m.): Good Night, Santana!

October 15th, 2013

You (9:00 a.m.): Morning!

You (10:50 p.m.): Good night, Santana!

October 16th, 2013

You (8:45 a.m.): Morning!

You (11:15 p.m.): Good Night, Santana

October 17th, 2013

You (8:30 a.m.): Morning

You (9:00 a.m.): Are we ignoring each other again? Why? We didn't have sex recently, lol, so you shouldn't be.

You (9:12 a.m.): Were we supposed to? You were all into Brittany the last time I was home.

You (10:34 a.m.): Santana?

You (11:00 a.m.): You haven't asked me what's up with Puck.

You (11:00 a.m.): I let him hit it from the back. And the front, and the side. All night long!

You (11:01 a.m.): I gave him head in the subway.

You (11:02 a.m.): Really? Nothing. I'm sending you a naked pic of me right now.

You (12:30 p.m.): You're mad at me, aren't you?

You (12:30 p.m.): What'd I do?

You (2:30 p.m.): Please don't freeze me out again.

You (10:15 p.m.): Good night, Santana.

October 18th, 2013

You: (8:32 a.m.): Morning

System Message: Error sending text. Unable to send.

You: (8:33 a.m.): Morning

System Message: Error sending text. Unable to send.

The second time she'd gotten that message she dialed Santana's number, surprised when she got the dial tone. *"The user you are trying to reach is no longer available. If you have reached this message in error, please hang up, and try your call again."*

Of course it was an error, so Quinn hung up and tried her call again. *"The user you are trying to reach is no longer available. If you have reached this message in error, please hang up, and try your call again."* Quinn actually physically dialed the number this time, but the message was still the same.

You (9:31 a.m.): Hey Rachel?

GoldBerry (9:31 a.m.): Quinn! Hey! Oh my gosh, how are you?! I missed you at the opening! You're still going to come see the show as soon as you're done with finals, right?

You (9:34 a.m.): Yes. Sorry I couldn't be there.

GoldBerry (9:35 a.m.): It's alright, Quinn! I know you were there in spirit! I got your flowers. Sorry I didn't return your texts or calls. The show has been so hectic!

You (9:37 a.m.): It's okay, Rach. Hey, I tried calling Santana, earlier. Is her phone disconnected?

GoldBerry: (9:38 a.m.): It shouldn't be. Hold on.

GoldBerry: (9:53 a.m.): That's odd. I got a user no longer available message.

You: (9:54 a.m.): Me too. Ask her why her phone isn't working?

You: (10:01 a.m.): Rachel?

You: (10:10 a.m.): Rachel, are you there?

GoldBerry: (10:15 a.m.): She's not here.

You: (10:19 a.m.): Where'd she go? When's she coming back?

You: (10:25 a.m.): When you say she's not there, do you mean that she's not there as in she went out, or she's not there as in

You: (10:26 a.m.): When's the last time you saw her?

GoldBerry: (10:30 a.m.) Opening night.

You: (10:31 a.m.): When's the last time you saw Santana?

LadyFaceLOLz: (10:32 a.m.): Well helllooo to you, too, Quinn!

You grunt because when did Santana hack into your phone and change Kurt's contact information?

You: (10:32 a.m.): It's kind of important! When?

LadyFaceLOLz: (10:34 a.m.): Oh Gosh, I'm not sure...Blaine has been absolutely wearing me out! It's our new workout regime! Umm...a few days ago. Why, what's up goldilocks?

You (10:35 a.m.): How long ago is a couple of days?

GoldBerry (10:35 a.m.): Quinn?

LadyFaceLOLz (10:36 a.m.): Erm...oh, wow, I know I saw her the morning after opening night...

LadyFaceLOLz (10:36 a.m.): I don't remember seeing her since...

LadyFaceLOLz (10:36 a.m.): I think she said that she was going to Dani's or something. I know she was saying she was going somewhere. That maybe she and Britt were planning another trip.

Quinn's temper flared at this because honestly, how much money did they really think that an 18-year-old girl who worked in a diner actually had? When Santana mentioned that she and Brittany were going on an extended vacation to Greece, she had been doubtful. Santana didn't even have a passport as far as she knew. What was going on with her best friend, and why was no one else noticing?

She, at least, had the excuse that she was in New Haven and didn't see her all that often, but these were the people who lived with her, and she was almost fuming at Rachel because although she understood that Rachel was busy with her performance schedule, how did you just miss that you hadn't actually seen your roommate in a week?

You (10:37 a.m.): Has no one questioned where she's getting all of this money to keep taking these extensive vacations?

LadyFaceLOLz (10:40 a.m.): Her mother did give her that check.

You (10:41): It wasn't blank. God, has no one been paying attention?

You (10:41 a.m.): Sorry...worried. I think something might have happened to her. Her phone's been disconnected.

GoldBerry (10:45 a.m.) Quinn?

You (10:45 a.m.): When's the last time you've seen or talked to Santana?

You (10:45 a.m.): When's the last time you've seen or talked to Santana?

You (10:45 a.m.): When's the last time you talked to Santana?

You (10:45 a.m.): When's the last time you've seen or talked to Santana?

You (10:46 a.m.): Is Santana with you?

DivaJones (10:47 a.m.): Hey Quinn! Ummm....Opening night. Why, what's up? What'd she do now?

TroutyMouth (10:50 a.m.): Quinn, my fair maiden! Rachel's performance. How are you?

GoldBerry (10:50 a.m.): Quinn?

You (10:50 a.m.): She's disappeared. Call or Text me the second you hear from her!

BabyDaddy (10:55 a.m.): Graduation.

You (11:00 a.m.): Was talking to Kurt, and Mercedes, and am waiting to hear back from Brittany, and Artie. So far no one in New York has seen or heard from her since the performance. She's your roommate, how did you not notice that she was gone?

Quinn dialed Brittany's number. It went immediately to voicemail.

GoldBerry (11:05 a.m.): Oh, please don't, Quinn. I feel bad okay, but you try having a balanced life and starring in a Broadway play! I can't do it all!

You (11:10 a.m.): One of your best friends has gone MISSING, Rachel!

You (11:15 a.m.): Britt...really worked about Santana. Please tell me she's with you!

You (11:15 a.m.): *worried.

GoldBerry (11:20 a.m.): Her suitcase is gone. So are most of her clothes. Some pictures. Quinn, I think she's gone.

It was at this point that she had hopped on board the next train to New York. Something wasn't right. Sure, Santana could be dramatic from time to time, but she wouldn't just leave without telling anyone. And her phone was off. She wasn't just not answering her phone, her phone service was cut off. Quinn had a really bad feeling in the pit of her stomach that this

wasn't some call for attention. And why wasn't Brittany answering? Were they together? Did something happen to the two of them? She tried calling and texting Brittany for the entire train ride, but got no response.

She hadn't yet called Mrs. Lopez, because if this was one of Santana's pranks she didn't want to get her mom involved. (And if it was that, she was seriously going to beat the shit out of Santana because *really?*)

Quinn preferred to think that Santana was just waiting to jump out of a closet and say surprise, or something as asinine as that because the thought of it being something other than that...Quinn just couldn't bear to think about it. She and Santana had been best friends since she had moved to Lima. She had been her first friend here, her best friend, and even though they had wax and waned over the years, Santana was still the girl that she would always come home to. She may have never been Santana's first choice, but Santana was always, and would always be Quinn's.

As the train chased the afternoon towards New York, Quinn remembered the last time she had actually been physically in Santana's presence. Santana had, of course, been wrapped up in Brittany, and Brittany seemed on a bid to get Santana back, and they hadn't talked much because the last words the two of them had said to each other were mostly intangible gasps and pants and calls to higher powers, so things were kind of weird. But she had noticed then, things were... off...with Santana. Off in a way that couldn't be dismissed as simple regret for that night. She had appeared to have lost a lot of weight, and she could have sworn that Santana had been wearing a wig.

And then there were their conversations. It had been nearly two months since they had last Facetimed, and no matter what time she had talked to Santana over the phone, the girl had seemed not tired, but just plain flat out worn out. Quinn wanted it to all mean nothing. She hated the pictures that her mind created that screamed otherwise.

GoldBerry (1:01 p.m.): Kurt's here. We'll be at the station waiting for you.

You (1:01 p.m.): should be pulling in shortly. I tried Brittany...still not picking up.

You (1:15 p.m.): Britt, please call when you see this.

You (1:15 p.m.): Do the others know?

GoldBerry (1:16 p.m.): Only as much as we do.

You (1:16 p.m.): Can you call Dani? Ask her if she heard from her?

RollnRiver (1:30 p.m.): Been in classes all day. Opening Night of Funny Girl. Something up?

You (1:31 p.m.): Not sure. Let you know.

RollnRiver (1:32 p.m.): Word.

GoldBerry (1:45 p.m.): Spoke to Dani. Tell when you get here.

GoldBerry (1:46 p.m.): Called out sick for tonight.

GoldBerry (1:46 p.m.): Quinn...

As soon as the train stopped, Quinn was up on her feet, and heading for the exit doors. As she made her way to the platform she realized that she hadn't thought to pack a bag before she boarded. Thankfully she had remember the essentials: money, purse, wallet, cell phone.

Rachel looked about as panicked as Quinn felt when she made her face out of the crowd. Kurt was standing by her side, his face blank as if he were reserving judgment, but his eyes gave him away.

She took several deep breaths, trying to calm herself. "What did Dani say?" she questioned.

Rachel shook her head, indicating that she didn't want to talk here. They left the station and found a diner close by. At about the same time that they sat down Quinn realized that she hadn't eaten anything yet, but at the thought of food, she felt like she might throw up. She didn't want food, she didn't want comfort, she wanted answers. She wanted to hold Santana in her arms, and inspect every inch of her to make sure that she was okay, and then she wanted to slap her for making her worry this much. *Why* wasn't Brittany returning her calls?

Quinn shot Rachel a pleading look, and the expression that crossed Rachel's face had her wanting to pull her hair out. "Rach? Please just tell me? How bad is it?"

"It's...", Rachel seemed unable to figure out what to say. A speechless Rachel meant the end of the world. *The end of the world...*? Quinn felt her stomach churning. No, no way, it wasn't that. "They talked...I mean Dani spoke to Santana. On Wednesday. Santana called her."

"*What did she say?*" Quinn demanded, mere seconds away from grabbing Rachel by the collar and shaking the information out of her. Rachel had that look that said that she was doing a very poor attempt at putting her acting skills into use because her wide doe-like brown eyes were bright, as if she were trying to give off the appearance of being calm, but instead looked as if it were only a matter of minutes before the waterworks started. Rachel was brilliant on stage but had never mastered acting in real life. "Good-bye. She called her to say good-bye."

Before those words could even register with her, her phone rang in her pocket, causing her to jump a foot in the air. "*Santana?*" she questioned, forgetting to check the caller before she answered.

"No," the usually bubbly voice responded. "It's Brittany."

Ice seemed to invade the diner, dropping the temperature, and a chill shook her body. She suddenly felt cold all over. "Hey Britt." The greeting came out sounding strangled. Quinn was grateful when Rachel's reached out and held her hand in her own. She had to calm down. She was merely panicking, she told herself. She was letting her imagination run wild. She was making a big deal out of nothing, and Brittany was about to tell her just how much of a complete idiot she was being. Of course Santana was with her and she hadn't answered because they were *busy*.

For once the jealousy and hate that Quinn held in quiet reserve for Brittany wasn't present, and she was just held in complete appreciation for this girl, and the girl that she loved. Brittany knew what was going on, Brittany would make everything alright. For once Quinn didn't care if it was Brittany that got the girl, just as long as the girl was okay.

"I know you're worried, Quinn, and I'm sorry, but this isn't a conversation that I wanted to have. I would have texted you back, but I don't want to try to tell you any of this in a text. I don't need you to ask any questions right now, I just need you to listen. Can you do that?"

Quinn nodded, forgetting that Brittany couldn't see her. Brittany seemed to know that Quinn had though because she let out a breath. "Good." Quinn put the phone on speaker, held a finger up to her lips, and placed the phone on the table in between them. "I know you've been calling, I turned my phone off. I needed some time. Santana's not with me, and I don't know where she is, she wouldn't tell me, but she's...okay." The heaviness with which Brittany said that made it clear that she was anything but. "She just needs some time alone. She's...working through something."

"What does that mean, Britt?" Quinn demanded.

"I can't say anything else other than that she said that she'd call when it was time. I can't tell you anything more. She made me promise. "

"Brittany, what aren't you saying?"

Quinn was positive she didn't imagine the slight sob before the line went dead. Quinn instantly called Brittany back but the phone went immediately to voicemail. "She turned her phone off," Quinn said, dully. Where was Santana? Why was she doing this to them? To her? They were her friends. *She* was her best friend. Bonded for life.

Quinn felt a squeeze on her hand, and she looked down, remembering that Rachel was holding it. Her eyes slowly climbed until they reached Rachel's brown eyes. She didn't realize that her own eyes mirrored the glassy quality of Rachel's. "You said that she didn't clear out her stuff, right?" Quinn questioned, hopefully, grasping for whatever she could hold on to after Brittany's call.

Rachel shook her head, but it wasn't a comforting gesture. "No. She left some clothes, most of her things. She took her toothbrush."

"So she could be coming back." Rachel fidgeted. Quinn noticed, her eyes narrowing, locking in on the gesture. "What do you know that you're not saying?" Rachel winced as if Quinn were about to hit her. Quinn wondered what look she was carrying that would make Rachel think such a thing.

"She took the Glee picture, you know the one of all of us after we won nationals? And the picture of you, her, and Brittany, her family. The ones she left were just random photos: buildings, of New York, and Lima, things like that, nothing with people in it. Dani-,"

Quinn had forgotten about the conversation with Dani. Santana had called Dani to say good-bye? "Dani said that Santana called to apologize for the abrupt end to their relationship, but that

she was glad that she got the chance to get to know her, and that she'd never met someone who was so...well it doesn't really matter. Quinn...you don't think that Santana's thinking about," her voice lowered to a (Berry) whisper (which wasn't that quiet at all), "committing suicide do you?"

That thought would have crept into her mind if she had heard about Dani's conversation before Brittany had called, but she quickly dismissed it. "She wouldn't do that," Quinn said with certainty.

"There was something else," Rachel said. Blearily, Quinn looked at Rachel. "Dani said that Santana said that if I called to 'tell Quinn that Santana left her watch behind'. Whatever that means, do you know what that means?"

"She said 'Quinn'?" Quinn demanded desperately. Rachel didn't know what to do with this new expression on Quinn's face. "Santana specifically said Quinn? Not Brittany, not 'her', but Quinn?"

"I repeated it verbatim the way Dani said it, and as you know I have...never mind. But I looked and didn't see a watch anywhere Quinn-"

Quinn started to laugh at the same time that tears fell down her face. How could her day be made and her world be collapsing all at the same time? Time. Both Brittany and Dani said that Santana mentioned time. It had been a message solely for Quinn, because who else would have understood it? But the reference could only mean one thing.

"I have to go," Quinn whispered, standing up. "I need a car. I have to go!"

"Go where, Quinn?" Rachel questioned.

"I think I know where Santana is. I have to see her."

"I'm coming with you," Rachel decided.

Quinn shook her head. "You can't, Rach. I promise, I'll tell you everything but I have to do this by myself, okay?"

Quinn looked at Kurt for the first time since she had sat down. Kurt had been oddly quiet this whole time, and that wasn't something that Kurt usually did. Their eyes met. He knew. He might not know it all, he might only suspect, but he had put something together, and from the look in his eye he was heading toward the same conclusion that Quinn was just now reaching.

"There's an Enterprise a few blocks from here. I Googled it," Kurt said, softly, holding up his phone.

Phone! Shit Quinn had just left, she hadn't packed a bag or anything. She didn't bring her phone charger. "I need to go back to your loft."

Rachel and Kurt both looked confused, but they didn't say anything about it as the three of them made their way to Bushwick as fast as the New York traffic would allow, i.e. not fast. Quinn was anything but calm as she sat sandwiched between Kurt and Rachel in the cab. It would be dark soon, and she knew she had a drive ahead of her.

It didn't take long for Quinn to find what she knew she would: underneath Santana's bed was a packed bag hidden away. Quinn opened it just to be sure that it contained what she thought it did: Clothes. Quinn's clothes. When they first started sleeping over at the other's house they started keeping drawers at each other's home. Santana must have brought a handful of Quinn's clothes with her when she moved first to Louisville, and then to New York. Sitting on top of the neatly stacked pile, was Santana's cell phone, the charger resting right beside it.

They may have stabbed each other in the back every now and then, they may have slapped each other and done worse, but Quinn couldn't deny that they understood each other like no one else could, and at the moment Santana was trusting that Quinn understood her completely. She shouldered the bag.

Kurt found another Enterprise, and he and Rachel came with her. They each kissed her on the cheek as she got into the car, and she saw Kurt's knowing look as she pulled into New York traffic. It took an hour before she was out of the city, and heading north on I-95. Quinn longed for her iPod, but settled for the satellite radio, leaving it on the first station it landed on.

The music wasn't enough to stop her thoughts as she ate up road, heading towards the Cape.

"You want to spend the night, S?"

"Can't. Already told Brittany I was spending the night with her."

"Why didn't you guys invite me?"

Santana shrugged, casually. "Figured you were busy."

"Ever since she came back, you never have time for me anymore."

Santana hesitated, hovering. She quickly pressed her lips against Santana's. "It's not like that."

Quinn bumped past Brittany on her way to first period. "How was your sleep over with Santana?" she said huffily.

Brittany looked confused. "Santana didn't spend... Oh...it was great. We had so much fun!"

"Quinn?" Santana's voice was a harsh whisper, her hand soft and warm on top of Quinn's. "Baby, you have to wake up, now. There's all these people that are here, waiting for you to come back to them. You can't let Berry spend the rest of her life thinking that this is all her fault. She's Jewish, you know how much they like guilt. And the driver, he's been here every day to check on you, and he feels really bad, and he keeps saying that he has a daughter, and if you stay where you are, he'll probably become a drunk or something. Not to mention you won't see your daughter again. Puck still needs you because he still holds out hope that you two will have another baby together, and if you crush that he'll have nothing. Mercedes needs you because you're her sister from another mister, and Artie, well, I'm sure there's some reason that he needs you, too, but I can't think of anything other than that people's lives are simply better because you're in them. You can't leave your mom. She's barely hanging on as it is; she'll fly off the edge if you leave her alone.

"And of course Britt and I need you. Especially me. Who else is okay with knowing that I find the idea of a door closing with a sense of satisfaction so hilarious that I giggle just thinking about it? Who else will I rely on to smack me down when I become too big of a bitch? Honestly, just knowing that I get to be in the same place that you do, it makes my existence Quinn. I'm holding your hand right now, can you feel it? If you forget where you are, and start to feel like you're floating away, remember that my hand's here; I'll never let you go. You ground me to Earth, Quinn. You are my lifeline so you can't go because without you I would die. Alone."

At first Quinn thought that it had started raining, until running the windshield wipers didn't seem to do anything, but wiping her eyes did.

"Are you crying?"

Santana ducked her head underneath the sheet. It was a funny sight considering it was the only part of her body that was covered. "I'm sorry," Santana mumbled.

Quinn was instantly self-conscious, and she pulled the sheet around her. "What are you sorry about?"

"I'm sorry for tonight. I know I shouldn't have, but I wanted to know what it felt like, just once."

"You're sorry we had sex?" Quinn questioned. Santana cautiously peaked her head from beneath her pillow. She nodded.

Quinn started to slide off the bed. "Wait, Quinnie, let me explain!"

"What's to explain? Sorry I was a bad lay."

"Shut up, Fabray! I'm sorry because I've wanted to be here with you for so, so long. God, you can't imagine, but now things will change."

Quinn felt that same uncomfortable feeling that she got every time she saw Santana and Brittany kiss. "It doesn't have to," she mumbled.

Santana started crying harder. "I wish that were true, Quinn. I really, really do."

Time kept pace with her as she drove. The sun was starting to set, and Quinn looked at it praying that she was wrong about this.

Santana played with the chains on the swing. "What are you reading?"

Lucy showed her the cover of the book. "The Restaurant at the End of the Universe," she answered shyly. She wasn't used to people paying her attention. Usually their eyes just traveled over her, or looked through her.

Santana smiled at her. "Have you read The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy?"

Lucy nodded eagerly. "I've read all of them! This is my third time reading this."

"You know what always kind of blew my mind about that book? What I thought was brilliant?" Santana questioned. Lucy shook her head. "No, what?"

"It's called the restaurant at the end of the universe, so you think that it's like the last planet in the universe, but then you find out that it's not about a place at all."

The drive to her aunt's place in New Bedford was somehow the shortest and longest drive Quinn had ever made. The whole way she kept hoping that she was wrong about this, that the conclusion that her mind made up was the wrong one. She felt like she should have called Mrs. Lopez, confirmed what she did or did not believe, but that almost seemed like cheating. Santana had laid down breadcrumbs for Santana to absorb, it would have been wrong to just go grab a loaf from the store.

So this whole time Quinn had been operating on an idea, but it was such a completely unfathomable idea that just thinking about it brought tears to her eyes, and made her want to turn the car around. But she couldn't. She had started out on this journey, and she had to finish it. She owed her friend that, at least, and if, if it turned out she was wrong, then the only thing that it would have cost her was a missed day. For one of the few times in her life, Quinn was really hoping that she was wrong.

The last thread of hope Quinn had been clinging to, went crashing to the ground when she pulled to a stop at her aunt's cabin and she saw a car parked on the side. Quinn sat in her own car for a long, hard, minute, before she forced herself from it. Out in the fresh air, Quinn felt suddenly overwhelmed by everything, the sounds, the smells, the way the grass made it seem like the very house was floating on water. It was easy to pretend that they were at the end of the world, here, and Quinn was sharply reminded that the end wasn't a place, but a time. It was time.

The car could have belonged to anyone, but the moment Quinn stepped out into the air, it was like she could feel Santana, she could hear her heart beating in between the birdsong, taste her in the breeze that blew up to greet her, smell her. Santana had always been the orbit that Quinn had been drawn into, and today was no different.

She walked around the side of the house to the back, where the earth disappeared into the water. Quinn had taken Santana here. Twice. The summer after her freshman year, and the summer after they had graduated from high school. It was Quinn's place. It was deeded to her when her mother's sister had died, and a trust paid for the upkeep. It wasn't an expensive piece of real-estate. It was an unimpressive house, a cottage really, in the middle of marsh grass and nowhere, that had snakes, and rats, and mosquitoes as their closest neighbors. But, and Santana agreed, every minor annoyance was worth it, for the view from the back porch.

"It's beautiful, isn't it?" Santana questioned. Quinn's heart fluttered at the sound of her voice. Quinn had never figured out how a voice could be sexy, angelic, acidic, and vulnerable all at the same time. "The sunset?"

"It is," Quinn replied. She realized the sound was coming from the lounge, but she didn't want to move any closer, scared of what she would find when she got there. She found herself unable not to move closer to it, closer to her.

"I told Brittany to tell you that I didn't want any company," Santana scolded.

"She did," Quinn said, stepping closer.

"You didn't listen."

"Did you think that I would?"

Santana exhaled a sigh that seemed to be half amusement, half irritation, but all tired. "No, Quinnie. I knew you'd be here to help me watch the sun rise over the cape at the end of the world. Do you remember what I said, the last time you and I were here?"

Quinn brushed away a tear, and nodded. She was now directly parallel to the lounge chair, but she didn't turn. "You said that this place was the most peaceful place you've ever been to, and that if you had the choice, this is where you'd come-," Quinn didn't finish the rest of the statement.

"Did Brittany tell you?"

Quinn shook her head. "No. The entire drive I was praying that I'd be wrong, that I'd come here, and it'd be just as abandoned as it was when we snuck up here that summer."

Quinn was thrown off by Santana's chuckle. The sound sounded so inappropriate given the situation. "You weren't wrong," Santana said. Her aloofness sent fire through Quinn, and she glared at Santana, and froze.

"Don't panic," Santana said, almost as if it were a challenge. That fierce stubborn pride that Santana had carried around with her through the years was still there, she was still Santana, only she wasn't, not at all. She wasn't wearing one of her scandalously inappropriately short, body hugging dresses that clung to every inch of her delicious body and you couldn't help think about doing anything but running your hand along the curves so obviously on display. No, she was dressed simply in a plain white-cotton blouse, and khaki-linen pants, the latter of which was partially covered by the thick blanket that covered her legs. The clothes didn't cling to anything, either, they swallowed her whole. Even her chest was deflated.

Her sensuous, olive colored skin was waxy, clammy looking. The eyes that stared back at Quinn weren't the soft, warm, chocolate brown ones that she used to believe she could stare into forever. They weren't covered by the fake eyelashes that Santana never seemed to be without. They didn't burn with a fire that was translated by a tongue so sharp it could easily cut down even the most confident person. The eyes that stared at her were sunken in, and pleading. They were vulnerable.

I was right about the wig, Quinn thought grimly, as her eyes moved to where Santana's thick, dark, wavy locks should have been, but instead was replaced with a bandanna that rested underneath a wide brimmed white and blue sun hat that did nothing to cover up the fact that the bandanna and the hat lay too flat against her head.

"It's gone," Santana stated, noticing where Quinn's eyes had rested. "When it started to fall out, I donated it to Locks of Love. I figured someone would appreciate the irony."

Quinn nodded, not yet finished looking. Santana's eyes stayed trained on Quinn's face, while Quinn continued to take inventory. God she was so thin. So, so very thin. This was Santana, her Santana, lying in front of her, a mere ghost of what she was.

The final thing that Quinn's eyes took in was the silver IV stand that stood at the side of the lounge.

Santana swallowed. "Say something, Quinn." Quinn's eyes flickered back to Santana's, watching as her chest moved in and out with each breath.

"What happened to your breasts?" It was the most asinine thing to say given the circumstances, but she blurted it out without thinking.

Santana was laughing and crying at the same time. "I had the implants removed," she explained. "I kept dreaming that it happened, and you would just see these mounds, perky and upright while the rest of me was,"

Quinn must have let something show on her face, because Santana's ghost of a smile was instantly gone. Her mouth snapped shut.

"Why?" Quinn questioned.

Santana rolled her eyes, a tear falling in the process. "God, you don't know how many times I've asked myself that. *Why me?* As if someone else deserved," she waved her hand, "This. No one does, and I'm not so much of a bitch as to wish it on someone else, either. It's good that it's me. I've made peace with this."

Quinn shook her head fiercely because she really didn't want to hear that. How could Santana make peace with something that Quinn hadn't known about? This was worse than Brittany. At least when Santana was with Brittany, she was still around. Quinn felt the ground spinning beneath her. She didn't want to be here, but she knew she couldn't be anywhere else. "No, not that. Why are you *here*? Why are you here *alone*? Why did you turn off your cell phone? Why didn't you tell Brittany where you were going? Why, Santana?"

"Why?" Santana repeated, her voice sounding bitter. "I've been wasting away for months! I left the loft on Sunday morning, and it's taken until Friday afternoon for anyone to notice!"

"I noticed!"

"What took you so long to get here then?"

"It's not like you haven't shut me out before, Santana! We've gone months without talking before!"

Santana nodded in acknowledgement. "I figured that the roomies would have at least noticed, though, but I guess Rachel's been busy with Broadway, and Kurt's been busy with not me. It's a good thing I wasn't lying in some dark alleyway or being tortured off in some room, waiting for salvation."

"Don't say that," Quinn said, fiercely. She was thoroughly pissed at both Rachel and Kurt, but she didn't want Santana to think that they didn't actually care about her. "They care about you, but you did a very good job of shutting everyone out. You shut me out."

For the first time, Santana hung her head, embarrassed. "I know. I thought I was brilliant. Push any one who could get close to me as far away as possible. But then I got dragged into that damned Glee Club, and I started to care if people cared about me, and Berry made hella sure that she found a place in my life. I kept expecting her to realize what was going on, she can be awfully damned persistent when she wants to be, but she didn't. I was eternally grateful that she got distracted with that play."

Santana looked back at Quinn. "Aren't you going to sit down, Q? I know your back must be killing you. I swear I don't bite."

Santana made room for her on the lounge, and Quinn tried very hard not to notice just how little space Santana actually took up. Quinn shook her head.

"You scared of sitting with me?" Santana questioned. It was a challenge that was said with her usual bravado, but Quinn could hear the hurt in her voice, could see it reverberating in her eyes.

Again Quinn shook her head. "I want to be able to still look at you," she replied. Santana got the same curious look on her face that she had flashed her when Quinn had said that she enjoyed slow dancing with her at Mr. Schue's wedding. She smiled, brightly, and Quinn's heart broke because the smile still belonged to Santana, and for once it wasn't directed at Brittany.

Santana patted the space beside her. "I promise you can stare all you want later."

This time Quinn obeyed, sitting down beside Santana. She kicked off her shoes before wrapping the blanket around the both of them. "You're cold," Quinn noted.

"I'm always cold," Santana returned.

Quinn hesitated before she pulled Santana in her arms, as if she was maybe trespassing in territory that she didn't belong, but Santana didn't object. To Quinn's delight, she fell back against her, cuddling into her side and borrowing her warmth. Her head rested on Quinn's shoulder.

"I'm sorry, Quinn." Santana said. "I thought I could do this all on my own, but I couldn't."

"Why would you think you should have to?"

"I just wanted to protect you. I'm a disaster."

"You're perfect."

"Look at me, Quinn."

Quinn did. "You're perfect," she repeated, and she sealed it with a kiss. Santana pulled back in surprise after only a few seconds, but she was smiling. "Why would you think that I wouldn't want to go through this with you?"

Santana shrugged. "You try to protect the ones that you love."

Quinn nodded, vigorously. "Then you should have let me try to protect you," Quinn returned. And that simply they had finally admitted something that they hadn't their entire time of knowing each other. It really wasn't fair that she finally got to be this close to Santana when Santana was wasting away.

Santana gently nudged Quinn's chin, until Quinn looked up. "If you have questions, just ask them instead of mulling over them in your mind. I need to hear your voice. We've spent too much time in silence."

"Lesbos?"

Santana gave a small laugh. "That was a lie. I needed something to explain my absence, and Brittany figured that it sounded Brittany enough that no one would challenge it, like they would if, say, she just said we were going to Italy or something." That was pretty smart of her, because no one *had* challenged it. "It allowed us to disappear for a few months without anyone noticing."

"Where were you really?"

"Vanderbilt. In the hospital. They wanted to try a more extreme form of treatment. It was a last ditch effort."

"When'd you find out?"

"Summer of freshman year. Before we came here. That's why I was so keen to get away. The doctors told me I had about two years." She laughed. "I asked them if I had to give up cheerleading. They said as long as I felt strong enough, I didn't. I didn't have too many problems for most of the time."

"How much does Brittany know?"

"She knows I'm dying." Quinn flinched at the words. "She knows I've been sick. She knew that I spent some weekends in Dayton in high school, but she didn't know that I was telling you that I was sleeping over her house until you found out."

"Louisville?"

"Treatment center in Cincinnati. Brittany knew. She knew I was getting worse. We, I broke up with her because I knew how much of a strain the illness was causing her."

"How long were you two together?"

"From senior year until then. *Landslide* was about me dealing with the illness but when Rachel called it out for being some Sapphic expression, I just went with it. Brittany and I have been having sex since freshman year, but things didn't get intense between us for a long time. I didn't want it to, but Brittany wouldn't let me let it go."

"Mr. Schuester's wedding?"

"Best night of my life," Santana said earnestly. She twisted so that she could look at Quinn. "I have loved you since I was 13 years old. I didn't know it at the time, but I saw my life in your eyes when I first saw you. If life were different, if I didn't have this sickness in me, I would have made you my girl a long time ago. I, I thought you felt this way towards me that summer, but then you pulled away once school started, so I thought maybe I was seeing something that wasn't really there. I tried to ignore how I felt about you, but every now and then it would creep up, and I'd catch myself staring at you without realizing it, or I'd be anxious without knowing why, and then I'd hear your voice, and that's all it would take for me to calm down."

Quinn's stomach twisted in a knot. "How much time?"

Santana chewed on her lip. "Less than a month, I was told. No more than two."

"They were wrong in high school."

Santana coughed. "They're not wrong now," she said, softly. "I can feel it. I'm tired."

Quinn held her close. "Are you scared?"

"You wouldn't believe how scared I am." Santana lifted one of the arms around her enough so she could kiss it. "But having you here, makes it so much easier."

"When can I tell the Glee kids?"

Santana sighed. "Once I'm gone."

"You're not alone, San."

"Will they even want to see me?"

"Of course they will," Quinn said. "They love you."

"Quinn?"

"Yea?"

"I love you."

"I love you, too, Santana."

Santana shook her head. "I mean like really, really love you. Like there's no one else on this earth that I love more than you."

"I've never loved anyone other than you," Quinn replied.

When night thoroughly covered them, Quinn helped Santana up. Quinn was surprised that Santana wasn't staying in the master, but in the bedroom that the two of them had shared both times they'd come. Santana hesitated beside the bed, and Quinn wondered if it was because she didn't want Quinn to be in the same bed with her. "I...is it okay if *I* hold *you*?" she finally questioned. Quinn smiled, and in response, shifted towards the center of the bed. Santana crawled in behind her, a thin arm resting across Quinn's abdomen. She smiled when she felt a kiss pressed to her neck, before she felt Santana cuddle into her.

They were awakened when the nurse arrived. Quinn stood by, trying to fade into the walls, until the nurse turned to her. "Are you going to be around?"

Santana looked at Quinn, and Quinn turned to look at her. "I am," Quinn declared.

"Well, then, you should know what I'm doing, and what you can do to help."

So then the nurse showed Quinn what to do. How best to bathe her, showed her how to massage her muscles, made up a routine for Quinn to follow. The nurse came two times a day: in the early mornings and in the afternoons. Santana had a medic alert band in case something happened in the night, but it was made clear that Santana wasn't going through treatment. Nurse Palmer was a hospice nurse. Santana was through with surgeries and medications, she was here to die.

On one afternoon after Nurse Palmer left, Santana turned to Quinn with a bright smile. "It will make you happy to know, Q, that I'm famous. I'm actually in medical books because it's so rare for someone my age to have my illness."

Quinn didn't ask what she had, because she didn't want a name to the faceless illness that was taking her best friend and lover away from her, and Santana didn't offer that information to her. She guessed, and she found out she wasn't incorrect, that it was something that inhibited her motor functions, but she never bothered to find out its name. "I guess there's always that," Quinn mumbled.

Their days fell into a routine. After the nurse left, Quinn fixed breakfast, and helped Santana dress, and they would eat on the back porch. They didn't move much from the porch for most of the day, actually. Santana never tired of looking over the water as they talked about anything and everything, and even when it got cold to the point that she *shouldn't* go outside, Santana still wanted to be on the porch. They talked. They talked about everything. They talked about the first time they knew that they were in love with the other. They talked about old routines. They talked about Santana fixing up a car with her father. They talked about their families, even Russell.

"I hated your dad from the first day that I met him," Santana admitted. "I wanted to slap him for standing there, looking down on me, and I was so, so mad, but when I saw you, it all disappeared."

They colored together. Quinn drew, and Santana shaded, and Santana made jokes about Quinn's old obsession with Rachel Berry's anatomy, and convinced Quinn to make an erotic cartoon strip of which Santana spent hours coloring in the vagina.

Santana sang. Santana sang for hours, song after song, and when she finally stopped, Quinn picked it up because she thought it was a shame for the music to end. They held hands, and kissed, and spent useless hours just staring into each other's eyes. They made love, and fell asleep in each other's arms, and woke up with the sun beaming down on them.

"I could get lost in your eyes," Santana greeted Quinn when she woke up to find her staring at her. Quinn could only smile because she already had.

Maribel and Antonio came on the weekends. It was the only time that Quinn was aware of the passage of time, because there wasn't a single clock in the entire house, and if it weren't for their visits, she would have thought that they were living in one continuous day.

"I love you," Santana said, when her parents were gone. Quinn had lost track of how many times those three words had been exchanged between the two of them, but her heart warmed every time she heard the words again.

Sue and Schuester came together, because sometimes they did that, and they still refused to admit that they were actually friends. Sue told Santana that she still expected her to take over for her one day, and Schuester sang her a lullaby which Santana surprisingly didn't roll her eyes at. Even more surprising, she asked him to rap *Rapper's Delight*, and sat through it with a straight face. Santana asked if she could have one of his sweater vests, so he gave her the one he was wearing and she wore it over her clothes for a whole week. Sue cried and when Quinn caught her, she blamed it on Schue's singing.

The Glee kids came. Not all at the same time. Mike visited the day before Halloween. Tina the week after. Sugar showed up two weeks before Thanksgiving. Marley put in an appearance, and because she came, she brought Jake and Ryder. Coincidentally, Matt and Lauren both made a visit the same weekend.

The New York crew: Rachel, Mercedes, Artie, Sam, Brittany, Blaine, and Kurt drove down together, and they made it a thing. Despite the date, it wasn't too cold, so they barbecued, and ate it in the living room. They did what they did whenever they came together: they sang, they danced, they one-upped each other, and they reminisced. Before they even made the trip, Quinn prepared them for what they would see, and no one made a comment about the illness while they were there. Santana sat on the couch, wrapped in her blankets, and smiled the whole day. She even sang once. And if her voice was off, or pitchy, no one (but Berry) made a comment, and when she had to take a nap in the middle of the afternoon, it just got quieter, but not strained. Brittany stayed for a few days after, and Quinn let the two of them have their time together.

The doctors were wrong. Two months passed, and Santana's heart was still beating beside hers. Quinn was beginning to feel like they existed in this bubble. Santana wasn't getting any better, but she wasn't getting any worse, and Quinn thought that if they could just stay suspended here for a couple of years, she'd be just fine with that. Everything was perfect.

Until it wasn't.

The times when Santana needed Quinn to help stand her up, or to help her walk were getting more, and Santana began to lose all her independence. It seemed that her conditioned worsened as autumn made way to winter. Santana didn't talk as much, and Quinn learned to have short hand conversations with her. They still talked for hours, but in an abbreviated fashion, with Quinn doing the majority of the talking, and Santana responding non-verbally. Her *I love you's* were always spoken, though, even if it was the only thing she said for hours.

They had a crowd at Christmas. It was a surprise to both of them. Two days before, Santana's doctor came to visit her. To take her temperature, to check her vitals, to look at her

throat and ears. To feel the muscles in her legs, arms, and back. He gave the two of them a smile before he left, and Quinn was just amazed that he had come out here so close to Christmas. Two days later the cabin was filled with people. Mr. and Mrs. Lopez arrived with a Christmas tree and trimmings, Mrs. Fabray showed up sober and with their friends from Glee. Mercedes and Sam, Rachel, Kurt, Blaine, Brittany. Puck and Jake. Dani and Eliot.

The fire place was lit, poinsettias and Christmas Lilies covered every surface, and there was caroling. It was nice having the cabin filled completely, to have voices echoing from the rooms, bringing in a warmth that a fire couldn't create. There wasn't enough space for everyone, but no one left, or attempted to make other accommodations. It was the best Christmas Quinn could ever remember having. Quinn gave Santana some gloves she had been knitting, and a leather bound copy of the *Complete Works of Douglas Adams*. Santana had gotten Brittany to go out and buy Quinn a pocket watch engraved with the words '*Don't Panic*'. Brittany got Santana two hats, Rachel the *Dream Girls* Soundtrack, Blaine gave her a box full of bowties and some scissors. Quinn almost cried over how happy Santana was to throw the pieces of the bow ties in the fire, her eyes lighting up happily every time one burned.

She really did cry two and a half hours later when they were in the middle of watching *Beaches* because Santana thought it was a beautiful movie, and before it was even turned on she had turned to every single person in the room, and smiled as she made eye contact and said, "its okay...to cry. I...do."

Puck stood up and cuddled the side of Santana that Quinn wasn't covering. No one noticed when Santana fell asleep, but when Hillary started to get sick, Quinn realized that Santana was out to the world, so she picked her up and carried her to their bed. She seemed colder than usual, so Quinn wrapped her securely in her arms, and ended up falling asleep with her. When she woke up, it was to whispers coming from the living room. She knew that the whispers were about Santana, about her condition, but Quinn shut them out, snuggling closer to Santana. The words didn't matter, the only thing that mattered right now was this moment. They still had time.

Christmas fell into New Years' and some people left, but some stayed. Santana fell asleep before midnight, and Quinn couldn't wake her up long enough to count down, so she whispered 'Happy New Years' into Santana's ear at 12:00 a.m., and kissed her on the forehead, before going out into the living room to drink champagne with her friends. Rachel and Brittany held her while she cried.

By the 2nd, everyone, even the Lopezes were gone, and it was just the two of them again. "Are we alone?" Santana questioned, surprised. She apparently had waken up and noticed that it was quiet. Quinn nodded. "Luv you, Quin...nie."

Quinn kissed her, and her heart nearly broke at the effort Santana made to try to kiss her back. "Love you, too."

It was hard for her to breathe, sometimes, and Quinn was woken up one night to the sound of Santana gasping for air.

The lights hurt her eyes every now and then, so she spent hours in the bed with her eyes closed. Kurt had brought her a teddy bear at Christmas, and Quinn always made sure that she had something to hold whenever she had to leave her for even a few minutes.

She got scared when she woke in the middle of the night, so they slept with the lights on and their hands linked together.

Santana couldn't hold a spoon in her hand, so Quinn fed her all her meals.

Quinn wasn't sure what day it was, but she knew that the Lopezes were scheduled to arrive in a day or two, the day that Santana asked Quinn to take her outside again. Since the weather had gotten bitterly cold, they hadn't been back to the deck, but Santana insisted. Quinn bundled her up in practically every piece of clothing she owned, and sadly, she could. She took two blankets, and the kerosene lamp, and they sat outside for the rest of the day, and even into the night because they had never seen the stars shine so brightly, and Santana didn't want to go back inside.

As the sky was lightening, Santana stirred in Quinn's arms interrupting the song that Quinn had been singing.

"What is it, baby?" Quinn asked quietly. "Do you want some water?"

"Will you...tell me...a story?" Santana's voice came out labored, and it took her a full minute to say just that one sentence.

"Of course, baby," Quinn said. She had to think about it, but once the words started they didn't stop. "Once upon a time there was this beautiful, beautiful princess who could light the world ablaze with her smile, and calm any storm with her laugh. Her voice would bring the angels from the sky, just so that they could listen to her song. One day the princess got really, really sick, and everyone became worried, and it made the entire kingdom sad.

"The king sent for one of his bravest knights and he gave her a quest. Now this knight loved the princess very much and would do anything to make her well again. So the knight went searching far and wide until she found a magic river that restored the health to anyone who drank from its banks. The knight rushed back to the Kingdom, and took the princess to a magical spot on the Sound where the Princess could live and forever drink from the river, and be well, and where they could watch the sun rise over the water, together, for forever, and ever."

Her words ended just as the sun seemed to make its grand appearance, turning the black water of the Cape clear blue, and chasing away the shadows of the night before. Birds announced that they had woken up from their slumbers, animals stretched and begun to move around, crickets chirped, Quinn tightened her arms around Santana, and one lonely heart beat to the same rhythm of the watch that ticked silently away in Quinn's pocket, each tick reminding her don't panic.

I love you too, by PieAngel

Santana huffs and a cloud forms around her mouth. Her arms were crossed, and she was tightly hugging herself, trying to preserve as much body heat as possible.

She was miserable. She hated winter, and everyone knew it. The cold, the snow, she just couldn't stand it! In front of her however, her girlfriend was having a great time.

Her girlfriend, she was the reason why Santana was even outside in the first place. When she had found out that it snowed overnight, she turned into a little kid, which Santana thought was just adorable.

How could she say no? So even if she did hate the snow, she had agreed to come outside. She might seem like a badass, but she was a complete softball when it comes to Quinn.

"Baby!" She looked towards where Quinn was standing, and previously making a snow angel. "Yeah?" Santana asked, "Come look at the angel I made!"

Santana sighed, and another puff came out. Santana trudges over to Quinn, who was admiring her own work, with a smile. When she finally makes it to Quinn, the ankle deep snow had soaked her Uggs.

"So?" Quinn asks, "What do you think?" Santana really had no idea how she was supposed to judge a snow angel, so she went with the safe route, "Of course you'd be good at making angels. I mean, you are one."

Quinn giggles and gives her a kiss on the cheek, Santana fake frowns, "I have to be out here freezing my butt off, and I don't even get a proper kiss?" Quinn rolls her eyes, but kisses her anyways.

Santana is amazed at how Quinn's lips are still warm, despite being out here. She wraps her arms around Quinn's neck and deepens the kiss, momentarily forgetting all about the cold and the snow.

That is until, snow is shoved down her back.

She jumps away from Quinn screaming and clawing at her back, and when that does absolutely nothing, she just takes off her jacket completely. Quinn is just standing there laughing hysterically.

When the jacket comes off, the snow falls out with it, and she is left in just a damp sweater. "QUINN!" She growls before grabbing a handful of snow, rolling it into a ball and launching it at her girlfriend.

It hits Quinn right in the face. Now Santana is the one laughing.

Quinn wipes off the snow, revealing an evil smirk. It was war. She quickly grabs snow, and makes her own snowball, throwing it at Santana, who luckily dodges it. "AHH! NO I'M SORRY! GET AWAY FROM ME!"

Santana keeps on screaming and running away from Quinn, circling their entire backyard. "Q I'M ONLY WEARING A SWEATER! EEEEH!"

Quinn doesn't let down though, and keeps chasing her, only stopping to make another snowball, after throwing the last.

Santana has been rather lucky however, and hasn't gotten hit by one yet, and right when she thinks that she won't be going inside soaked and freezing, she slips and faceplants into the side of a huge pile of snow.

Quinn, stifles her laughter and rushes over to where Santana's legs are sticking out of the snow, kicking wildly. As she gets closer, Santana's muffled yelling becomes louder.

She grabs Santana's ankles, and yanks her out, catching her before she had the chance to slip again. Santana spits out some snow and her teeth start chattering, her hands rubbing the sides of her arms.

Quinn quickly takes off her coat and wraps it around Santana, who tugs on it, trying to make it cover more of her. Even when freezing, Santana still appreciates the way that the coat smells like Quinn.

She wraps an arm around Santana's waist and starts leading her to their backdoor. When they make it inside, she plops Santana on the couch, and was leaving to turn up the heat, when Santana pulls her back, shaking her head.

Knowing what her girlfriend wanted, she sat down next to Santana and pulled the brunette onto her lap, hugging her tightly. Santana buries herself in Quinn, trying to steal-or at least share, some of her warmth.

Quinn starts to giggle, and Santana pouts, "I hate you." The blonde smiles cheekily and kisses her girlfriends head, "I love you too, Santana."

The Tracks To You, by PikiBear

It's summer in Ohio, the school year is over and the Fabray Family is going on a big trip to Europe. On some days, Judy and Russell can take care of some business meetings for the company, and on the others they can spend some quality time with their daughter. Although the family is made up of four members, only 3 tickets were bought for this trip. Which meant that Quinn wouldn't be joining them, not like it was a surprise to her, she was rarely included in any, if not all, of the family vacations. Instead they take Quinn's older sister, Francis, who is the angel of their eyes. They really wanted to have her opposite to Quinn who was only an accident, but an abortion was out of the question as it would have tainted their reputation of being the "perfect family", and would've made it hard for them at their church. But just because they decided to keep her in the family didn't mean she'd be treated as one. Quinn's parents used to drive her to her aunt Mimi's house near Philly. But this year they all had a flight to catch, so they just gave little Quinn some money to take the train by herself, and set on their way, leaving her alone yet again.

As her neighbor brought her to the train station with her backpack and suitcase that was almost as heavy as she was herself, there was no way she could carry it on her own. The old man waited with her till the train came to the platform, carried her suitcase in and found her a place to sit. Then he was gone again before the train shut there doors.

She has a seat with a little table which she really liked and a big window where she could see all the landscape as the train was driving through the various colorful places. Quinn saw fields, high bridges with water under them and deep forests where she thought that the train would get stuck between all the big trees, but that never happened. Quinn was sitting in her seat and searched though her bright yellow backpack that was matching her sunflower dress. As she looked through it, she smelled something really nice. It wasn't the train that just smelled old or another person sitting behind her no it came from her backpack. Pulling out all of her things like her colloringbook, a box of crayons, a bottle of water, a sandwich and her stuffed lamp, but at the bottom she saw a big pink box that she had never seen before, so she was sure that it wasn't from her parents, her neighbour must've put it in there As curious as she was as a little girl, she opened the box and saw a lot of good different things. A banana, an apple cut in pieces, carrot sticks, cookies and a piece of fresh backed brownies. After debating what to eat for now she decided that a cookie would be a good idea and she was right then it tasted really good but a lot of crumbs fell on her dress. Before closing the box she popped a slice of apple in her mouth and put all her things back into her backpack. Quinn stood up from her seat and walked in the middle if the ail that separated the seats in the middle and she started to shake he dress, all the crumbs fell to the floor but thankfully none of the other passengers looked at her or made a bad comment about it.

After making sure that her dress was crumb-free, Quinn began stretching out her aching legs, sitting for a long time in the same position did not work well for her. It doesn't really work well for anyone she thought. While Quinn was too focused on stretching out, she failed to hear some kids

screaming and running through the train. It was too late for her to react when a body ,almost the same height, crashed into her bringing both of them to the floor. It must have been a girl as Quinn's face was full of long black hair, the body over her started to giggle first and then to laugh really loud but didn't attempt to get off her. Finally the girl stood up and held her hand out to Quinn who just looked at her like it is a forging object. "Aren't you gonna take my hand?" asked the little girl. After thinking about the pros and cons of taking the girl's hand, Quinn took it and was standing on her two feet in no time.

Quinn could finally look at the other girl and whispered, "You are pretty" the other girl's cheeks got a little flushed as she heard the comment from the girl looking shy.

"What's your name? I'm Santana"

"Quinn, it is really nice to meet you" answered the little girl back just how her parents had taught her.

They just stared at each other till they heard a loud voice calling for Santana.

An older woman that looked exactly like Santana stopped a couple feet behind them and looked at both girls "Santana , there you are, I told you not to run around in the train. Who is your little friend over there?"

Santana turned around and hugged her mom tightly "That's Quinn, Mommy, she is sitting over there" said Santana and pointed to the seat with a table that also had Quinn's yellow backpack sitting on one of the seats.

Mrs Lopez looked around and noticed that nobody looked anything like the little girl standing in front of her so she asked, "Where are your parents Quinn?"

Quinn was a little shocked that the woman already noticed that she was alone but maybe all moms could do that. "They aren't here, I am going to visit my aunt Mimi, so I had to take the train this time"

Mrs Lopez looked shocked "What you are on the train all by yourself?" Quinn nodded and looked up so she could see the face of Mrs Lopez better, "Aren't you a little scared? And where does your aunt live?"

"I have all my things so that I don't get bored like my lamb and a coloring book so that I can't even think about getting scared. And my aunt lives a little outside of Philadelphia but she'll pick me up from the train station there"

"You could come and sit with us, Santana is getting a little bored so you could play some games because we are going to Philadelphia too. Do you want to come?"

This woman looked really nice and Santana was really pretty, she was getting a little scared that a lot more people would get into the train with each stop so Quinn just nodded her head and told Santanas mother where her suitcase was which she took and they all walked to the sitting area where Santanas dad and her little brother were already waiting.

Getting all of Quinn's things was an easy task as she only had her small backpack and a big suitcase. Mr. Lopez put over their heads then they had a small room where they could close the door.

After sitting a while on the only empty seat with her backpack on her lap, Quinn looked around and pulled her stuffed lamb out of it and started to cuddle it really hard. She always did that when she was sad then her mom would never give her a nice hug. She only got them from the teachers at her daycare, when she was little and her parents forgot to pick her up.

Santana saw Quinn sticking her head deep into the lamb and poked her mother's arm with her hand and pointed her finger at the other girl. Mrs. Lopez knew exactly what her daughter wanted to tell her so she knelt down in front of Quinn and put some of her hair that fell into her face behind her ear and asked, "Sweetheart, do you want to play a game with Santana? She won't bite you, so you don't have to worry about anything." The little girl looked up and had a small smile on her face, she really liked this family, they were funny, and they seemed to genuinely care about one another, and even a stranger they met not only an hour ago. It baffled her, how different they were from her family.

"Sure we can play something, what games do you have?" Quinn said shyly.

Santana walked over to a seat with a big bag and started to go through it and found some Uno cards.

"Do you play?" asked Santana while holding up a pack of Uno.

"Yes, we can play that." She walked over next to Santana, who had begun dealing out the cards between Quinn, herself, and her brother.

"Do you have any idea how long it will take till we get there?" asked Quinn after the 9th round of Uno of which she won 6.

"Well if the train is all on time we should be in Philadelphia in less than two hours, so if you are a little tired it would be a good time to take a nap. I'll wake you up before we're there so we can go all the way to the doors, and hopefully find your aunt there soon. Do you have a phone or maybe her number so we can call her in case of an emergency or something?"

Quinn looked at the woman doubtfully. Why would she need her aunt's cell phone number, did they not believe her aunt would be there waiting for her, but it is still better to give it to her than not. So Quinn walked to her backpack, opened some zippers and found in a tiny place a folded paper with the letters Mimi on them, "I think that is her number" and gave Mrs. Lopez the paper.

Mrs. Lopez woke her and the other two kids up exactly 20 minutes before they would be in Philadelphia at the train station. Quinn was still a little tired for the first couple of minutes but went back to her normal playful self after a few minutes. She helped the family pack their stuff up, as well as her backpack so that nothing was left behind. Santana was really excited to finally be at the destination that she started to jump up and down like a crazy person, but her parents

didn't say anything. They made their way to the door with all their bags and looked excited through the windows as the train began slowing down in front of the platform.

Mrs Lopez went outside with all 3 kids, while Mr Lopez needed to go inside to make sure that they hadn't forgotten anything.

The family plus Quinn walked to a spot that wasn't that crowded so that Quinn's aunt Mimi could find them there soon. The platform was less crowded now, but Quinn's aunt was nowhere to be seen. "Do you want to get on my shoulders so that you can maybe see where your aunt is?", Mr. Lopez asked Quinn.

Quinn looked up at the big man, but he was part of this nice family and he probably did that with Santana and her brother a lot of times before so she just nodded and walked close towards him so he could lift her up.

From the top she could see really a lot more and after making a 360° turn she spotted her aunt and waved excitedly into her direction.

"There she is, can we go to her?"

"Sure let me get you down here and let's walk over there"

Santana grabbed one of the luggage bags, her dad grabbed one and Mrs Lopez had one in her hand too, which left Quinn with her own. "Are you able to pull your bag behind you?" asked Mrs Lopez.

Quinn nodded, at her first try it didn't work but at her second pull it swiped onto its rolls and it was really easy to pull it behind her so she was really proud of herself.

They finally reached Aunt Mimi who thanked them for keeping an eye on Quinn. She was a little scared to let her own niece ride alone on the train for such a long time, but Quinn is safe at her destination so everything is good.

"So Q say goodbye to your new friends."

Quinn walked over to Santana and pulled her into a big hug and whispered into her ear, "It was really nice to meet you and I don't even mind anymore that you ran into me on the train. I had fun being your friend for the day." She gave Santana a light peck on the cheek.

"I'll miss you too Quinn, it was really nice to meet you." said the young girl while she was still blushing from the affection.

Quinn turned to Mrs and Mr Lopez and thanked them as well and walked with her aunt Mimi away to the parked car that waited for them in the big parking lot.

Comfort and Confessions, by SCWritings

Santana studies the open history textbook lying open on her bed. She looks from her paper and then back to the textbook, flipping a couple pages. She groans and lets her head fall forward and onto the page about the Civil Rights Movement. She curses in Spanish a couple times before picking her head back up and rubbing her face roughly, trying to focus on Malcolm X and his messages to the African Americans.

The teenager glances at the clock. 8:30pm. Well, I guess I could take a break... she thinks to herself as she hoists her body up from the bed, and walks towards the door. She walks down her stairs, and into the living room, then into the kitchen. Heading to the refrigerator, she sees the note she came home to today.

Santana,

*Your father and I have an important conference to attend to in Seattle. No parties and no boys here while we are gone. You may have two **friends** over at a time. We transferred \$200 into your bank account this morning so you have spending money for food and school supplies.*

Love,

Mami and Papi

Santana rolls her eyes at the note. Oh well. At least she has two hundred dollars to spend. Probably on clothes, and maybe some pizza. Sue will just have her burn the carbs at Cheerio's practice anyway, so she can eat what she wants.

Inside the fridge she sees some water, soda, juice, and left over food, but the enchiladas catch her eye. She reaches inside and pulls out the container and a bottle of water. She takes out a plate and loads some food onto it, and places it in the microwave.

She's watching the food slowly rotate in the microwave, and she hums Valerie to herself as the timer counts down. When there's about thirty seconds left, she jumps when the doorbell rings. She looks at the clock on the oven. 8:40pm. *What the fuck*, she thinks as she makes her way through the living room and to the door.

She twists the doorknob and opens the door with irritation. "Look, buddy, I don't care who yo- Quinn?" Santana looks down at the girl clinging on to her doorframe with tears rushing down her cheeks. "Uhhh..." Quinn looks up at Santana, and then looks to the inside of her house. Santana steps aside, allowing Quinn to slowly step in, and she notices a slight limp in the blonde's step.

The shorter girl follows Quinn into the living room, watching her slowly make her way up the stairs towards Santana's bedroom. After a few seconds, Santana sighs and follows her up the stairs and into her room. Quinn is standing in the middle of her room hugging her waist.

The head Cheerio looks up at her partner in crime and finally speaks, "Can I shower here and borrow some clothes...?" Okay, not the words Santana expected to hear. Maybe an

explanation, but she doesn't really know what to do in these situations, so she just nods and heads to her dresser.

"Are you going to stay over?" Santana asks as she looks in her dresser. She wasn't sure whether to get Quinn pajamas or actual clothes.

"Yeah," Quinn mumbles back. Santana rolls her eyes. Of course Quinn would just say 'yes'. She's "the boss" what she says goes. Of course she wouldn't ask if Santana cared.

She walks back to Quinn with pajamas in hand, and Quinn looks down at the tank top and athletic shorts, then back up at Santana. Santana shrugs. "What? They're comfortable to sleep in."

Quinn looks at the floor. "No, I know. I mean, could I, um, borrow some underwear?" Quinn fiddles with her fingers as she stares at the ground.

Santana puts the pajamas in the bathroom, and heads to get some underwear, like actual underwear, and not her usual thongs. She tosses them on top of the clothes and on her way out, she says, "Tampons are under the sink. Have fun."

Quinn rushes into the bathroom, and it isn't more than a minute before Santana hears the water switch on. She walks out of her room and back down the stairs, hoping her enchilada is still a little warm in the microwave. *Oh thank God*, she thinks as she gets the food out of the microwave. She grabs her bottle of water and heads back to her room to wait for Quinn and eat.

What was she even doing here? So, what, she got her period in her pants, and came crying to Santana's doorstep? Santana continued to think about possible explanations as she ate, and she even got as far as thinking Quinn was abducted by aliens, and anal probed, which is why she needs new underwear. Santana smiled at the ridiculousness of the story just as Quinn stepped out of the bathroom, carrying her dirty clothes.

She drops her clothes into Santana's laundry basket, and then tosses her bloodied underwear into the trash can. *I guess it was the period thing*, Santana confirms to herself. The blonde walks over to Santana's bed and slowly sits down, wincing when her body comes into contact with the bed. The facial expressions that go through the Latina's face would have been funny if it wasn't for the fact that she realized Quinn had just had sex. At first it was confusion, and then slowly her eyes widened at the realization and lastly, she started stuttering.

"Wait-What? But-I mean-You... What the hell?" Santana settles for the last phrase, deeming it good enough to get her point across. Quinn starts to cry, and that just freaks Santana out even more. Quinn doesn't cry. She's the HBIC. Those don't cry.

Santana sits still, but after at least five minutes of watching Quinn cry, she give up and awkwardly pats the girl's back. Quinn curls into her friend, and the shocked girl has no choice but to wrap the blonde into her arms.

After the initial shock has worn off, Santana starts to slowly stroke the blonde's hair. Seeing her friend like this causes Santana to soften, and she slowly relaxes into Quinn.

"What happened?" Santana whispers into the room, not wanting to scare Quinn by being too loud. Thinking that she's like a scared animal, she could bolt at any moment. Knowing Quinn, that's a very real possibility.

The sobs and cries dissolve into small whimpers, and Santana sits against her headboard with Quinn in her lap. The blonde takes a few deep breaths before she speaks, "Don't get mad at me. Please."

Santana looks down at her friend with confusion, all she gets back is the look of a broken girl. Santana sighs, "I won't."

Quinn looks towards the bedroom door, and Santana catches this, tightening her grip around her friend. Quinn looks at Santana and begins to speak quickly, "Puck got me drunk and started calling me beautiful and I was feeling fat and he kept telling me he loved me, and I thought- I mean, he..." Quinn breaks down into more sobs.

Santana sets her jaw, grinding her teeth. Her whole body tenses, and she begins to shake uncontrollably. She's pissed. Not because Quinn had sex with Puckerman, but because he got her drunk, manipulated her into having sex with him. Making her lose her virginity to a guy like him. Yeah, she was dating him, but she doesn't *feel* anything for him. She considers driving over to Puck's house to give him a piece of her mind...or fist, but then she feels arms wrap around her waist.

"I'm sorry," Quinn whispers. *Quinn apologizing? Fuck. It's bad.*

Santana relaxes and returns to stroking Quinn's head. "I'm not mad at you, Quinn." Quinn looks back at Santana. "I'm mad at him."

"I agreed to it."

Santana snorts. "Not while you were in your right mind."

Quinn sighs. "It's okay. Will you not tell anyone? I don't want anyone to know. Please? You don't know what it's like to feel disgusted with yourself, knowing people will be disgusted if they knew."

This time it's Santana's turn to look away. She feels the familiar knot rising into her stomach and then into her throat. The tears begin to sting her eyes, and before she can swallow them, one escapes her eye. She tries to wipe it away quickly, but it's too late. Quinn notices. Santana shakes her head to clear her thoughts, and hopefully wipe Quinn's thoughts. "I won't. I promise."

"Why did you cry?" *Well, fuck. She saw it,* Santana thinks to herself.

Should she tell her? It's not like Quinn could do anything since she has this piece of information about her and Puck. Plus, it might be nice to talk to someone instead of fighting, because she's getting so tired of it. "I know what it's like to feel that way."

"What? Santana, you are the most confident bitch at McKinley." Quinn says.

"Wait, Quinn-"

"I mean, you always have a guy on your arm, and you should be the most popular girl at our school, I don't understand why you aren't. I'm not ev-"

"I'm a lesbian."

Quinn stops talking. Her mouth stays open, but nothing comes out. Santana throws her head back, looking at the ceiling, letting her arms fall from Quinn's waist to either side of her, thinking that Quinn is about to leave her. Instead, she feels a Quinn's body shift to sit next to her.

"Wow," Quinn breathes. "I never would have guessed. I mean, you're pretty."

Santana lets out a laugh. "There are such things as feminine lesbians."

"Does that mean you're attracted to, like, guy looking girls?" Quinn asks.

"Oh, God, no! I'm what you call a lipstick lesbian. I like feminine girls." Santana says, completely thrown how easy it is to talk to Quinn about this.

"What about Puck, though?"

Santana waves a hand. "He was my beard. I mean not anymore, obviously, but whatever."

The two girls are silent for a while. "You know it's okay. Right" Quinn asks randomly.

"What?"

"You being a lesbian. It's okay." Quinn answers.

"Yeah, sure. I go to school every day, and I wish I was like Kurt. He's proud of it, but for me, I can't even look at myself." Santana mutters, a few tears escape her eyes, and she hastily wipes them away.

"Why?" At this point, Quinn is staring intently at Santana.

"Because, I hate myself." Santana sighs. "I'm not supposed to be like this."

"Santana, look at me." Santana turns her head and looks over Quinn's shoulder. "I said, 'Look at me.'" Santana's brown eyes focus onto Quinn's hazel ones. "You are beautiful, okay? God made you the way you are because he knows you are strong enough to take it."

Have her eyes always been this green? Santana thinks to herself.

Have her lips always been this full? Wait, what? Quinn thinks.

"Thank you, Quinn." Santana takes ahold of the blonde's hand. "Seriously, thanks. Oh, and don't worry about Puck. I'll make sure he doesn't tell anyone. If he does, I'll go all Lima Heights on him."

"Santana, you left Lima Heights when you were eight."

"Doesn't stop me from keeping razor blades in my hair." Quinn's eyes go wide. "Not at night, Fabray."

The two are silent again for a long time. "I didn't like it." Quinn mutters.

"What?"

"I didn't like it... With Puck."

"No one 'likes' their first time. It fucking hurts." Santana responds.

"What if I don't like Finn?"

"But you will, because you love him."

"I don't though. He's so stupid, and he's been hanging all over Man-Hands. He's the quarterback, and I'm the head cheerleader. Him and I are supposed to be together." Quinn says.

"I've never really liked a boy, San."

"Dios Mio, are you trying to tell me you think you're gay?"

Quinn shrugs. "Well, how did you know?"

"Well, first I realized I didn't find boys attractive, and then one night, I kissed a girl from a dare, and I liked it. It took me a really long time, but I accepted I was gay. I don't support it, but I know it." Santana replies.

"Oh." Quinn mutters.

Now it's awkward... Santana thinks, as she drums her fingers on her own thighs, blowing air out of her mouth and towards her bangs, trying to get them out of her eyes. She looks around the room, at everything except Quinn. At least until she felt Quinn lay her head on her shoulders.

The next thing Quinn said made the Latina's stomach do flips. "Can I find out? If I like girls, I mean."

"W-What?" Santana stutters over her words. Sure, she knows she's a lesbian, but she hasn't kissed any other girls except that one at the party.

Quinn lifts her head to look at her best friend. "I need to know, San. It's killing me."

Knowing how Quinn feels, and how confused she is, she nods slowly. She doesn't want Quinn to have to go as long as she did hating that she doesn't know who she is. Hating herself for being confused.

Quinn looks down at Santana's full lips and then glances back at her eyes. All she finds is sympathy and concern in them. There's something else there too, but she's never seen it in anyone else before. Quinn takes a deep breath before she leans in and touches her forehead against her best friend's.

"Quinn..." Santana breathes out shakily, not wanting to feel as if she's pushing her friend.

"I want to," Quinn whispers, her breath hitting Santana's lips.

Santana nods, and slowly pushes forward, pausing just before she reaches Quinn's lips to give her one last out. Quinn makes a small smile at her friend's unusually caring attitude, and pushes forward the last few centimeters.

Their lips connect and Quinn inhales sharply through her nose. The two girls definitely feel something they have never felt before. Fireworks explode through their bodies, flowing through the tips of their fingers before exploding again. They stay in a lip lock for a few seconds until Quinn starts to move her lips against Santana's. The cheerleader follows along slowly, and when Quinn takes her bottom lip into her mouth, Santana decides to just go with it.

Santana nibbles on Quinn's upper lip, and feels fingers snake through her hair. It's when she feels Quinn's tongue running along her bottom lip that she lets out a groan. Taking the chance, Quinn lets her tongue enter Santana's mouth, meeting the other girl's tongue, they start a slow dance. Moans and heavy breathing fill the room. At some point they come up for air.

"Whoa," Quinn breathes out with an awestruck look on her face.

"Yeah," Santana says as she regains her breathing.

"Oh my god, I'm gay."

There's a brief silence until laughter fills the room. "You're so gay, Fabray!" Santana laughs. "You're Fabgay!" The girls continue laughing hard before they slowly start calm down.

Since the tension was broken, Quinn decides to bring up what she's sure they are both thinking. "So, what happens now?"

Santana shrugs. "I dunno. What do you want to happen?"

Quinn looks at Santana, knowing that she's going to have to open up if she ever expects Santana to. "I want to keep doing that." Santana looks at her like she's said the most obvious thing. "I meant with you."

Santana rolls her eyes. "Well, who am I to deny a friend?" she says, before leaning back in, eager to feel the fireworks again.

Comfort/Fluff, by seemenopeu

Quinn slumped into the overly soft pink chair in the dress shop as she eyed the stores outside the window. It was sad really. The thought of prom had been exciting to Quinn since the day she turned five, and yet here she was staring out the window at the mall on the worst day of her life.

"What about this one," Rachel galloped out of the dressing room and spun in a circle. She stopped to face Quinn, but unfortunately the blonde's eyes were elsewhere, "Quinn. Quinn!"

Quinn jumped, "What?!"

"Where are you right now?" Rachel sat next to Quinn, now in full mom-mode.

"I'm just," Quinn tried to find her words, "I don't want to go to prom."

Rachel's eyes went wide, "You can't be serious."

"I'm serious," Quinn nodded.

"But prom's all you've been talking about for weeks," Rachel paused then smiled, "Is this about Puck?"

"It's not about Puck!" Quinn snapped but immediately felt bad. It wasn't Rachel's fault that she was having a bad day. Well, technically it was but she promised to get over it. It shouldn't be this hard not to snap at the short brunette, "It's not about Puck."

"I know," Rachel patted Quinn hands, "How about you go walk around for awhile. I'll pick out a few dresses for us to try on and call you to come back in like twenty minutes. Just don't go too far, okay?"

Quinn nodded her head and got up to leave. Maybe Rachel had an idea, she should go walk around and chill out. They should be having fun, not whatever this was.

Quinn walked out of the shop and looked at the store across from her. It was a mattress store with an array of mattresses beyond the eye could see. She didn't have any place to go, so she shrugged her shoulders and walked into the store.

She didn't even remember the last time she had been in a mattress store if she ever had. There was mattresses of all kinds. Small, large, firm, bouncy. Quinn took the time to test them all, putting pressure on all of them with both of her hands.

She stopped at a king sized bed that seemed like it hadn't been touched all day. Quinn assumed that it was tough as wood since the bedding was still crisp, but as she put pressure on it, it formed with her hands. It was super soft, but not too soft and happened to be the nicest bed in the whole store.

She looked around for anyone, but this side of the store seemed deserted though it wasn't the end of the store or anything. It was more like the middle.

It took a bit of encouragement, but she ended up crawling into the middle of the bed, laying face up at the ceiling.

Now the bed felt better than it did before. It was like one of those tempurpedic beds but like fifteen times softer. Quinn couldn't think of any specific words for it other than, well, fluffy. It was like sleeping on a firm fluff ball. If that makes any sense.

Quinn involuntarily closed her eyes and gave the biggest exhale of her life. How could this mattress be the biggest comfort of her day?

"Um, excuse me?" A voice, a very annoyed voice, broke through Quinn relaxation for the day.

Quinn peaked her eye open to see a girl about her age with long dark hair that suited her olive skin. She wore the standard attire for someone who would work there and by the way her arms were crossed and her face was contorted, she didn't seem too happy to see Quinn, "Yes?"

"You can't, like, sleep here," the girl said motioning to the bed.

"Why not?"

"You just can't," the girl looked away for a while before saying, "People don't like to buy things that other people have touched and shit."

Quinn raised an eyebrow. Obviously this girl wasn't a regular everyday mattress employee, "It's free advertising."

"We don't need free advertising."

"But it's free."

The girl sighed, "Whatever. Just don't stay too long. My boss isn't so lenient."

The girl walked away and Quinn giggled.

Soon twenty minutes passed by. Well actually more than twenty minutes. Quinn could tell that it was by the way her phone kept buzzing over and over. It may have been rude for her to intentionally ignore Rachel, but comfort came before "friends" and for some unknown reason that was Quinn's motto for that evening.

She opened her eyes again, this time because she heard a pair of foot steps stop next to the bed. It was the girl again, looking just as annoyed as she was before, and it made the corners of Quinn's lips turn up, "Yes?"

"You're still here," the girl observed, "Why?"

"I'm tired," Quinn closed her eyes again, "And this bed is too comfy."

"Do you want to buy it or something?"

"No," Quinn almost laughed, "I don't have money to buy a mattress."

"*Right*," the girl paused before saying, "I have a customer."

Quinn opened her eyes to watch the girl walk away and wondered if there was any implication that she was going to come back.

Quinn lost any of sign of time and Rachel stopped calling her phone. Also the girl never came back so she assumed that maybe it was okay for you to sleep on the beds. Even if it made people not want to buy it. Even if she wasn't going to buy it herself.

"Yo," a voice brought her eyes open to the mattress girl. Quinn smiled, "My boss told me to kick you out."

"Are you going to?" Quinn sat up but scooted until her back hit the pillows at the end of the bed.

"He also told me to do inventory on the mattresses," the girl folded her arms, "You can stay though."

"Thanks, um," Quinn really wanted to know her name. Not because there was a specific need but because the girl was cool enough not to kick her out.

"Santana," the girl-Santana said coolly, "Why are you hanging out by yourself at a mattress store?"

"I'm not by myself," Santana squinted her eyes and looked around, so Quinn explained, "You're talking to me."

"Right," Santana smiled but shook her head, "But seriously, do you do this often?"

"No, not really."

"So you just decided to hang out here?"

"Yep."

"By yourself?"

"Technically."

"What? Are you having boy problems or something?" Santana pulled out of thin air and it surprised Quinn because she *was* having boy problems but she couldn't be making it that obvious. It also made her sad all of a sudden and she looked down to the mattress under her to try to hide it this time.

"Wait right here," Santana said as she walked away almost like Quinn was going to leave anytime.

A few seconds later, she came back and tossed a pillow into Quinn's face. Quinn barely caught it without it hitting her square in the jaw and she looked up to Santana for an explanation, "It's our special 'I just broke up with my boyfriend and other boyish problems' pillow. Guaranteed stress reliever."

"Will it relieve the stress of my boyfriend breaking up with me to go to prom with my best friend and my second choice blowing me off because he wanted to go out with Lauren friccin Zizes?"

"I don't know who that is."

"I know," Quinn slammed her face into the pillow which cushioned the blow. It was working already.

"Look, I honestly don't know if that pillow relieves boy stress but what I do know is that on my toughest days that pillow's the softest."

Quinn pulled her head from off the pillow, "Do you not have boy stress?"

"Not especially."

"How could you *not*?" Not that she was saying that all boys created stress, but someone who looked as visually stunning as Santana should have enough boys under her belt to conjure up enough of it.

"Well it's not *boy* stress," Quinn didn't seem to get it so Santana clarified, "I have girl stress. Like when you date girls. Cause I don't date guys."

"Oh," Quinn analyzed this. She suspected that she was supposed to feel conflicted about this topic like her parents had taught her to be but she mostly felt jealous of the girl, "Must be fun."

"It's not, girls are horrible," Santana sat on the edge of the bed, "Now here's what I've learned from the glorious amounts of chick flicks that I may or may not have been forced to watch. You need to let out your feelings. Talking them out with a stranger might help or something."

She then pointed to herself, "And I happen to be a stranger. So tell me your problems, get it out of your system, and leave before I have to kick you out."

Quinn didn't have to consider this before nodding, "Let's say you have a boyfriend, who isn't exactly what you wanted in a boyfriend, but he was good enough for the moment."

"I'm trying to imagine this but it's hard," Santana commented.

"Then you find out later on that he wants to go all the way with you. Like all the way all the way, and you just can't picture that happening and it kind of makes you gag thinking about it."

Santana put on a thinking face that almost looked like she was going to say something but didn't. So Quinn continued.

"Then, once you're honest about it he breaks up with you, before prom. Which is the biggest night of your entire high school existence, and asks out your best friend to the damn thing. And she says yes. And you have to be cool about it. Cause she's your best friend."

"She sounds more like a bitch than a friend."

"Well, yeah, but she's Rachel and, I don't know but she's like-"

"Keep going with the story."

"Right. Then you ask your ex, which goes against everything that you believe in, to go to prom with you and you know what he says?"

Santana shakes her head no.

"He says 'Can't go. Busy. Me and Zizes are gonna hit up the prom together so it's like a no-go with the us thing for now,' " Quinn says in her best impression of her ex-boyfriend.

"What an asshole," Santana played along.

"I know right!" Quinn threw her hands up, "Now you're at the mall with your supposed best friend buying prom dresses so that she can go to the prom with your now ex boyfriend while you go alone. Like a loser."

"Wow," Santana said and it disappointed Quinn that she didn't have more to say. Santana must have picked up on it cause she then said, "Everyone you hang out around seem to be jerk-offs."

Quinn honestly wanted something in the form of advice but she supposed that this would do, "It sure looks that way."

"I know!" Santana said with less enthusiasm than any person in the history of saying those words, "Just don't go to the prom."

"But I have to go! I'm going to win prom queen." Quinn whined. She wanted some quality advice and this is what she got?

"Enough people to vote for your queening but not anyone to take you to prom," Santana said more to herself, "Why do you think you were too grossed out to sleep with your ex?"

That came out of nowhere and the fact that she had picked up on that part concerned Quinn, "I don't know."

"Was he gross?" Santana asked and Quinn denied being that Finn, her now ex, had a charm to him, "So he wasn't ugly?"

"Nope. I would never date someone ugly," and though there was different meanings to the word ugly, Quinn had a thing for being attracted to people with certain qualities that made them the opposites of such thing.

"Hmm," Santana smirked, "Maybe you're kind of gay?"

"I'm not gay."

"I said kind of."

"Well I'm *kind of* straight for your information."

"Kind of?"

Quinn blushed. Kind of was correct. She was only kind of straight, "Shouldn't you be working or something."

"Or something," Santana gestured around, "It's actually closing time."

Quinn's eyebrows rose. She hadn't realized that she had been in here for so long, "Wow I should probably leave."

"That's what I been trying to make you do," Santana said in good nature.

Quinn scooted off the bed but turned back to the still sitting Santana, "Can I ask you a question?"

"Go for it," Santana smiled.

"Will you go to prom with me?" Quinn knew that it was a weird request but by the way Santana failed over and over at trying to hide her smile made her feel better for asking.

"I don't even know your name, Blondie."

"It's Quinn," She folded her hands in back of her, "So will you? Like go to my prom with me? I know a lot of things go into things and technically we don't know each other well but we could learn and I'll get a corsage and limo and stuff or whatever guys get for their dates and-"

"And yeah, I'll go with you," Santana interrupted her and Quinn felt like kissing the girl on the face but opted to standing awkwardly instead, "Just promise that you'll come here everyday until prom and make my boss really annoyed and stuff."

"I promise. I promise," Quinn started to back away, "I should probably get going now."

"Yep, see yah," Santana watched as the girl made little to no movements to leave.

"I'll come tomorrow and stuff," Quinn clarified.

"That's the plan," Santana nodded.

"Thanks so much for going with me," Quinn said as she almost bumped into a bed, "What's everyone gonna say once I show up with someone like you on my arm?"

"Who knows," Santana watched as Quinn actually came into contact with a bed this time, making it turning it off its bed post.

"It's really great that you're doing this," Quinn said as she moved the bed to its correct position.

"Seriously, Quinn. We're closing," Santana said in all seriousness and Quinn nodded her head before giving a last wave and doing a quick walk out of the store.

Quinn slowed down once she got to the parking lot and yanked her keys out of her pocket. Maybe the prom won't be as horrible as she thought.

She walked a few steps before stopping, realizing that she had the car keys the whole time. So where the heck did Rachel go?

With You, by ShadowKira

Santana sighed and pulled the bathroom door open before ducking inside. The teacher had them reading quietly to themselves and the sound of the clock ticking and occasional turn of a page had been driving her mad.

She didn't even have to go to the bathroom, she just had to be somewhere else where her thoughts weren't the only thing to focus on.

The brunette looked in the mirror, humming to herself softly as she checked on her makeup. Once she was pleased that everything appeared to be in order, she turned for the door. But before she could exit, a small sound from the large handicap stall on the end caught her attention. She shook her head, ready to ignore it when some nagging feeling stopped her in her tracks.

Furrowing her brow, Santana ducked down slightly to get a better look at the mystery girl's shoes. Her eyes widened when she realized that they were actually in a wheelchair and not just using the furthest stall for privacy. There weren't many wheelchair bound students at McKinley.

"Quinn?"

At first a loud sniffing sound was her only response but after a second the door to the stall pushed open. "Santana?"

"Hey, are you okay? Why were you crying?" Santana asked worriedly, leaning against the nearest sink as Quinn wheeled herself closer to one of the others.

"It's nothing... Don't worry about it."

"It doesn't look like nothing..." The brunette mumbled, crossing her arms over her chest.

Quinn shot her an unamused look before pulling out her compact to fix the make up that had smudged around her eyes. She resisted the urge to squirm under the weight of Santana's gaze and finally broke after several minutes of silence.

"It's my physical therapy..." Quinn said, almost too quietly for Santana to hear.

The brunette's eyebrows knit together, "What about it?"

Quinn sighed and put her things back in her bag. "It just... It doesn't feel like it's working."

Santana's frown deepened, "You've only been at it a few weeks, Q."

The blonde turned herself and her chair to face her friend, "I know."

"So, why not give it some more time, okay?"

"What if time doesn't change anything?" Quinn asked, pausing on her way to the door.

Santana took a few steps toward the other girl, "Wait... What do you mean?"

Quinn looked to her right and away from the eyes that were seeking hers out. "I-I don't know."

"That's bullshit, Quinn. Talk to me." Santana said, somewhere between begging and a demand. She knelt down next to Quinn and placed her hands on the handle of the blonde's wheelchair.

Quinn moved her teary eyes to meet the brown ones watching her. "It's just... I've been hanging out with Artie and he keeps looking at me like *this* isn't temporary... Like my doctors are just being optimistic. What if he's right?"

Santana stared at her a second before lifting her hand to cover Quinn's with her own. "Hey, don't you dare let anyone tell you or make you feel like you can't do something, Q. You're amazing, okay? And... I'm sorry that I wasn't always there for you."

Quinn laughed, turning her head away slightly to wipe at her eyes. "Thanks... W-where'd this come from?"

One eyebrow arched above the other as she glanced back toward the brunette and caught her blushing. "I-uh... It's stupid."

Quinn smiled, "Tell me." She insisted, ducking her head to try and catch Santana's eye.

"It was the accident." Santana admitted, a little sheepishly. "I-I thought that I had lost my best friend."

Quinn's small smile fell as she realized how serious her friend really was. The two of them were quiet for a moment before the blonde spoke up. "Come here."

Santana blinked in surprise as she was tugged closer into a half hug and the brunette lowered her head to try and hide her deepening blush.

The bell rang and the two broke apart, Santana straightening up quickly. She pulled open the door before stepping to the side so that Quinn could leave first.

"See you at lunch, Q"

Quinn smiled back over her shoulder, "Yep! See you later."

—

"So, when's your next appointment?" Santana asked as she walked behind Quinn's chair in the lunch line.

"Tonight, why?" The blonde asked as she grabbed a tray to sit on her lap. Santana grabbed her own before helping to push her friend's wheelchair forward a few steps.

"Just wondering. Keep an open mind, okay?"

Quinn sighed but nodded, "Okay, I'll try."

Santana laughed and handed Quinn a plastic container containing her salad as well as an apple.

—

"So, how'd your appointment go?" Santana asked at lunch the next day.

Quinn rolled her eyes, "I don't know..."

"You don't know?" Santana asked, arching a brow.

"It's just... My therapist is so awkward and I just feel so... Distracted."

Santana wrinkled her nose, "Ew, like awkward how? Is he some kind of creep?"

Quinn scrunched up her own features, "Well, he's not that much older and he does seem awfully friendly... But he hasn't tried anything inappropriate."

Santana rolled her eyes, "That's reassuring..." She muttered, stabbing her salad rather violently with her fork.

The blonde laughed and took a bite of her own, completely missing the fact that Santana appeared to be lost in thought.

"I'm going with you."

"What?" Quinn asked, looking up from her food.

"I want to go with you, to your next appointment."

The blonde stared at the other girl for a quiet moment before nodding. "Okay."

"Ah, Quinn... Hello."

The blonde smiled and held the door for Santana as the brunette wheeled her into the therapist's office. "Hello, Joe."

"And who's this?" Joe asked, surprised to see someone other than Judy along with the teen for her appointment.

"Name's Santana, nice to meet you." The brunette said, forcing a smile for Quinn's sake.

The physical therapist returned the expression, jotting a few notes down before rising from his chair. "Will you be joining us for the session then?"

Santana nodded, "If that's okay?"

Joe smiled, "Of course. Let's get started then, shall we?"

Santana watched quietly as Joe excused himself to give Quinn a moment of privacy. Dark eyes flicked toward the frustrated girl nearby.

"Hey, Q, it's okay..."

"No, it's not! I'm supposed to be able to feel them by now!"

Santana frowned and placed her hand on Quinn's forearm. Her thumb stroked her friend's skin gently for a moment before she sighed.

"I'll be right back."

Quinn kept her head turned away, a single tear rolling down her cheek as the door shut with a click.

—

"How is she doing?" Joe asked, frowning as Santana emerged from the room attached to his small office.

"Not good." The girl said, rather bluntly.

Joe nodded, his frown deepening. "I'm afraid this is not uncommon... Quinn's doubts and frustrations are working against her, unfortunately."

Santana narrowed her eyes, "What do you mean?"

"I've seen progress with her... But in Quinn's mind, it isn't enough. She wants to walk, to have it reinforced that this condition she's in isn't permanent."

"So... It's *her* fault that she isn't getting better?"

"It is a sort of mental block... Her negative outlook on her recovery is keeping her from making progress."

Santana sighed, "And it's just something that she has to work out herself, we can't help her?"

Joe smiled, "Actually... *You* may be able to. Quinn was much more calm in this session than she has been in the past."

Santana's brow furrowed thoughtfully, "I *do* have some training, when it comes to therapy from or cheer squad."

"If you'd be willing, you could take my place on a few sessions... Utilize the available equipment and I'll be close if it doesn't seem to be working."

"I think I can handle that, thanks, Dreads."

—

Santana didn't get to help out that day but she and Joe did inform Quinn of their plans for the next few sessions.

The blonde seemed skeptical but also slightly relieved. And she was still feeling those emotions as Santana wheeled her into Joe's office at the next session.

He reminded Santana of the exercises and stretches as well as what order to do them in. Once he'd done that, he excused himself and left them on their own.

Quinn blushed, folding her arms and placing them behind her head.

"What's with that look, Q?" Santana asked stepping closer to where the blonde was laying.

"N-nothing.." Quinn mumbled, lowering her eyes.

Santana rolled her eyes, "I'm not going to feel you up or anything... If that's what you're worried about."

"N-no, that's not it." Quinn said instantly, her eyes raising to meet the brunette's.

"Alright..." Santana said, not sounding too convinced.

Quinn swallowed and watched as Santana put her hands in place to start the blonde's stretches.

She hadn't lied to Santana, she trusted her friend to be appropriate and respectful. It was herself that she was worried about.

Santana had always been beautiful but something had changed when she came out. Quinn couldn't help but see her friend differently after and it definitely hadn't been in a bad way.

Quinn had been confused about her feelings and it was more than obvious that Brittany and Santana cared deeply for one another. Having felt foolish and not wanting to come between her friends, Quinn kept quiet about her feelings.

Swallowing, the blonde raised her eyes again to watch Santana's look of concentration. "How are you and Brittany?"

Santana's eyes shot up before narrowing slightly. "Alright, you know how it is... Always off and on."

Quinn frowned, "How do you put yourself through that?"

The brunette shrugged, focusing more on what she was doing than the current topic of conversation.

"Are you going to prom?"

"Yeah, going stag. You?"

Quinn wanted to know exactly why Santana was going alone but didn't want to push the subject.

"Yeah... I guess, although I don't really see the *point*."

Santana shot her a look, "The point? It's *prom*, you love shit like this."

"I used to..." Quinn corrected, glancing down toward her legs.

Santana rolled her eyes, "You need to stop doing that."

"Doing *what*?"

"Being so pessimistic. You're going to walk again, you're going to *dance* again. Hell, your pasty white ass is gonna be dancing at Prom, Fabray."

Quinn couldn't help but laugh before shaking her head. "You really think so?"

"I know so." The brunette said, matter-of-factly. "Now c'mon time to exercise these Thunder Thighs."

Santana joined Quinn on her next couple of appointments and the blonde became more confident with each session.

"Hey, how'd your appointment go last night?" Santana asked as she caught up to the wheelchair bound girl.

"Alright." Quinn said with a smile.

"Sorry I couldn't make it..." The brunette said, lowering her eyes to her feet.

Quinn glanced toward her, surprised. "It's okay, really. You only had to come to a few, Santana."

"Well, I'll be there for the next one."

"You don't have to..."

Santana slowed to a stop, "Do you not want me to go?"

"No, that's not it... It's just, Mom kind of wants to go to the next couple. To make sure she's getting her money's worth or whatever."

"Oh, alright." Santana said softly before starting to walk again. Quinn frowned and wheeled herself forward quickly to catch up to the other girl.

"Hey, would uh- Would you like to go to prom with me?"

Santana glanced back over her shoulder toward the blonde. "What, like as your date? I thought you weren't really that into that, Q."

"Uh, yeah... Sure. Mom wants to make sure that if I go... That someone is looking out for me. And, I figured that you said you were going stag so..."

"Sure. You know I've got your back. Now c'mon, let's get you to class before you're late." The brunette said with a smile before coming around so that she could push Quinn to class.

Prom was upon them before the McKinley high students knew it. And although Santana was disappointed that Quinn was still in her wheelchair, she was glad that the blonde seemed to be handling that fact well.

She had just arrived at the other girl's home moments before and was double checking her makeup and overall appearance in the mirror.

Santana frowned as her stomach twisted, she wasn't exactly sure why but she was feeling very nervous. Sighing, the brunette tried not to think about it. Instead she flipped up her visor before exiting her vehicle and made her way up the short walk from the driveway.

The girl hesitated, smoothing down her dress before raising her hand to knock.

It was quiet for a moment before Judy pulled the door open with a warm smile. "Hello, Santana. Don't you look lovely!"

"Thanks, Mrs. Fabray..."

"Now, now... I know it's been a while but please, call me Judy."

Santana nodded and stepped passed the older woman and into the foyer so that she could shut the door.

"Quinn will be out in a few minutes, she's just finishing up her makeup. Thank you, for going with her... It means a lot, to both of us."

Santana smiled, "It's no problem, if anything... Quinn's doing me a favor. I'd almost decided not to go."

Judy frowned, "Why's that, dear?"

"No date, seeing Brittany with someone else." Santana confessed, rather easily. It felt good to get it off of her chest and she didn't want to ruin Quinn's night with her melancholy.

Little did she know, the younger blonde had overheard the tail-end of their conversation. Quinn lingered in the hallway for a second, her teeth teasing her bottom lip before she finally wheeled herself down the rest of the way to the living room.

"Hello."

Santana looked up, surprised and her eyes widened when they fell on Quinn. The blonde looked gorgeous, her hair pinned up neatly on the back of her head in large curls. Her dress was purple with silver straps and jewelry.

The blonde blushed under her close scrutiny and Santana realized that she had been staring. "Hi, uh... Wow Fabray. You look amazing."

Quinn smiled and wheeled herself closer. "So do you."

Judy looked between the two of them, a large smile playing at her lips. "You two should probably get going, don't want you to be late."

The girls looked toward her before glancing toward the clock, "Yeah, you're right."

Santana got up first, smoothing down the front of her dress. "I'll go start the car."

Judy rose from the couch just as she was disappearing back outside and moved toward her daughter. "Relax, Quinnie. You'll be fine."

Quinn nodded and sighed as her Mother wheeled her toward the door, "Do you think she'll be surprised?"

Her Mother laughed, "Yes, honey. She will be."

Quinn nodded again but stayed quiet this time, a blush tinting her cheeks a shade darker as her Mother whispered in her ear. "You should go for it... You'll never know if you don't."

"Mom." Quinn warned as they moved from the walkway and onto the driveway. Her Mother sighed but chuckled just after.

"I know, I know... I'm sorry. I just want you to be happy."

The younger blonde turned her head slightly to look up at her Mother, "I know. Thank you."

Judy wheeled Quinn up to the passenger door and Santana came around to meet them, "I've got her."

The Mother watched with a smile as the brunette carefully helped Quinn from her chair and into the seat, making sure her dress was inside the door completely before shutting it. She then collapsed the wheelchair and popped it into the back before turning back to Judy.

"I'll have her home at a decent time and all that, whatever it is I'm supposed to say." She said, waving her hand with a smirk.

Judy nodded with a laugh, "I trust you. Have fun tonight, love you Quinnie."

Quinn nodded, mouthing the words back and waving from inside the cab as Santana joined her. Judy watched as the vehicle backed out of her driveway and disappeared down the street. Secretly praying for her Daughter's sake that she had the courage to do what she needed to have a chance at happiness.

—

"Come on, Q. Let's get some dancing in before we do our duet." Santana urged, tugging on the blonde's hand slightly.

"You really want to dance with me, when I'm like *this*?"

"Sure, why not? I could try to pick you up and hold you... But I wouldn't want you to fall." Quinn blushed at the idea, ducking her head down to try the evidence. "Besides, do you see all of the glares I'm getting? Even in a wheelchair it looks like there are a lot of suitors wishing they would have asked."

Quinn looked up, she had been completely oblivious to the people watching them until that point. Some of them were curious, some of them seemed jealous and others appeared to think that the two of them looked cute. The blonde glanced toward her friend and her extended hand. Santana did look beautiful and to waste the opportunity would be foolish on her part.

"Okay."

A large smile pulled at Santana's lips and she pushed Quinn toward the dance floor excitedly.

Kurt and Blaine smiled over toward them, the shorter boy bending over slightly to compliment Quinn as they approached. "You look gorgeous!"

"Thank you." The blonde said, blushing slightly as he straightened back up.

"You too, Santana." Blaine added, pulling his boyfriend back into his arms.

"Thanks boys, you look pretty damn good yourselves. Mind if we join you?" Santana asked, flashing them a toothy grin.

"Sure. Aren't you two performing soon?" Kurt asked, looking between the two girls.

"Yeah, we are. But we've got some time." Santana said, coming around so that she was facing Quinn. "May I have this dance?"

Quinn rolled her eyes but laughed and took Santana's hand in her own. "So proper."

"I try."

After dancing for a few more songs, it was finally time for Quinn and Santana to take the stage.

Santana wheeled her up to the stage and Quinn tried her best to ignore the way that a hush had fallen over the crowd of students watching them. Once they were centered on the stage, Santana on the right and Quinn the left, Santana handed the other girl her mic. Quinn thanked her quickly, trying to swallow her nerves and prepare herself to belt out *Take My Breath Away* before the other students.

Quinn started off the song, her voice strong but her hands trembling. She glanced up toward Santana, ignoring the other students dancing before them.

They were halfway through their performance when Quinn finally found the courage to grasp the mic stand firmly and raise herself onto unsteady legs.

Santana did a double take, her eyes widening when she realized what it was that the blonde had just did. She stepped to the left then, sliding a supportive arm around Quinn. Her friend leaned into her, shooting her a smile. She once again ignored her classmates and the collective gasp as they realized why her singing had faltered slightly.

When the song was done and the silver confetti had fallen, Santana glanced toward Quinn. "You're *standing*." She said, her voice full of pride and a touch of awe.

"I wanted to surprise you... I hope you're not mad." The blonde said, leaning into Santana more heavily as she felt her legs beginning to weaken.

"Mad? Q.. This is amazing! I'm so proud of you." Santana said, pulling her into a gentle hug before helping her back into her chair.

"T-thank you... I, uh, do you mind if we head home? I'm exhausted..."

Santana nodded with a small smile, "Of course. Let me get our jackets and I'll take you to the car."

Quinn wheeled herself toward the ramp attached to the stage, she didn't notice Kurt until he was just beside her. "That was pretty impressive. I'm glad to see that your therapy is working."

The blonde shot the boy a smile, "Thank you. It's been difficult... But worth it."

"Most things difficult are." His eyes trailed over to where Santana was grabbing their coats, "So... When are you going to ask her out?"

Quinn's eyes widened and she looked up toward the boy, "What?"

"Oh, you heard me, Fabray. She and Brittany aren't together right now. You and I both know those two are toxic for each other... Sure, they make each other happy sometimes but they hurt each other just as much, if not more."

Quinn's eyes drifted over toward where Brittany was dancing with some Jock, a small frown playing at her lips. "I-I don't know what it is you want *me* to do about it. I'm not gay."

"Honey, you don't have to be. Regardless of your orientation, you're *attracted* to her. And I personally, think that you should go for it. She'd be an idiot not to say yes. You're beautiful, intelligent, talented... I'd continue but I wouldn't want to inflate your ego too much." Kurt said his smile softening.

Quinn wanted to respond but Santana was approaching them quickly, one eyebrow arched above the other. "Thanks, Kurt."

"No problem. Good luck." He said, waving goodbye as Santana wheeled her toward the exit.

"Could I ask you something?" Quinn asked, glancing toward Santana's profile as the brunette drove them home.

"Sure, what's up Q?"

Quinn swallowed, "Would you go to dinner with me?"

Santana's brows furrowed but she kept her eyes trained on the road, her hands flexing over the wheel. "Uh... You're going to have to clarify this for me because as a girl who dates girls... That sounds an awful lot like you asking me out, Fabray."

Quinn barely resisted the urge to sink deeper into her seat and instead did her best to meet Santana's gaze when the brunette glanced toward her. "I am."

She was known for being the girl who took what she wanted, for asking and receiving. But her hands were sweating and her heart was racing. Every second that passed without an answer felt like an excruciating eternity.

Finally, just as they were pulling up outside of Quinn's home, Santana answered. "Okay."

Quinn glanced toward her, surprised. "Really?"

"Uh, have you looked in a mirror lately? I've been wanting to get on that for years..." Santana muttered but it was obvious that she was just as nervous and embarrassed about the situation as the blonde was.

Quinn chuckled at that realization and glanced toward the front of her home, the living room light was on and casting lines through the blinds and over the front yard. "Mom's waiting up, can't keep her." She said, her hand resting on the passenger door.

"Yeah, okay." Santana said quickly, taking out her seat belt before coming around to help the other girl out of the car.

She leaned down once she had the door open to try and help Quinn to her feet but the blonde placed a tentative hand on her forearm. "Santana."

"Yeah?"

The brunette tipped her head upward slightly, her eyes widening as Quinn closed the distance between them. The kiss was chaste but it stole her breath regardless. "Thank you, for tonight. For everything."

"N-no problem, Fabray." Santana said, pulling away feeling a little light headed. She smiled before helping the blonde into the wheelchair and wheeling her to the door.

The brunette smiled as she slowed them to a stop, "Well, here we are..."

Quinn chuckled, "Dinner tomorrow, at eight?"

Santana was grateful for the darkness as her cheeks flushed. "Sure."

Quinn smiled and reached for the door but Santana stopped her. She bent down and caught the girl's attention before pressing their lips firmly together. "See you tomorrow, Q"

The Best of Us Can Find Happiness in Misery, by

solvethebomb

Quinn is actually at school, but she's mostly there for show. The eyes following her down the hall tell her that her new look is having the intended effect. People are staring, but not because she's perfect, not because she's a cheerleader, not because she's pregnant, not because she is **the Quinn Fabray**. They are staring because she isn't any of those things anymore.

Not caring feels so fucking good, even if she has to actively *try* not to care at times. Sometimes it was easier than others. Any time her mother spoke it's easiest. It was hardest with Santana begging her not to break up the Unholy Trinity.

Listening to her once-upon-a-time best friend act like *she* was the thing that broke their trio up had been infuriating and also somehow painful. Santana and Quinn had been a team. They had formed a friendship borne of necessity but grown out of actual affection. They were hard on each other, sure. But they were also two sides of the same coin. And Brittany was...well, Brittany. She was funny, kinder than Quinn or Santana, and she loved their little group. Without her, the Unholy Trinity would have never really existed as an entity. They would just be three friends who happened to be cheerleaders and were generally more awesome than their peers.

No, what had broken their little trifecta had been Santana and Brittany getting so deep into each other that Quinn couldn't stand to look at them any longer. Her best friend became someone else entirely around Britt, and it was fucking irritating. Almost never in 3 years of friendship had Santana been as soft with Quinn as she was with Brittany. That wouldn't really have been a problem, except that suddenly at Nationals she *was*, and it made Quinn feel hopeful for something that she couldn't exactly define but knew was absolutely out of the question.

There were many things that pained her deeply and led her to this point, but Santana Lopez was Quinn's last straw.

After New York, she came back to Lima and cut off all ties to the version of herself that she was hell bent on abandoning. Quinn was tired of being *Quinn Fabray*. She was exhausted, really. After floundering for a few weeks, she caught sight of one of the Skanks having a smoke and immediately admired the freedom she saw there. She needed a change, and this was it. So she bummed a cigarette.

It was fucking terrible. She felt like shit, her lungs hurt, her healthy body screamed at her. It was perfect. Her body felt closer to the shit mess that her mind had been for quite some time.

In a few more easy steps she transformed herself into a physical representation of the insanity that went on in her head. Gone was the pretty blonde hair. Gone were the fit-for-church sundresses. In was black, a lot of black. Not as much black as she felt, but still a lot. The tattoo hurt, but it defiled the perfect body that had been so admired by so many, that she had worked so

hard for when she was still Lucy. The nose ring actually took some convincing, but she'd gotten used to it by now.

Quinn the Skank was born. Quinn the Cheerio was dead.

When she reaches her locker she pops it open without a thought, her combination still embedded in the former Quinn's memory. New Quinn isn't getting books though, she's grabbing a pack of cigarettes to bring to her new friends. Before she could reach in, however, a note falls to the floor.

Quinn bends down and picks it up, turning it over to see Santana's distinctive left-handed scrawl.

"Q"

One letter, written on the outside of a folded piece of paper, makes Quinn's heart thump hard in a painful protest.

Fucking Santana.

She tucks the note in her pocket and grabs her cigarettes, vowing never to use her locker again as she slams it shut.

Quinn strides purposefully, angrily, out to where her little gang waits. She hands the pack over after taking one for herself, lighting it immediately and taking a long draw.

She hates every second of it. Hates the urge to cough, hates the singed feeling in her lungs after she exhales, hates the smell. Quinn hates it so much that she loves it. Such a simple, awful thing that always makes her feel like she deserves to feel. The only thing better was the blackout heaven she experiences after drinking herself into oblivion.

Quinn knows how to drink. It is her parents' favorite pastime, after all. Now that Russell is back in the picture and her mother is back to kissing his douchebag ass, there is always an abundance of booze in her house. And since her father doesn't actually acknowledge Quinn anymore, she can walk in the front door completely bombed and be guaranteed that she'd be left alone.

She hates that she can do that.

Quinn reaches in her pocket and feels the note. She doesn't want to read it. She really actually wants to light it on fire with her cigarette, but she knows she won't.

One of the Skanks is talking to her, but she isn't listening. She shakes her head at whatever was said and looks off towards the field where the Cheerios are practicing after school. It isn't hard to spot her.

Santana Lopez is beautiful even from afar. She is graceful and confident, her limbs always carefully under her control. So many of the girls on that field don't know to keep their own bodies from being flailing messes during tucks and flips, but Santana does. Brittany does, too. She is easy to spot as well.

Quinn fights the ache, fights the emptiness. She is happier not caring. It is so much fucking easier not to care. Looking at them makes her care more than she's capable of dealing with.

Wordlessly, she pushes herself off the wall she's leaning on and walks away, ignoring the girls calling her name. She climbs up a little known ladder behind the school and takes a seat on the flat rooftop.

This was hers and Santana's spot back in the day. They sat here and plotted their takeover of McKinley High like generals plot campaigns to win wars. They'd stopped coming when Brittany came into the picture.

The note feels heavy in her pocket, even though she knows it is just her imagination. Quinn pulls it out and stares at it for a while, certain that whatever is written inside is going to hurt, one way or another.

Santana being angry with her would hurt. Santana reaching out to her would hurt. Santana writing her off would hurt. Santana doing anything seemed to hurt lately.

With a long sigh she slowly opens the folded paper and braces herself for what she is about to read.

Quinn-

I could write a very long list of things I am awesome at, and a very short list of things I'm not so awesome at. Unfortunately, I think that a lot of the things I'm not very good at are exactly what you need right now. So I'm going to try my best. Bear with me, because I'm out of my comfort zone trying to say these things.

First off, I love you so very much. I know I say that I'm numb to other people's feelings a lot, and that is 99% true, but not to yours, Q. Never to yours. Your pain hurts me so much, because I truly do love you.

Secondly, I want you to know that I see you. I don't think you know that, but I do. I see all of the great things in you, I see how incredibly smart you are, I see your strength. But I also see your pain, Quinn. I see how afraid you are of love because it has hurt you so much, I see your sadness, I see the emptiness you feel sometimes. Most importantly, I see that you are a survivor. I know you hurt, but I know we can beat that hurt together.

Third, you are my best friend, bar none. I know you don't believe me because you think it's Brittany, but it's always been you. I probably should have told you that more. I'm sorry I didn't.

Lastly, I am here for you. You don't have to talk to me, you don't have to do anything at all. I just need you to know that I am willing to do anything to help you get through this. We've made it through so much shit, Quinn. We can do anything if we stick together.

I love you,

Santana

Quinn reads the note twice, ignoring the free fall of tears on her cheeks. When she finishes it the second time she looks up to see her friend standing warily at the top of the ladder, regarding her nervously. They stare at each other for a long moment before Quinn slowly drops her chin to her chest and starts sobbing.

Santana is shaken to the core by the raw pain escaping her best friend in loud, body shaking cries. She practically runs the ten steps between them and drops down to wrap her arms around Quinn. She murmurs quietly into the broken girl's ear, telling her over and over that it will be okay and that she loves her.

The sky has begun to darken by the time Quinn's sobs slow and weaken, and she moves for the first time, picking her arms up and turning into Santana to return the hug she's been wrapped in so fiercely since she started crying.

"I'm broken, Santana. I'm so fucked up and I don't know what to do about it."

Santana is taken aback by the vulnerability Quinn has shown with that simple statement. She feels every single word deep in her heart. She can't believe she let Quinn get to this point. She especially can't believe she thought a haircut could fix this.

"We're going to fix it together, Q. You're not alone, okay? Please just don't give up."

Quinn nods silently. She's not sure she can be put back together, but she wants to stay in this embrace for as long as possible. She sighs and leans into her best friend, exhausted from crying.

Santana closes her eyes and fights the familiar feelings that arise whenever she is this close to Quinn. She has Brittany now. Quinn is straight. She's so fucking irritated with herself because she needs to be a friend, not a friend with an eternal crush on her best friend.

They sit in silence for a long time, until Quinn shivers in the darkness.

"You cold?" Santana asks quietly.

"Yeah, but I don't want you to let me go."

"Here, take my Cheerios jacket then."

Quinn looks up at Santana in surprise as she stands to whip her jacket off and wrap it around her shoulders.

"But you'll get cold," Quinn interjects with a frown.

"Maybe, but I told you I'll do anything and I meant it. So if we have to stay up here all night and talk, that's what we're going to do."

Santana shrugs, as if this is the most obvious thing in the world and then sits back down, putting her arm around her former captain and pulling her close.

Quinn runs a hand through her mess of pink and blonde hair, considering her friend's statement, then tilts her head to rest on Santana's shoulder.

"I don't even know where to start. I don't know how to explain how fucking shitty I feel all the time. It's like a void...a vacuum. My heart always feels so empty. It hurts."

Santana just nods, uncertain what the right thing is to say. She silently curses herself for sucking so bad at this. She thinks about when she felt the absolute lowest, trying to identify with where her best friend is right now.

"You know, I felt really similar when I realized for sure that I'm gay. It just all felt so hopeless. I had no idea what was going to happen to me if anyone found out, I thought my life was pretty much over. I didn't know how to make it stop hurting. Sometimes it still does, but it got a lot better. I don't know how exactly to help you yet, I just want you to know that it can and will be better."

This is the first time Santana has ever said the words "I'm gay" to another person, and she feels a flare of fear after she finally utters it out loud.

Quinn sits quietly for a moment, surprised that Santana has finally admitted something she has suspected for a long time. She knows it's big for her to say it now.

"Why didn't you tell me? Maybe I could have helped you feel better somehow."

Santana sighs.

"I didn't want to freak you out or something."

Quinn shakes her head and turns to look her friend in the eye.

"I don't care, Santana. I just want you to be happy. I love you the same as I always have."

She lets out a little humorless laugh and word vomits unexpectedly.

"Hell, if anything I still love you too much."

Santana's brow furrows. She's not sure how to take that.

"Too much how?"

Quinn is silently panicking, uncertain how to parlay this slip to save their friendship.

"Nothing, never mind."

Santana leans farther away from Quinn and studies her face. This is important, she needs to know what was meant by "too much," but Quinn is fragile and needs her help, not an interrogation. Santana's conflicted expression is read easily by her friend, who sighs deeply.

"There have been times, many times, where I have felt a certain...pull, I guess...towards you. I-"

Quinn looks up to the sky and fights the tears that are forming. They were so close to being besties again, and she's going to ruin it. She raises her hands slightly and shrugs, her fingers downward and her palms facing out in a helpless gesture.

"I want you sometimes, like...more than a friend. But I know you're with Brittany and I would never act on it, it's just something I've always felt, really since the first day I met you. It breaks my heart too, I didn't say anything because I never wanted to ruin our friendship and somehow I fucked it up anyway."

The tears finally slide down her cheeks as she rushes out words she never wanted to say.

Santana sits absolutely still and processes what Quinn just told her. She'd been right about the feelings between them all along. It really was mutual. Santana reaches out to take Quinn's hand and looks her firmly in the eye when hazel irises turn to her.

"You didn't fuck anything up. It would take a hell of a lot more to ruin this, okay? I...I felt the pull too. Ever since the beginning. I've always loved you too much, and I'm not about to stop. You're still my best friend."

Quinn smiles genuinely for the first time in a long time.

"Now I wish I'd said something sooner. I've always wondered what it'd be like to kiss you," she admits with a light laugh.

Santana inhales sharply. She doesn't know what to say to that, so she just acts. In half a second she's on her knees in front of Quinn, carefully cupping her face and looking into her eyes intently before carefully dipping her head to gently, slowly caress Quinn's lips with her own.

It's a soft, tender moment. Santana takes her time, intent on showing this amazing girl just how much she adores her.

Quinn relishes the affection she feels, understanding the intention behind the kiss. It's about Santana telling her that she has always and will always be truly loved.

When Santana pulls back she reaches her hands out to pull Quinn up to her feet. She wraps her friend in her arms and hugs her fiercely.

Quinn leans into the embrace, her thoughts still on the kiss they just shared.

"San..."

Santana immediately knows what Quinn is trying to say and answers her incomplete thought.

"I'm going to tell her. She'll understand, don't worry. It's fine."

"Tell her I'm sorry."

"Are you sorry?"

Quinn is quiet, because she isn't sorry. She doesn't want to ruin what her best friends have, but she will treasure that kiss for as long as she lives.

"No."

Santana turns her head to softly kiss Quinn's temple.

"Good, neither am I. That needed to happen. I love you, Q. Let's go back to my house and talk, okay? It's fucking freezing out here."

Quinn nods and follows her friend down the ladder. Santana takes her hand as soon as both of their feet are on the ground and doesn't let go until they make it back to her house and into her bedroom.

They talk late into the night, Quinn in tears for most of their conversation. Santana mostly listens, occasionally interjecting or wrapping her friend in a tight hug when the tears become too much. Eventually they fall asleep, both in Santana's Cheerios sweats, their hands intertwined throughout the night.

Santana awakens first and lies quietly, studying the beautiful face before her. She loves Brittany, she really does, but she knows how easy it would be to fall in love with Quinn. There has always been something more, that pull, between them. It has kept them from completely unraveling so many times, drawing them back in when their friendship floundered hopelessly.

It's confusing and painful, feeling this way for the two people closest to her. Santana has always struggled with allowing herself to be vulnerable, yet somehow has managed to allow Brittany and Quinn so deep inside of her heart that it actually terrifies her.

She knows that Brittany loves her, but Britt also put her on the back burner for Artie. If she was actually *in love* with Santana, she wouldn't have chosen him over her. She wouldn't have been able to. Not only that, but Santana knows that Brittany really will be okay with her kissing Quinn last night, and what does that say? And what does it mean that she didn't even really consider *not* kissing Quinn when the opportunity presented itself?

On the other hand, Quinn needs to get her shit straight. Getting involved with her at the moment is a terrible idea, and would probably ruin their chances of making it together and destroy their friendship as well. But the urge to kiss the gorgeous blonde next to her is so much stronger than she anticipated. She's been burying this feeling for three years and in one night it has been unearthed with a vengeance.

Quinn opens her eyes and studies the deep brown ones looking back at her. She can see, without a word being spoken, that Santana is struggling with something. Something big.

The brunette closes her eyes and lets out a heavy puff of air through her nose before turning away. It's all too much right now.

"What is it?" Quinn asks quietly.

Her best friend shakes her head, lost for words. All at once, Quinn just *knows*.

"Santana. Hey Santana, listen to me."

Wary eyes come back to hers, and Quinn feels a sudden strength. She knows what she needs to tell her best friend.

"I love you, San. I really do. And my feelings for you are probably not going to go away anytime soon, considering they've stayed with me for three years. But you and I both know that this can't happen right now. You don't need to feel conflicted, because I couldn't let you choose me even if you wanted to. I need you so much, but I'm not anywhere near ready to have you as more than a friend. Maybe someday, but not now."

Santana nods and sighs deeply. She knows Quinn is right and she's thankful for the reprieve, even if it kind of sucks to hear "no" from this girl that she has wanted for so damn long. She

doesn't know how to say any of the things she is feeling, so she just keeps her mouth shut and stares at the ceiling.

"So...still got that bottle of peroxide?" Quinn asks with a smile, looking to ease the tension that has settled over her best friend.

Santana brightens immediately and turns to look at her.

"Damn right I do. Let's go fix that hot mess."

The former blonde frowns.

"I don't think it looks that bad. You don't like it?"

Santana looks away while she considers her answer. In truth, she thinks Quinn looks pretty hot as a Skank, in an objective sense. But as her friend, as someone who cares about her deeply, Santana sees the hair and the clothes for what they are—a way to hide away from the pain.

"Uhh...well, I don't dislike it really. Only you could even come close to pulling this look off. But it doesn't really look like you. It looks like you hiding yourself from things that hurt."

Quinn nods, unsurprised that Santana picked up on the reason behind her changed look.

Santana hops out of bed and walks into her bathroom, emerging with a bottle of peroxide and a smile.

"Ready?"

Quinn takes a deep breath and then follows her into the bathroom.

In no time the pink is gone and Quinn is just Quinn again. She stares in the mirror, uncertain why it doesn't hurt as much to look at herself, but thankful nonetheless. Santana steps up next to her and they regard each other in the reflection. Quinn feels braver with those brown eyes on hers and she looks down with a smile.

"Thank you, Santana. I needed you and you were there. I don't know how long it will take for me to feel right again, but at least I've taken a step."

"I'll help you get there, Q. One step at a time."

Quinn looks back at herself in the mirror.

"It's weird, like I haven't really seen myself for months."

"Well let me be the first to welcome you back, Quinn Fabray. I have missed you so very much," Santana says sincerely.

Quinn smiles softly.

"I missed you too, San."

I Needed Someone On My Side, by Take My Breath Away Two Times

Knock, knock

“Q open up!”

Knock, knock

“Quinn!”

“Coming, San, shhh!” Quinn shouts as she gets up from her desk and walks to the door. As she opens it, she catches Santana in mid knock.

“Hey Lena.” Santana says casually as she pushes past Quinn and throws her stuff on Quinn's roommate's bed.

“Hey S. What are you doing here? I thought it was my weekend to come to you, I have my train booked.” Quinn says as she closes the door and turns to face Santana who is in the process of taking off her boots.

“Yeah well I don't have an apartment anymore so I decided to come to you a day early. Surprise!” Santana replied as she turned and opened her arms to Quinn with an over the top smile.

Knowing Santana like she did, Quinn moved forward and wrapped her arms around Santana pulling her close. She refrained from asking anymore about Santana being homeless as she placed a soft peck to her temple. Santana moved her head to Quinn's shoulder as she let out a sigh and kissed her collarbone.

“Hey.” She whispers softly, her eyes closing at how comfortable she feels all of a sudden.

“Hi there.” Quinn replies, enjoying the warmth in her arms.

“Did you fall asleep at your desk again?” Santana asks as she observes the messy layout of Quinn's desk.

“Yeah. How did you know?” Quinn questions as they both move apart.

“You've got that just woke up look and your voice is sleep husky.” Santana responds as if it were obvious.

Quinn tries not to read into just how well Santana knows her as she moves to tidy her desk. She can feel Santana's eyes on her as she moves around her small room. She loves and hates the effect the girl has on her.

“So where's the roommate?” Santana asks as she moves to sit on Quinn's bed.

“She dropped out. Couldn't take the pressure.” Quinn replies rolling her eyes. If you get into a school like Yale, you shouldn't give up so easily.

“Well that was stupid. Never liked her anyway.” Santana comments also rolling her eyes.

Quinn quickly finishes her tidying and moves to sit beside Santana, taking her hand.

“So what did you do to Rachel?” Quinn asks as she plays with Santana's fingers. 'Oh that's nice Quinn! Of course I'd be the one to do something. I'm always guilty!' Santana snaps, snatching her hand away and scowling at the ground.

“Okay San, I'm sorry I didn't mean it. I just know that you were already on thin ice with her for going through her stuff so what happened?” Quinn rephrases as she retakes Santana's hand.

“I may or may not have confronted Donkey face about his pill pushing ways...” Santana says quietly, still pouting from being the one always in the wrong.

“Okay and were you right?” Quinn asks, already knowing what Santana is like when she is suspicious. Quinn however also knows that Santana never pursues something unless she feels it is important or will harm someone she loves.

“Kind of...” Santana replies vaguely as she runs her hand through her hair and looks over at Quinn. “He's a gigolo.”

“He's a what?” Quinn questions trying hard not to laugh but failing miserably. “Oh my god! So why would that get you kicked out, you were right that he was sketchy?”

“I confronted him at NYADA and he told the wonder twins who told me to either drop it or get out. So I left and investigated deeper, before calling Rachel's giant in shining armour and then calling plastic man's hotline. I hid Finnocent in the bathroom of a hotel room and when the mannequin arrived, I left and Finn beat the crap out of him.” Santana explained briefly, smiling at her plans brilliance. “From the amount of missed calls on my phone, I'm guessing Finn told Rach.”

“Well once again your Mexican third eye was correct.” Quinn congratulates. “Did you actually confront him or did you do a Glee confrontation?”

“L..my have sang Cold Hearted...” Santana says embarrassed now that she realises how random it was.

“As in Paula Abdul?” Quinn asked surprised. “Did someone get it on video?”

“Why? So you can mock me with it later?” Santana questions, brows furrowing with her pout.

“Well...its just I was thinking about that video...and you performing it...and wow...” Quinn explains slowly, her mouth suddenly going dry.

“Hmm...maybe I'll give you a private show later.” Santana purrs as she winks and laughs at the dumbstruck girl.

Shaking her head to get rid of her quickly escalating thoughts, Quinn watches Santana's face carefully. After a few minutes of smiling, Quinn quietly speaks up. "So what's wrong?"

"Nothing I just really needed to see you." Santana says softly as she moves to cuddle into Quinn's side and ignore the hurt from being once again left in the cold. "I needed someone on my side."

Quinn welcomes the closeness instantly, moving them to lie down on her bed with Santana's head on her shoulder and their legs tangled. She runs her fingers in random patterns along Santana's back as she watches the girl digest the events of the past few days. As she watches her, she realizes just how close to the girl she has gotten to the girl since their trip to New York to have a Rachel intervention. They talk every day, either by text or phone call. One of them visits every weekend and they've been having a friends with benefits thing since the wedding that wasn't. It's then that Quinn wonders if Santana has been seeing other people or just her and her heart drops.

Yes she had been the one to say it was a onetime thing, that turned into two and that turned into a lot more but that doesn't mean she wants other girls up on her girl. Her girl! She can think it in her head okay. Maybe she wasn't too bothered about the labels and inevitable heart attack her mother would have if it meant she could be with Santana.

"Hey, San?" Quinn asks quietly.

"Hmm?" Santana responds distractedly.

"Will you go out with me?" Quinn asks as she focuses hard on the ceiling.

"What?" Santana says as she lifts her head, becoming more alert.

"Well I just thought you know, we've been doing this for a while and we could go out or something? If you don't want to that's fine I just thought that you might..." Quinn rambles quickly, wondering if the ground could swallow her up.

"Really?" Santana asks smiling up at Quinn. "I was going to ask you a while ago but I thought you wanted to keep it casual. You said you wanted to keep it casual when it became a more than two-time thing and at the start you used to whisper that you weren't that into this so I didn't ask."

Both Santana and Quinn looked at each other smiling at each other's rambling. Santana leaned up so she was closer to Quinn and leaned their foreheads together.

"Are you sure you want this?" She says trying not to feel vulnerable.

"Santana Lopez, will you be my girlfriend?" Quinn asks, this time confident in her question.

"I would love to." Santana says as she brushes her lips against Quinn's.

Quinn instantly feels the sparks at the simple touch and pulls Santana against her to feel her lips more fully. The need to rush is left behind as both girls take time to explore the other. Santana wraps her fingers in Quinn's hair as Quinn draws patterns into the small of her back.

Lips make way for tongues and both girls moan at the contact. When air becomes an issue, Santana moves back but rubs her nose against Quinn's lovingly.

“Who would have thought the two HBIC's would ever be dating.” She says smiling down at the blonde.

“Well now that I think about it, it seems like the perfect match.” Quinn replies simply as she pecks Santana's lips again.

“I like this, us. I think we should stay here.” Santana comments as she snuggles back into Quinn's neck.

“Nah, New York looks good on you babe. Once I've shouted at Rachel for a while, you'll be home sweet home.” Quinn says seriously. 'But first, let's get our cuddle on.'

Comfort/Fluff, by team-valkyrie

Quinn is laying down on her bed reading her favorite book, *The Hunger Games*, when Santana comes bursting into her room, crying. They were friends, even through all the fights they have had over the years, they were still there for each other and Quinn was instantly worried about her friend.

"Santana... What happened?" the blonde asked softly before standing up and embracing her oldest friend in a warm hug. If it were possible, Santana started crying harder. Quinn knew she wouldn't be able to talk now so she led her to the bathroom and ran her a bath, putting in that lavender soap Santana likes so much. She gently undressed the brunette girl and lowered her down into the warm water. Quinn lathered a sponge up with the soap and washed Santana, then using her shampoo to wash her dark locks, then rinses her. When the water runs cold, she picks up Santana bridal style and warps her up in a fluffy towel.

Walking out of the bathroom, Quinn makes her way to her bed, where she gently lays the girl down. She walks over to her closet and picks out a pair of sweatpants and a hoodie. Quinn goes back to Santana and redresses her before tucking her in and laying down beside her. Santana cuddles closer to Quinn and the blonde can't help but hold her tight.

"She picked him over me. Brittany picked Artie over me..." Santana says softly, her voice laced with a deep sadness that came from within the depths of her soul. Quinn felt her heart ache for the other girl, not knowing what to say so instead she just held her tighter and kissed her forehead.

"I tried so hard, so damn hard, to be a better person for her. I tried being nicer, I put myself out there, I gave her my heart. I overcame so much just so she would think I was worth it. But it wasn't. I wasn't enough. That's why everyone leaves me. That's why my parents are never home. That's why everyone at school, even the glee club, is afraid of me. That's why you hate me."

Quinn was beyond angry. How dare Brittany do this to Santana? Santana was amazing, the most amazing girl she knew. Sure, she had her flaws but who didn't? Her virtues overruled her flaws. Santana was not only beautiful, but smart, funny, honest, loyal, confident. She could go on. Brittany was lucky to have Santana fall in love with her yet she threw it away.

"No!" Quinn said angrily, no longer able to contain her emotions over the matter. "Santana, you are amazing and anyone would be lucky to have you. You are incredibly gorgeous, both street and book intelligent, sarcastically hilarious, sure of yourself and the most loyal person I know. Your parents are too obsessed with work to see they have an amazing daughter, the kids at school are stupid and don't be past the HBIC facade, and I... I could never hate you, Santana," Quinn finished her rant quietly.

Santana gazed up at the blonde and looked at her with a quizzical expression. "Thank you. Those words mean more to me than you will ever know. I love you."

Those three words hit Quinn harder than they should have. It was in that moment that Quinn knew she was in love with Santana. And she was going to try her damn hardest to make Santana feel just how much.

"I love you too, Santana. And I will never leave you."

What's in a Name?, by tehedward

"So I've made a decision about tomorrow." Quinn says quietly into Santana's shoulder as they lay together cuddling in bed. The early morning light of the rising sun just starting to peak into their bedroom.

"Mmhmm?" Santana questions, barely awake and just enjoying the warmth of sharing a bed with her fiancé, soon to be wife.

"I've been thinking about this for a long time now and I didn't come to this decision lightly and I know we're going to be really busy today getting ready and everything but this is important and... San, are you listening to me?" Quinn huffs, slightly annoyed at Santana's apparent lack of interest in what she was saying.

"Mmhmm." Quinn hears Santana answer in the affirmative, but the fact that she snuggles in further under the blankets belies that.

"So anyway," Quinn says, "I've been thinking about this for a while now and I've made a decision-"

"Uh-huh..." Santana mumbles.

Quinn rolls her eyes, annoyed, but she can't be too angry. Santana, even on her best days was not a morning person. Still she had hoped that Santana would pick up on how serious she was being here. Quinn sits up in bed and looks down at the snoozing form of Santana and a warm smile crosses her face.

God she loved her. Santana was everything that she wished she could be. She was so strong and confident. Nothing fazed her and if someone or something was stupid enough to get in her way Santana just went right on through them. Being with Santana Lopez made Quinn better, stronger, than she could ever be on her own.

"So anyway, like I said, I've made a decision about the wedding tomorrow." Taking careful note that Santana wasn't paying attention she decided to have a little fun with it. "So I think we should have a nude wedding. Everyone shows up just completely naked."

"Mmhmm."

"Also, I want us to be married by either an Elvis impersonator or Darth Vader."

"Uh-huh."

"Oh and I spent all of your life savings to get trained doves who will fly in the formation of a heart. I know it seems a bit excessive but I think they'll be well worth the memory."

"Okay."

"I also fired the band that you wanted and asked Rachel if she would do an all Broadway musical tribute to our love."

"Thas nicsh."

"Also I'm not content to have it be just the two of us so I invited Puck to join us in a polyamorous marriage. He agreed but he wants first crack at me, you don't mind sitting back and letting him have first go on our wedding night do you?"

"Wah-eber you wan..." Santana's lips smack together sleepily when suddenly what Quinn had just said registered with her and her eyes snap open. She sits up quickly and glares at Quinn. "The hell that bastards ever laying even one measly paw on you!" Santana snarls, joking or not Santana did not share Quinn, at least not like that.

Quinn arches a brow, "Oh, finally paying attention are you?"

Santana scoffs, "Of course I was paying attention to you, I always do."

"Uh-huh, I totally believe you." Quinn says, her voice oozing with sarcasm.

"I was." Santana says glaring right back.

"So you're fine with everything I just said?"

"I most certainly am not!"

"Which part in particular do you have issue with?"

Santana can see the little smirk trying to escape as Quinn tries to hold a straight face. To be honest she hadn't actually been really listening but she wasn't about to admit that. Right now it was a battle of wills between her and her girl and as much as she loved her, she wasn't about to lose.

"Just- Just the last part." Santana tries to say confidently, but she can tell by the gleam in Quinn's eyes that she had just handed this victory to Quinn on a silver platter.

"Okay, so you only have issue with Puck, none of the other stuff bothers you?" Quinn's not even trying to hold a straight face anymore, she's just grinning from ear to ear and shaking her head fondly.

"Alright, alright! I'm sorry I was sleeping, I didn't hear a single word you said."

Quinn leans in and gives her a quick peck on the lips. "Don't worry about it, I shouldn't have brought it up this early. I'll just tell you later." And with that Quinn lays back down to go back to sleep for another couple of hours.

"No, wait. C'mon Querida, talk to me, I'm awake now and I want to hear what you have to say."

"This is kind of important San, I'll wait till you're a little more awake."

"C'mon, please, mi Amor-" Santana begins to kiss Quinn's shoulder and slowly works her way up until she's nibbling at Quinn's earlobe. Whispering in Spanish for Quinn to talk to her, knowing that when she did that it was a big turn on for her and if she kept at it she could get whatever she wanted out of Quinn.

"Saaan..." Quinn whines, as she starts to giggle. Santana however ignores her and continues to do her best to drive her girl wild.

"Alright I'll talk, I'll talk!"

"Good, now just let me get comfy and-" Santana positions herself so that Quinn's back is pressed up against her front and she wraps her arms protectively around the blond, holding her close. "There we are, so what did you want to talk about?"

"Alright, well like I said, I've been thinking about this for a while now and I've decided that... I don't want to do the combined last names. I don't want to be Lopez-Fabray."

Santana felt like she had just been punched in the gut, hearing that hurt and she can feel the tears welling in her eyes at the knowledge that Quinn didn't want to share a last name. "Oh... um, okay." Santana says, her voice cracking.

"No, let me finish San. I don't want to be Lucy Quinn Lopez-Fabray I just want to be Lucy Quinn Lopez... just Lopez, no Fabray. I want to take your last name I... I hope you're okay with that."

That punch to the gut feeling disappeared completely and she could feel herself almost literally melt. Quinn wanted to take her last name, she wanted to be a Lopez and just a Lopez. She had never really given it much thought before, she had always figured that when she married she would be a hyphen last name, Quinn wanting to take her name was such a, a... traditional move that she was thrown for a bit of a loop. But hearing Quinn say that, she realized just how wonderful it would be to have Quinn do that.

Quinn had had a rough time trying to figure out who she was and what she wanted out of life. Between her own extremely high standards and the ridiculously insane amount of pressure that her family put on her Quinn had always defined herself by what other people thought of her. It wasn't until she had gotten out on her own and was given the chance to work out who she wanted to be that Quinn had finally come into her own and discovered her identity and a big part of that for her was reclaiming the name Fabray for herself. Making it mean what she wanted it to mean and not what her father and the rest of her family told her it meant. Her wanting to drop the name Fabray and adopt the Lopez family name completely, spoke volumes to Santana about how much she truly meant to the other girl.

"Really?" Santana asks softly. "You really want to take my name?"

"Yeah I..." Quinn flips around so that she's facing Santana. "You are my entire world, you make everything okay, you inspire me and make me strong, I want to be Quinn Lopez, I want the entire world to know that I am yours completely and totally, one hundred percent."

"You don't have to do that though, I mean you've always been "Quinn Fabray" you know. You don't have to do that for me."

"You... do you not want me to?" Quinn asks meekly.

"No I, I think it would be incredible to have you take my last name, I... words can't even begin to describe how much that would mean to me I just want you to be sure, I don't want you to look back and regret not being a Fabray anymore."

"I could never regret sharing myself with you. You've been there for me through the good times and the bad. You are so strong and so confident and you, you inspire me, you're my hero... I look up to you. Whenever I'm worried or scared I think of you and suddenly I feel better, like I can handle whatever the world throws at me. Honestly... I'm more worried about not living up to the Lopez name than I am about losing the Fabray name."

"Oh, Querida, you don't need to worry about that."

"So you don't mind then?"

"I would love it, I would love to share my name with you."

"Quinn Lopez..." Quinn says quietly, testing the name out. "Mrs. Quinn Lopez... Hmm... Doesn't quite roll off the tongue does it?" Quinn asks, sounding a little disappointed.

"I think it rolls just fine, in fact, I don't think I've ever heard any sexier in my entire life." Santana reassures her as she leans forward and captures Quinn's lips with her own.

Comfort/Fluff, by vampyre in hiding

Santana was passed out in bed. She and Quinn had been together for almost two years and she still couldn't get enough of the blonde Cheerio. She was just too amazing to even describe in Santana's eyes and she knew she meant the same to Quinn.

Santana, coming home late from soccer practice, hadn't been surprised to see Quinn sitting in her living room chatting away with her parents. She didn't even acknowledge her girlfriend until Santana flopped down into her lap and hugged her.

"Hi, baby," she greeted with a kiss to the tanned cheek. She tried desperately not to scrunch up her nose, but a sweaty Santana wasn't her favorite Santana...*unless she'd caused the sweat.*

"I'm going, I'm going," Santana huffed, kissing the blonde softly before leaving the room. She truly did love Quinn, even if she was too mean to let her sit on the blonde's lap.

Santana yawned and rolled over in bed, feeling for her blonde lover. Her parents had let Quinn stay the night and once they'd gone to sleep, she and Quinn had fooled around for a while before saying their love for each other and cuddling in bed.

"Quinn?" Santana called out. She waited for a moment before hopping out of bed. She slipped on a t-shirt and some booty shorts before slipping out of her room and down the stairs to the living room. Her blonde wasn't there, but the smell coming from the kitchen was amazing.

Quinn was swaying in front of the stove, humming quietly to herself in a McKinley Cheerios hoodie and Cheerios shorts. Santana silently walked up behind the girl and wrapped her arms around her waist, giggling softly when Quinn yelped in surprise.

"Shit, San," Quinn gasped. She swiveled around in Santana's arms and leaned into her, planting heavy kisses on the Latina's lips.

"What – what about my parents?" Santana panted.

"Gone. Went out for breakfast or something," Quinn mumbled against her girlfriend's soft lips.

"Sweet," Santana grunted. She reached behind Quinn and clicked off the stove, ignoring whatever it was Quinn was cooking.

Quinn began to protest, but when talented lips kissed the side of her neck she was a goner. "Oh, San."

Now, Santana may have been shorter than Quinn, but she was stronger than her Cheerio, so she lifted her by her thighs and placed her on the kitchen counter. She parted Quinn's legs and stepped between them, attaching her lips to Quinn's.

"I love you," Santana murmured lovingly, stroking Quinn's cheek with her hand.

"I love you, too, baby."

Neither of the girls heard the front door opening quietly. Santana's Abuela, Maria, was planning to surprise her grandchild with an all-day outing and hopeful set-up, but what she saw in the kitchen as she walked in nearly stopped her heart.

"Santana!" The blonde who had her legs wrapped around her granddaughter's waist groaned and Maria felt her face turn red with rage.

"My God, how could you?" Maria admonished loudly.

Santana froze and she could feel her heart beat fast. "Abuela?"

"How could you do this to your family, Santana? Do you know what you being a *lesbian*," Maria whispered the word like it was poison and to her views, it was, "will do to our family? Our name will be ruined! A sin such as this should be forced away, not celebrated." As Maria ranted, Santana felt her heart breaking. "Do your parents know?"

As Santana started to open her mouth, the door opened and Santana's mother and father walked in with leftovers in their hands. "Santi, Quinn, you two awake yet?"

"In here," Santana called, her voice wavering slightly.

Michael and Carla walked through their house and stopped at the sight in front of them. Santana was being held in Quinn's arms, though the girl was still on their counter. If things had been different, Michael would have joked about it, but looking at his mother and daughter, he knew better.

"Did you know about this...this...sin," she spat, "going on in your house, Michael?"

"What sin?" Michael knew exactly what his mother was talking about, but he wanted her to know he didn't see it like that.

Maria narrowed her eyes. "Your daughter cavorting with this...puta?"

Santana's eyes narrowed and Quinn bowed her head.

"Mother!" Michael shouted in disbelief. He knew his mother wouldn't be okay with it, but he thought she'd have more class than that.

"How dare *you*?" Santana screamed, getting into her grandmother's face. Her tone was so harsh Maria stepped back in fear. "You have no right to come in here and insult my *girlfriend*. Just because I don't fit your narrow view on how a Latina should act doesn't mean I'm ruining our family name. I'm in love with that girl, Abuela, so either accept it or don't, but never," she poked her Abuela in chest, "Ever call my Quinn a puta!"

She ignored the stunned expression of everyone in the room and strolled over to Quinn. She was shaken with rage, but she just wanted to comfort her girlfriend and hopefully have the blonde hold her until she felt better.

"How can you let your daughter stand there and talk to me like that?" Maria snapped at her son.

"The same way you can come in here and insult her girlfriend and her. I think you should leave, Mother." Michael was adamant not to see either of them hurt anymore.

"You-you'd kick me out?" Maria stuttered.

Michael nodded. "She's my daughter."

"I'm your mother!"

"Not unless you can see past your narrow views. I won't have this in my house." Maria sputtered, but noticing how everyone simply glared at her, she left in a huff.

Quinn wrapped her arms around Santana's neck. "I'm so proud of you, baby. You stood up for yourself...and me."

Santana burrowed herself into Quinn's neck and choked out, "Of course." She was heartbroken, but she knew she could do anything with Quinn.

"Come on, baby, we can go upstairs and you can cry it out." Santana nodded and allowed Quinn to hop off of the counter. She took Quinn's extended hand and followed the blonde upstairs. Her parents weren't going to stop her. She needed to spend time with her girlfriend and they knew it.

Quinn flopped down on the bed and Santana followed. She buried herself into Quinn's chest and let out a heart-wrenching sob.

"It'll be okay, beautiful," Quinn promised. She vowed she'd fix what happened between Santana and her Abuela.

Santana shook her head, but over time, slowly calmed in Quinn's arms. Things weren't the best, but she knew, that moment in Quinn's arms, that the blonde would forever protect and love her, and that was all the comfort she needed.

"I love you," she mumbled into Quinn's chest, slowly growing tired. Her eyes closed and she fell into an easy slumber.

"I'll love you forever," Quinn promised her girlfriend before following her into sleep. All they'd ever need was each other and they were okay with that.

Worth It, by wonderlandwaitforme (BlessYourSoul)

"Please?"

"No."

"Pleeeaaaase?"

"No!"

"C'mon San."

"No, Quinn, let's go." At that, Quinn's lower lip jutted out, quivering slightly. *Oh God, the pout!*

"But-"

"No 'buts', let's go, this place is closing soon and we haven't seen everything."

"Okay." Quinn said dejectedly, scuffing the front of her shoe on the ground, her pout still firmly in place, pulling on Santana's heart strings. *No! Resist. Resist!* Chancing a glance at Quinn, her resolve broke.

"Ok! Fine! We'll come back later to get it." A smile graced Quinn's lips instantaneously, jumping in to Santana's arms, peppering her face with kisses.

"Thank-*kiss* - You- *kiss* - You're - *kiss* -the- *kiss* -best!"

"Yea, yeah." Santana said dismissively.

"I Love You." Quinn murmured shyly, blushing, realising that's the first time she's said those words. Smiling brightly Santana replied.

"I Love You too, Q" Pulling Quinn in for a quick kiss, and dragging her away, a goofy smile on her face.

Later that day, Santana found herself staring at an ecstatic Quinn, a giant Lion stuffed animal in her arms. Rolling her eyes she thought, *I knew bringing her to the zoo would be a bad idea. But totally worth it.*

Lost and Insecure (You Found Me), by WordsHaveMelodies

It had been three hours since Santana's mother Maribel had called you with the news.

"Quinn are you with Santanita right now?" she says in greeting and you already knew that you didn't like where this was going, "I've been trying to reach her all morning."

"I wish I were but I'm not. I'm in Los Angeles until Friday for a work thing," her sigh sounding a lot more troubled than usual, "Have you called her office?"

"I have but she's not there. I thought if you were with her that the news would be easier to handle," and it sounds like... wait? Was she crying, "She'll need you Quinn."

"Need me for what Maribel?" you ask as you begin to pace the room, "What exactly has happened that she's going to need me for?"

"Ramon's dead Quinn," and those words are all it takes to make your heart break too, "A drunk driver broke the light and smashed right into him."

"Fuck!" you breathe more into the air than the receiver, your hand going to your back on instinct, "I'm going to try my best to leave here now ok but you should still try her again, see if she picks up."

"If you get her before I do have her call me," she says around her tears, "Take care of my mija Quinn."

"I'll be with her as soon as I can."

Two hours since Santana had stopped responding to your text messages.

S: Hey you how's LA? Just got out of surgery and saw all of your missed calls? You ok?

Q: Miserable without you. Are you done for the day?

S: Yup. Pity I don't have you to go home to for another 3 whole days.

Q: I'll be there sooner than you think.

S: Is that a promise?

Q: Yes. P.S. you should call your mom.

S: I saw her missed calls too, everything ok?

Q: She asked me to ask you to call her if I got you before she did so call her, now, please.

S: Quinn? What the hell?

Q: Just call her S ok?

S: Fine. I'm calling her now.

Q: Thank you, love you.

S: Love you too.

S: Quinn?

Q: Yeah S?

S: Did she tell you? About him, do you know?

Q: Yes she did and yes I do. I'm so sorry Santana.

S: Don't be. I'm fine.

Q: Where are you?

S: I'm fine Q. Talk to you later ok.

Q: Santana please don't do this.

Q: Santana please baby answer me.

Q: Santana?

Q: Call me, text me. Just let me know that you're ok, please!

Q: Please pick up!

One hour since you'd told your boss that you were leaving.

"Quinn you can't just leave in the middle of it," his hands going up in frustration, "You're our lead attorney on this entire case."

"I know John and I'm sorry but I can't stay," your voice as firm as you needed it to be, "I'll still keep abreast of everything but I'm needed back in New York for personal reasons."

"Quinn--"

"If you want this case won you'll let me go. You know as well as I do that I've had more wins than anyone else in this damn organization but I wouldn't mind messing up that record," his eyes narrowing in understanding, "Do we have a verdict?"

"We'll see you back in New York."

Thirty minutes since American Airlines had delayed your flight.

Please be advised that American Airlines flight 2780 from LAX to JFK has been delayed. We're currently experiencing some issues with the plane but our technicians are working hard to fix the problem. We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

And ten minutes since you had landed back in the Empire State.

"Is there a shortcut we can take?" you ask the cab driver, "Any way to get to Manhattan faster than Cinderella got home from the ball?"

"Construction is everywhere lady," his voice sympathetic, "I'll do the best I can but we'll be stuck in this crawl for at least another 30 minutes."

"Great," your head hitting the seat with a thud, "Just great."

You were tempted to call Rachel, Kurt or hell even Brittany to go check in on her and make sure that she was ok but you knew her, she wouldn't open up to them. Sometimes she wouldn't even open up to you. Ramon had been like a little brother to her, he was a little brother to her and you couldn't even begin to imagine the pain that she must be going through. You'd already called her secretary and informed her to shift around all of Santana's surgeries that could be shifted around and to redistribute the ones that couldn't be. There was no way that she would be fit to save anyone's life when she just lost a part of her own. You were a lawyer and a damn good one but you didn't want to test it against a medical malpractice suit. Those were always tricky and filled with unintelligible loopholes.

You're annoyed, tired and sad by the time the cab pulls up in front of your Manhattan condo but at least you're home.

"Santana," you softly call as you walk inside, "Santana baby are you in here?"

There's no response. Not like you expected one but still, you just wanted to find her and make sure that she was safe.

She's not in the den or any of the downstairs rooms so you take your search to the second floor of the house. You find her sobbing quietly in the guest bedroom that Ramon had slept in not more than two weeks ago when he came to visit and the sight breaks your heart. She looked utterly broken.

"Oh baby," her body immediately curling into yours when you lay down beside her, "I'm here now. Let it out."

"What are you doing here?" her words coming through broken sobs, "I thought you had to stay in LA until Friday?"

"You don't really think that I'd choose work over you do you?" your arms pulling her closer to you, "Nothing will ever be more important to me than you are and we'll get through this together I promise."

"We don't have anything to get through Quinn, *I* do," her body pulling away from yours slightly, "It's not like he was your cousin or anything."

You wanted to but you knew better now than to respond to that. Santana when hurt would always be 10 times worse than any other Santana on the planet but you were prepared to deal with it. You loved her that much and honestly you weren't a bed of roses when you were hurt either.

"I'm sorry Quinn I didn't-"

"I know," you say placing a kiss to her forehead, "I know."

She cries herself to sleep in your arms with her head against your chest and you wouldn't have it any other way. Most people thought that you were equals and to some extent you were but she was without a doubt the stronger one. Since you were kids she'd been the one protecting you from getting hurt, she'd been your safe haven away from your parents, she'd be the one to hold you and tell you that everything would get better but now it was your turn to protect her and you would. With everything that you had, you would.

You awake in the morning expecting to have her there but she's not next to you. You find her sitting on the couch with a box of tissues, a blanket and a bunch of old home movies. Today would be a long day.

"Do you remember this?" she asks when you take the spot next to her, "The UCLA championship game when Sam won MVP of every game and Ramon won MVP of the series."

"How could I forget?" her head finding its way to your shoulder, "The sex that night lasted till the morning."

She laughs then and you smugly pat yourself on the back. Stage 1: Get her to laugh complete.

"Seriously Quinn?" her laughter stopping somewhat, "That's all you remember?"

"That's because you're unforgettable baby," her eye roll done in effect to stop her blush, "Always and forever."

"You sound like me." Her head returning to your shoulder again.

"In your dreams Lopez," a scoff her only response, "You wish you were that smooth."

The rest of the day is spent watching old home movies, eating pizza and getting her to laugh every once in awhile. It's a slow process and sometimes all progress is lost and she reverts back into herself but even then, you're there still. You'd always be there.

"Do you have everything?" you ask as you close your suitcase, "Our flight's at 4 in the morning."

"I don't want to go," she says through a sigh, "I can't."

"Yes you can," the suitcase forgotten as you make your way over to where she stands looking out the window, "You're Santana Lopez and Santana Lopez can do anything."

"I love you," her hand reaching up to push your hair back behind your ear, "Just in case I'm not here to tell you tomorrow."

And then she kisses you before you could respond to that.

The funeral comes and you're sitting right next to her in the front pew of the church, standing right next to her when they lower the coffin into the ground, holding her hand at Uncle Andres' house when they play a game of 'drink until you forget' in Ramon's honour and calming her down after she becomes a weepy, hysterical drunk. You're by her side the next day when she

helps her mother pack up his things and you're working close by when she and Sam play monopoly and talk about their favourite memories.

"Hey Quinn," its two days later when you return back to New York, "Do you have to go to work tomorrow?"

"Sadly yes I do," you answer tiredly dropping yourself onto the couch, "But not if you want me to stay home with you."

"No, you should go," her jacket tossed carelessly on the other chair, "I'm pretty sure that I have to go back to work tomorrow too."

"Are you ready for that?"

"I'm a doctor Quinn, saving lives is what I do."

"I know but just-"

"Seriously I'll be fine," her hair making a curtain around you when she leans over the back of the couch to give you a kiss, "But don't fall asleep just yet because I need you to meet me upstairs in 10."

"Why?"

"Because I wanna show you something." She says with a wink before disappearing upstairs.

You're tempted to give in to your tiredness and deal with her hitting you with a pillow in the morning but you get up and go upstairs anyway.

"If you didn't bring me here to...what the hell?"

There are literally rose petals on every surface of your bedroom complete with arrows pointing you in which direction to go and if you weren't mistaken, that was *Take My Breath Away* playing in the background.

"Santana?"

"Follow the arrows Quinn."

"It would seem that Kurt got a little bit carried away with this whole thing," your quirked eyebrow on your entry into your candle lit bath suite making her elaborate, "I wanted to do something special for you, you know to say thank you."

"Thank you for what?" you say while taking the offered champagne glass and eyeing her robe clad body.

"For being there for me through all of this even when I didn't exactly make it easy for you."

"Santana-"

"You know that I'm horrible with words so please just let me finish," she says in interruption, "Before you I never had a safe place to land, but then I met you and everything changed. No one has ever loved, cared or put up with my bitch like you do or allowed me to be me like you have

and I know that you think that I'm the strong one but if I'm the strong one it's only because you let me be. I love you Quinn and I just wanted you to know that."

You don't respond to her confession, not verbally at least. You kiss her then for all the days that you've been together, all the things that you've been through together and for all the things that you were feeling in this moment.

"We're supposed to be taking a candle lit bath before we get into bed Quinn," she says in between kisses, "I had this all planned out."

"I know but I think you'll like my plan a whole lot better."

"What exactly does this plan entail?" her eyes trailing the movement of your fingers slowly unbuttoning your shirt, "I'd like to know what I'm getting myself into."

"Me," you say recapturing her lips again, "You're getting yourself into me."

Can't Help Falling In Love With You, by WriteForYou

I ran down the halls as fast as I can, all eyes were on me. And not for the reasons I want them to be. Tears fell with each step and each horrifying memory that I tried so hard to bury beneath plastic surgery and MAC make-up.

Lucy Caboosey!

Fatty!

Fugly!

Pushing through the front doors of McKinley High, I run past the students gaping at me and slam myself against my car. I breathe heavily and drop my head on the roof of my car.

She was never supposed to find out. No one was supposed to find out. Lucy Fabray was supposed to be dead and remain that way. But all because of big Bertha (and Puck), Lucy had to resurface and haunt me all over again. Now everyone knows...now she knows.

I open the door to my car and slam it shut. I shove my keys roughly in the ignition, all the while smearing my mascara, and back out of the school's parking lot. Intending to drive far far away from all of this, I accelerate full speed leaving tire streaks. I intend to drive far out of Lima, not wanting to be around to hear the snide comments and low whispers of the hormonal acne-ridden students of McKinley. Not wanting to be around to be around her when she sees the posters.

Driving down the road, I turn the radio up and listen to song "Open Your Eyes" by Snow Patrol. I'm driving over the speed limit, but I find it hard to care. All I know is that the farther I distance myself from Lima I feel immensely better. I feel *free*.

I hear the vibration of my cell phone that I threw on the passenger seat. I look over to see a familiar name pop on the screen. A name that usually makes smile stupidly and have my porcelain skin to color red. But not this time. This time, all I feel is the twisting of knots in my stomach.

I tear my gaze from the cell phone and look back to the road. Another vibrate. And another. And another. Then my phone starts vibrating continuously. She's calling. I grab my cell phone and hovered my thumb over the 'decline' button. I stare at the picture I set for her. It was us at homecoming. We were both sitting outside on the bleachers, wanting to get away from everyone. I was wearing a white mini cocktail dress and she was wearing a red one. She looks stunning in that dress. In the picture, her black blazer is wrapped around my shoulders keeping me warm from the chilly night air of Ohio. She was smiling cheekily at the camera with her arm outstretched as I kissed her softly on the cheeks.

That night was perfect. She was my perfect thing in this crappy town. My other perfect thing is somewhere else with her adoptive mother who rarely gives me the time to visit. I lost this

perfect thing to Shelby and to the undeniable struggles of being a teen mom. Now, I will lose my last perfect thing that kept me hanging on.

With her gone, I don't know what to do.

I stare at the picture of us for a few more seconds when I instinctively pressed on the 'answer' button.

I hear her voice through the speakers. 'Quinn? Where are you? We need to talk. Quinn—' a loud car honk and the screeching of car tires rips my eyes away from my cell phone.

—

'Quinn?! What the fuck was that? Quinn! Fucking answer me!' Her voice screeches through my phone that was lying at the edge of the passenger seat.

My hands are wound tightly on the steering wheel, so tight that my knuckles were white. I stare to my side to see the truck driver who was now flipping me off and stepping furiously on his gas pedal. I can still hear his vulgar outburst as he drives farther away from the spot where we almost collided. Thankfully, my reflexes kicked in quick enough for me to swerve away, inches from a fatal accident.

I shakily step on the acceleration pedal and pulled the car over to the curb and put it in park. I let out shaky breaths while rubbing my hands together, trying to bring the warmth back to my dead cold hands. I hear a muffled voice screech in the car and I nearly scream in terror, thinking that my near death experience has turned me mad. But when I listen closer, I immediately relax. I grab my phone and slowly bring it to my ears.

'Goddammit, Fabray. If you don't answer me I'm going to storm over to your house right now and when I see you I'm going to go Lima Heights all over your ass and I won't even care if your dick of a father and alcoholic mother are there. Then I'll...'

I close my eyes and lean back into the seat. A single tear rolls down my face as I sit there and listen to the voice I thought I would never hear again.

'...kiss the living daylights out of you in front of them. And when they kick you out again because their daughter is getting it on with another girl, you're going to live with me and endure my bitchiness 24/7. But hey, at least you get to sleep beside my hot body. Then when we graduate we're going far away from stupid Lima. We're going to the city life...like New York. Because I know you're considering Columbia. Or we'll go to New Haven because I know you really want to attend Yale. Either way I know you'll get into both schools. I won't get into neither but I'll follow you wherever you go.'

My eyes are watery again as she rambles on about our future. She still wants to be with me. She still loves me.

'And we'll get an apartment which my dad will pay for because I'm his only daughter and he loves me even though he's never around much. There will be two rooms—but you'll be sleeping with me every single night. That room is only there for when Brittany visits—only Brittany. Manhands is not stepping a foot in our home. The room

is also there for when we get into fights and you don't want to sleep in the same bed with me. But at the end of the night, I'll still crawl back to bed with you because being away from you too long kills me.'

I'm full on crying now. More than before. My heart aches, but in the best way possible.

'Then to make up for my bitchy behavior, which I'm apologizing in advance for right now, I'll buy you a puppy—most likely a pomsky. Because those things are the cutest things ever, like seriously I can sit on a bench and just play with those pups all day long. And then—'

"I don't want a pomsky, San. Can we get a kitty instead?" I finally respond. My voice is scratchy due to all the crying and exhaustion that has hit me full force.

'FINALLY. Do you know that I've been going crazy here? What the hell Q? Where are you? Hearing your voice isn't enough...I mean I love your voice, but I need you physically beside me. I need you Quinn.'

I let out a choked sob and wipe the ugly tears that continue to fall.

'Shit. Quinn, babe, are you okay?' She says frantically. *'God, tell me where you are. Please, Quinn. Wherever you are I will go to you immediately.'*

"I'm near the diner we went on our first date." I confess.

'That far, Q? Okay, go inside and order a milkshake or whatever you want and wait for me. I'm coming to get you.'

"I love you, Santana." I breathe out.

'I love you too, Quinn. So much. Don't even second guess that. I'm crazy in love with you.' The soft click of the phone and a dial tone tells me she's on her way here.

—

Sitting in the diner, I sip on a chocolate milkshake while munching on a side of French fries. I was humming to the song that was playing, it was Billy Joel's *Uptown Girl*.

The sound of the bells attach to the door catches my attention. I look up and see Santana, still in her Cheerios uniform, scanning the diner frantically for me. When her hypnotic brown eyes land on mine she starts making her way over.

I stand up to greet her when instead she fiercely pulls me in a passionate kiss. Her hand is cradling my face and my hands are gripped to her top. Her soft lips send shivers down my spine. The kiss was getting heated by the moment. Thankfully no one really frequents this diner so we didn't have an audience. Either way, I don't think it would have stopped Santana.

To my disappointment, Santana pulls away and gazes at me with puffy red eyes. *She's been crying*. She breathes deeply and touches her forehead against mine. I sigh softly in the comfort of the touch and close my eyes.

"I'm sorry." I whisper.

"You fucking scared me." She whispers back.

I softly peck her on her lips. "I didn't mean to...I was, I just—"

"Needed to get away from everything." Santana finishes my sentence. I nod and look down shamefully. "Come on, let's sit down and you can talk to me about what was going on in that pretty head of yours."

I slide back into the booth and Santana sits right next to me. I brush my hair behind my ear and play with the straw of my milkshake.

"Why'd you run off like that Quinn?" Santana takes a french fry and nibbles on it.

I bite my lip. "You know why I ran, San. I know you saw the pictures around the school that Lauren posted."

Santana swallows the piece of fry and licks her lips. "Yea, I saw them. So what?"

I turn my head and gaped at her. "So what? Did you not wear your contacts today? That was who I was before high school! The ugly, fat, and social freak at Bellevue! That's who I was before getting a nose job, contacts, and before I took gymnastics." I rasp out.

Santana brushes the hair out of my face. "Exactly, Q. That's who you *were*. But that's not who you are now." I stare at Santana in silence. "Do you know who you are to me Quinn? You're not the pretty girl that everyone sees. I mean, hell, you're fucking gorgeous. But what keeps me coming back for more is everything underneath it."

"I love the girl who yells at me for bending the corner of pages when I read a book. The girl who likes to sit in my lap and read a big book even though her hot girlfriend is trying to get her attention." I smile at the memory of all the times Santana tried to seduce me but I was too engross in a book. "I love the girl who only eats the red skittles and gives me all the other colors of the rainbow to eat. I love the girl who likes to force me watch horror films even though I *really* hate them." Santana nudges me playfully.

"I love the girl who has a more than normal obsession with bacon. Like I think you passed the level of Mercedes obsession with tater tots." I gasp at that. "I love the girl who sings in the shower no matter what time it is. I love the girl who snuggles up next to me with no make-up on." The tears start to spill as the emotion laced in Santana's voice overpowers me. "I love the girl who mumbles in her sleep and drools on my shoulder." I open my mouth to rebuttal when Santana shushes me. "I love the girl who always likes to rebuttal. Because let's face it, the witty conversations and heated discussions turns me on."

"Everything turns you on, Santana." I whisper while still crying.

Santana swipes the tears away. "Yea, but that everything is you." I blush. "But that's not the only reason why I love that you fight back, Q. I love it because you're the only one who tells it to me straight. The only one who challenges me and pushes me to give it my all. If it weren't for you, I would still be sleeping my way through high school with no desire to getting into college. But now, all I think about is after high school and what college I want to apply to. I think of us. A lot. And how I want there to always be an 'us' no matter what happens. I don't care if we're no longer together and you find someone better than me at Yale or Columbia. All I care is that I'm still near you and that you're present in my life always."

I shake my head at the statement that I would find someone better than her. *No will ever be better than her.* "I'm so in love with you, Quinn. I don't care if you had red hair or that you had a nose job. I don't care what you looked like or who you were in the past. Because without a doubt in my mind, I would still love you. If I met you back then, I know I would have still fallen in love with you."

"No you wouldn't." I shake my head in disbelief. "You would have gone for Stacy Calhoun."

Santana raises her eyebrows. "Who?"

"Stacy Calhoun—the girl that made my life living hell in middle school. She was the popular girl at Bellevue. She had blonde hair and blue eyes and was already developed."

"Okay, maybe I would have dated her first." I glare at her. "But then I would have totally fallen in love with you. Because if this bitch Stacy really tormented you every day, then I would be around you every day. I would see those hazel eyes that I love so much every day. Then I'd have followed you into the school library and watched you reading a book. I'd have watched you smile that beautiful smile of yours when you get to a good part in the book. I'd have watched how your eyes sparkle at each word."

Santana moves closer to me and puts her hand in mine. "And the more I would have watched you with each passing day, the harder I would have fallen. To the point where I would have told that bitch Stacy off and would have ran to you and confessed my undying love for you like every dramatic middle school kid."

I scoff. "Then you'd have gotten stuck with Lucy Caboosey."

I know I was just having a pity party for myself, but it's so hard to change the internal self-image I have of myself. I spent every single day of my life telling myself I'm never good enough. Even after my transformation, I had more insecurities. I hesitate to eat anything outside of Sue's crazy diet in fear that I'll gain weight. I'm constantly afraid to be hated and become an outcast again. I'm always afraid to be alone. So even though I have a tough and HBIC attitude on the outside, on the inside I'm still broken Lucy.

Santana moves away and I start to have a mini-panic attack. I think that my constant self-loathing has pushed her away.

"Sa-santana what are you doing?" I choke out.

I see her rummaging her bag and pulls out her wallet. *This is where she drops a \$20 on the table and leaves.* But instead she pulls out a quarter and leans over me and inserts it in the mini juke box at the table.

"S-santana?" Santana doesn't respond to me and continues flipping through the songs. She stops at one of the track lists and punches in the code.

She then steps out of the booth and holds out her hand to me. I furrow my eyebrows in confusion and when I was about to ask her what she was doing, a new song starts playing in the diner.

*Wise men say,
Only fools rush in,
But I can't help
Falling in love with you,*

"Can I have this dance?" I stare at Santana teary-eyed. The song continues to play on and I'm stunned in silence.

*Take my hand,
Take my whole life too,*

I take Santana's hand and she pulls me close to her. We both start waltzing in the middle of the diner with Santana leading.

"Santana why are we—"

"I know you have loads of insecurities Quinn. I've known that from the day one." She kisses my forehead. "We all have our baggage. You can have a million of them Q, and I'll take them on. Because you're worth it."

"Santana—"

"I'll spend the rest of my life loving you Lucy Quinn Fabray." My heart stops at the sound of her using my full name. "Because it's impossible to stop loving you. You have all of me completely."

I tear up as I see the way she looks at me. "You have all of me too. I love you so much, Santana."

We kiss slowly and all the insecurities, even if it is for a moment, dispel completely. We pull apart and gently touch our foreheads together as we swayed to the music.

For I can't help falling in love with you.

Thunder, Take a Chance on Us, by xsummer-rainx

The clouds above rolled in ominously, well, great. The weather was just peachy today wasn't it? I turned away from the window and glanced at the state of my messy room, my books were haphazardly piled on top of my desktop-right in the far back corner, almost as if they had seen enough use for a lifetime and were trying to avoid being disturbed. The rest of the desk had papers strewn all over it.

This won't do.

I sighed loudly, running a hand through my hair and reluctantly walked over to 'clean' up the mess, kicking my bag out of the way in the process. After five minutes, I gave up (I ended up just pushing everything to the side.)

Quinn was coming over. Well, she was on her way over. It probably would take another 5 minutes tops. Quinn had said she was going home first to quickly pack an overnight bag. Operation Sleepover had been given the green light by mama Fabray. Well okay, maybe I was exaggerating. As far as Quinn's mum knew, her daughter was spending time studying with Brittany and me at Brittany's house, not my house. To be fair though, we had already done the studying and Brittany was around the block from me so Q had decided to crash at my place for the night. Brittany couldn't come because she had to look after Lord T. (Her parents were out).

I plonked down onto my bed, waiting for Quinn to arrive. It was nice that Brittany, Quinn and I hung out a lot these days. Ever since Brittany had been paired with me for one of Cheerio's training drills, we'd been great friends. The tall blonde could be a bit clueless and innocent at times but she had a kind heart. Still, I couldn't understand how Brittany could stand talking to the Glee Club kids. I mean, singing is cool and such but, that short brunette, Rochelle? No wait, *Rachel*, was just so obnoxious. I mean, I even feel irritated just thinking about her loud presence. I don't care so much that Brittany was friends with the glee club kids, I'm more concerned about the slushy attacks. Apparently, they were very popular means of delivering torture to the 'losers' at McKinley. I don't want Britts to be caught up in one because, well firstly, the whole school would probably incur the wrath of Coach for daring to slushy one of her cheerleaders. I shuddered at the horrifying thought. I'm pretty sure most of the Cheerios would agree that the woman was crazy insanes. I wouldn't want to know what plan or punishment she would concoct. Secondly, I would probably go all Lima Heights on the dumb jocks', and as a result they would probably need the hospital by the time I was done with them.

I snapped out of my musings when I noticed that it had been awhile since 5 minutes had lapsed. Where the hells was Quinn? Just as I was about to call her, the doorbell rung downstairs. Its shrill sound cut through the silence. In my mind I could picture Quinn stepping back, and waiting patiently. When I got downstairs, instead of answering the door, I headed left instead, quietly, sliding open the glass door which led outside. I cringed when the door creaked; freezing momentarily, my body tensing up and listening for any sound or movement. When there was no indication that Quinn had heard the sound, I moved forward again, placing my foot down onto

the cold blades of grass. Shifting my weight onto my extended foot, I felt the soft grass below my feet flatten silently, cushioning my footsteps. The doorbell rung a second time, this time for a longer duration. Using the sound to mask my footsteps, I snuck closer and closer to where Quinn stood, stopping only when she was in my line of sight but I was still hidden from her. She was wearing a simple yellow sundress matched with a white cardigan and black flats. Her rather oversized bag was set out on the porch next to her. *How much did the girl bring?* I shook my head slightly with a smile forming on my lips.

When I had last saw her, her hair had been tied up in a simple ponytail but now her golden locks of hair flowed freely, loosely settling onto her shoulders. My gaze found her face and my smile transformed into a small smirk. Quinn chewed her lip nervously, before glancing at the large number painted on the side of my house, almost as though she was afraid that she had come to the wrong place. Upon verification that she had indeed come to the right place, a crease formed between her brows and her eyes narrowed slightly. A grin crept its way onto my face, now all I needed to do was wait for Quinn to turn arou-

A flash of lighting preceded the loud clap of thunder which suddenly broke out.

What the-?!

Quinn looked as about startled as I felt. Her entire body had jerked in surprise, her eyes wide and a grimace etched onto her face. When she recovered, she glanced behind her before trying the doorbell once again, and began to shift nervously on the spot. There was no point in continuing my antics anymore so I stepped around the corner, into her field of vision and called out to her. I felt the texture of the ground beneath me shift from the soft grass lawn to a solid concrete as I made my way towards the blonde.

"About time Q!" I teased.

Quinn turned around and her eyes searched for me. Along with her gaze, I felt the accompanying warmth and giddiness which came with her presence settle upon me. The corners of her mouth turned upwards slightly, giving me a small tight-lipped smile.

"Mum kept asking me questions."

Quinn replied curtly and somewhat in a forced manner. I slowed down as I neared my porch, frowning slightly as something felt off. For some reason, she kept glancing apprehensively at the rapidly darkening sky. Her eyes conveyed a sense of fear and panic. They flickered from my face to and the sky and back again, seemingly distracted. I noted to myself that her captivating eyes were more of a brown today, flecked with sparks of green every here and there. *Damn, Lopez, get yourself together. Now you're the distracted one.*

"San?" Quinn's voice broke me out of my reverie. At the same time a big, fat raindrop, landed on my nose. I shook my head when I realised I had spaced out and was still standing about metre away from the porch, out in the open. Mirroring Quinn's previous actions, I glanced upward at the dark grey storm clouds with apprehension.

"Fuck." One look told me all I needed to know (...*well more like a raindrop straight into my eye*).

Quinn blinked, slightly taken aback at my use of the profanity.

"Umm...sorry. I mean, f-f-f..." I couldn't think of a word to substitute for "fuck". I had forgotten that Quinn wasn't used to swearing like I was.

After a minute of mentally searching my vocab for an adequate word, I gave up. *Nothing had quite the same effect...*

"We should go in, we're going to get drenched at this rate."

Quinn nodded in relief, my failed attempt to correct myself was instantly forgotten. She bent down to pick up her "overnight" bag and I couldn't resist the urge to tease her about its contents or sheer size. With one hand turning the key I had retrieved from my pocket, I unlocked the door and stepped back to allow Quinn to move into the house first. I watched her as she seemed to want to get inside as fast as possible, almost tripping over her bag in the process, her shoulders sagged in relief as she crossed the doorway and entered the living room. I sauntered in after her, ensuring that the door softly clicked after me.

"How long are you planning to camp out at my house? Trying to smuggle something into my house Fabray?" I gestured to her large bag.

A faint tinge of pink coloured her cheeks, and Quinn bit her lip.

"I..I..errr,"

I quirked an eyebrow at her flustered state, and my face formed the signature Lopez smirk.

"Do I ever want to know what *exactly* is in there, Q?"

Red crept up Quinn's ears and her blush deepened. Quinn averted my eyes and looked down at her feet. She looked really adorable like that, and I decided I should probably stop teasing her now.

"You don't have to tell me anything, I was just messing with you Q"

Quinn's hazel eyes met mine and I watched as she looked at me anxiously. Emotions flashed across her face and it seemed like she was conflicted about something. I waited patiently as she made her decision.

A flash of lightning danced across the sky, its light infiltrating into the living room, illuminating the space with an eerie glow. Quinn's mouth was still open, the words that she had finally mustered up the courage to utter to me was quickly swallowed down as the deluge of rain began. Thunder rolled across the sky outside, almost as if its fury was meant to crack the sky itself in half.

We stood there in the wake of the storm, the sound of the thunder clap still echoing in our ears. Quinn's frozen body began quaking as soon as the sound of the thunder dissipated, I watched as she struggled swallow the lump that had formed in her throat.

"Quinn? Wanna watch a movie after we eat or something?" I asked tentatively. The storm had suddenly put a damper on our previously playful mood and the silence between the thunder claps were now deafening, even to my ears.

Quinn nodded at me and I grabbed her bag, heading upstairs to place it in my room. I could feel her gaze on the back of my head as she trailed me up the stairs, stopping sometimes to cringe whenever the thunder sounded. Her discomfort made me want to drop the bag right here and now and engulf her in a hug.

I sighed in relief when we finally crashed into my room, the mess of it all almost made it feel homey, and I hoped it was actually conducive to making Quinn less anxious and afraid. I turned around to face her once again.

"I didn't know you were afraid of thunder..." I trailed off.

"It's not—I'm not..." Quinn sighed loudly, looking away from my face, eyes focusing on the wall behind me. "It's stupid, I know..."

I found a frown forming on my face at her words.

"No it's not."

Quinn shrugged noncommittally, attempting to dismiss my claim. She began to shake once again as lightning streaked across the sky again.

"It is stupid because I *know* that the thunder can't harm me, I *know* that thunder is just the sound created in the wake of lightning, but I'm still scared, even terrified of it!" Tears seemed to be welling up in her eyes and she brought up a hand to furiously wipe them away.

"If I wasn't so afraid, I might even be embarrassed right now!" As if to make a point, the sky rumbled angrily again.

In a few strides I was by her side, I gently turned her face so that she was looking into my eyes. For the first time since the deluge outside had begun, she met my eyes properly. I'd never done any of this "comforting" people thing before. Most of the time I would have been the one causing the grief, but then again, the majority of those who had felt my wrath had been people who had most definitely deserved it. I think back to Tiffany and Eliana, or whatever, and I had to mentally stop the wave of anger which rose. *Quinn. Think of Quinn.* My eyes found the frightened and beautifully expressive hazel orbs of Quinn Fabray.

"Quinn, it's not stupid." I said softly. I watched as she relaxed slightly. "Everyone is afraid of something...or even maybe someone. It's human. We're all human Q."

I pulled her in, feeling her sigh and rest her chin onto my shoulder. Her warm body heat radiates off her in waves and I'm left feeling a strange sense of calmness. It's funny because I thought I was meant to be the one who was comforting her.

We stayed like that for awhile, neither of us wanting to break the embrace that we found ourselves in. After who knew how long, I began to feel hyper aware of the points of contact between our bodies. I could feel the warm weight of her head on my shoulder, the softness of her

cheek on my own and the way in which my body tingled where her warm breath was ghosted over the outer shell of my ear. The now muted and distant rumbling of the momentarily calm storm amplified the sensations that were dancing across my skin, igniting a small flame within me, and tumbling into my heart to fill it with warmth.

"Q?" I pulled back just enough to see her face. She had her eyes closed and a small smile was etched upon the pretty features.

"Yes Santana?"

When her eyes flickered open, I found myself captivated by the now calm greenish-brown depths of her eyes.

"Want to get the movie started while I heat up some food?"

Quinn nodded at me and we broke away from each other. I immediately felt a sharp coldness at the lost of contact but nevertheless I moved downstairs to do as I promised. The dull hum of the microwave only served to make me even more eager to return Quinn, who was no doubt already waiting for me upstairs.

I found her with the most adorable expression on her face. Her furrows were slightly furrowed in concentration, her eyes fixed on the two dvd discs which lay on top of the bed covers in front of her. Quinn brought her hand up to run it haphazardly through her blonde tresses and I found myself wanting to do so as well; to run my hands through her hair and to gently massage her scalp. She looked up and her lips curved upwards, white teeth peaked through pink lips.

"Hey." She said rather shyly, "I couldn't choose between The Amazing Spiderman and Mean Girls." Quinn looked expectantly at me, hoping that I would be able to pick one or another.

"Just close your eyes, I'll shuffle them and you choose?" I offered.

Quinn hummed in agreement and I set our food down on my desk before making my way over to the bed.

"I'm surprised you even own The Amazing Spiderman, not secretly a comic book geek are you, Santana Lopez?"

I rolled my eyes at her remark. "Says the one who can't decide between that and Mean Girls. What's wrong with The Amazing Spiderman?"

"Nothing! Now hurry up and shuffle the discs, I want to watch the movie already."

"Quinn, face it, you just want to cuddle."

I punctuated my point with a wink. Quinn blushed and she looked away bashfully.

"Yeah, maybe..."

We ended up watching Spiderman, but about midway through the film, the storm started up again and I lost track of the movie.

The thunder was loud as ever and I felt Quinn shaking next to me.

"Quinn." She looked at me and croaked out an *I'm okay*.

"No seriously Q, come here. You're shaking...and why are you so fuc-cold?" I lifted up my arm to indicated that she should move into my embrace. She looked at me contemplating something for a second before she shifted closer. I felt the bed dip slightly as the weight distribution changed. Quinn rested her head into the space below my head, between my neck and my shoulder. The rest of her body curled up against me. I shivered as the coldness of her skin slid across my own, and I pulled the blanket up higher until it was covering her chin. Once again her warm breath stroked my skin, sending pleasant tingles travelling down my spine. As the storm raged on outside, she clung to me tightly and I did so too, never letting go of one another.

She wasn't shaking quite as much anymore and seemed to be pretty focused on the movie. If someone had asked me to tell them what I had just watched, I don't I think I would be able to tell them. Instead of watching the film, I found myself looking and observing the multitudes of emotions which flashed across Quinn Fabray's face. The expressions captured my attention and never really gave me a chance to stop staring until the movie had ended. The way Quinn would bite her lip, the way in which her lips would form into an involuntary smile at something cute, and the way in which Quinn sometimes buried her face into my neck when the storm got bad. I think that by the end of the night, I had committed them to memory.

Sometime around 12am, long (*if a couple of hours counts as long*) after the movie had finished, the battering storm outside died down until it was just a dull patter on my window panes and the sound of streams of waters flowing into the gutters outside. I could feel myself on the verge of slumber and Quinn's steady and deep breathing told me that she was as well. Quinn shifted slightly and curled her arm around my waist, and hooked her leg over mine. I gently placed a kiss on Quinn's temple and she nuzzled even closer to me mumbling something, the words vibrating onto my skin. I could barely make out the words: *'thank you and goodnight san.'*

We fell asleep like that, her scent surrounding me, our legs tangled, fingers entwined and hearts beating as one, long after the thunder had ceased its last murmurings.

thunder, take a chance on us, you'll find that we wont crack,

like the sky, when it splits.

in you wake.

thunder, our hearts will beat as one, when we drift off tonight

into the peaceful

embrace

of sleep.

Forever, by you are the unicorn

You sleep a lot. You always have. You loved your sleep. I always loved watching you sleep. I remember when we were thirteen and you would sleep all day and I would wake you up with light kisses on your cheek. You would always smile warmly at me and say 'five more minutes' which would always turn into you pulling me under the covers and holding me tightly as if you would never let me go. You never did.

As we were growing up the kisses grew, and they weren't just on the cheek anymore. "Friends kiss." We would assure each other. When we were sixteen our kisses were my favourite thing. We would kiss in the bathroom, in the locker room, in your bedroom, in my bedroom, in the corner of the choir room, under the piano... everywhere. I would kiss you and only you. No one questioned it, not even myself. But when you started to kiss him my heart would shatter into a thousand pieces every single time. I remember you telling me that friends shouldn't kiss anymore, and that we should grow up. I nodded, I agreed. Even though it broke me.

The kisses never stopped though. You tried, you really did. I didn't. I didn't want them to stop, ever. They never have. When you and him broke up you were un-phased. I knew why, and so did you. You didn't cry, you were Santana Lopez for god sake. You would never show weakness. Only to me, but that was later. When I broke down your walls completely. Our kisses became more frequent, more loving? When you parents were away you asked me to stay over. I did. We spend our time kissing and kissing until I could feel a need in my stomach that I was unfamiliar with. The kisses were hungry and warm and all over my neck and every time you touched me it burnt.

We made the love that night.

I told you I loved you. You told me you loved me too, you always have and always will. And baby, yes you have.

When we were eighteen, we didn't hide anymore. I was proud of you. I was proud to love you. You were proud to love me too. You told me you didn't belong there, you told me you needed to get away. So did I. So we left. Big city, big dreams and all that. We never stayed in one place for too long, you were my home. I loved traveling with you, you took me to every place I could have dreamt of seeing. You kissed me under the Eiffel tower and told me marriage wasn't your thing, but I was and you wanted to spend every day with me, like this. I cried and kissed you again and again and again. After hours of screaming 'yes' in our hotel room, I accepted.

We got married yesterday, and my god, I have never in my life seen someone as beautiful as you. Your father was so proud, my parents weren't there but I didn't mind. All I wanted was you. When you walked down that aisle I swear time stopped. I couldn't tear my eyes off of you for a second.

Yesterday was the best day of my life, today is the best day of my life, and tomorrow will be the best day of my life. Every day I spend with you will be the best day of my life, love. We left

our party early last night, you told me you couldn't go another second without feeling me. We sneaked out and made our way back to our hotel. I whispered 'I love you' over and over into the night. We made love, over and over into the night. I fell in love over and over into the night.

Now you are laid beside me, dark hair messy all over the pillow. I love watching you sleep. I run my hands up and now your sides and you murmur a little. "Sannyyy." I whine. It's early, I know but we have a flight to catch, darling. You turn and kiss me softly and wrap your arms around me to hold me closer.

"Five more minutes." You whisper. I nod and kiss your cheek.

Five more minutes, and forever.

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Two different families, by 78Violetfan

note: italics are flashbacks

"Will you relax, Quinn?" Santana said, causing Quinn to stop her pacing. "It's my parents... nothing is going to go wrong. They love you, because I love you."

Quinn turned to her, a frown upon her face, "is it bad for me to want them to love me because of me...and not because you love me?" She asked. "Because I do. Santana, they're your parents and I want them to like me."

"They already like you, Quinn." Santana explained standing up from her seat on the couch. "It's not like you guys haven't met already."

"That was different. And you know it."

"Quinn-"

"I want them to be different!" Quinn replied quickly, "I need them to be different."

"And they will, I promise."

The doorbell rang causing Quinn to jump, "oh, God!" Santana faced her girlfriend with a smirk, "relax, Q, it's gonna be fine." As the doorbell rang again Quinn stood from the couch. "why'd we invite them again?"

Santana too stood up, joining her, "it's gonna be fine." She said again. "They're your parents and we need to straighten things out properly." She took Quinn's hands in her own, "they already know we're together."

"And they weren't so impressed by it."

"Quinn." The doorbell rang again, this time the impatience was recognized. Santana pulled away, "let's just answer the door and talk to them and serve them dinner."

"What if-"

"Hey, Q, the sooner we do this the sooner they leave."

Quinn nodded, "right...quick and easy." Together they turned toward the door and stepped over to tear it open.

"Mami, Papi, hi!" Santana smiled as her parents stepped into the apartment.

"Santana." Her father grinned, "bring it in." He opened his arms widely waiting for Santana to hug him, which she did gladly.

"Me now," Her mother urged waving Santana over as she untangled herself from her father. "Oh, I've missed you so much." She clutched tightly onto Santana's body and rocked her back and forth.

"Oh, okay! Mom. Mom, you can let go now." Santana pushed away from her mother with a smirk.

"Okay, and where's that beautiful girlfriend of yours?" Her mother questioned. "Well, she's right..." Santana turned to where Quinn had been, but the blonde was gone. "She's somewhere." She shrugged, "in this general area." She waved around the apartment.

"Hello." Santana greeted with a smile, "please, come in."

"How nice of you to offer." Mr. Fabray snapped, "it's about time." His eyes glanced around the area as he stepped inside. "You shouldn't keep your company waiting outside...it's impolite."

"We apologize for that, dad." Quinn replied quickly, "there we some slight issues-"

"Is everything alright?" Her mother quickly jumped in.

"It's fine." Quinn smiled brightly.

"Drinks?" Russell snapped, taking in the sight of his daughter standing next to Santana. The Latina's arm around her waist.

"Right." Quinn nodded, dumbly, "I'll get them."

"No." Russell reached out and grabbed his daughter's arm. "She can get them." He nodded toward Santana.

Santana looked a little taken aback but she nodded, "yeah, what will you have?"

"I'll have a scotch two cubes of ice and Quinn and her mother shall have wine."

Santana's eyes floated to the Fabray women, but neither said a word. "I'll be right back." She said.

"You might want to grab yourself some water." Russell called after her.

"Dad!" Quinn gave him a frown.

He only eyed her a moment before proceeding to take his coat off. "Judy, your coat?" He looked to his wife. The woman nodded, unbuttoning hers as well before she handed it off to Russell.

"Let me take those." Quinn said, holding out her hands.

"That's okay, the other one can get them."

"Her name is Santana.." Quinn said quickly, "and I will take your coats."

"I hear voices." Quinn smiled, stepping into the area.

"There she is." Mr. Lopez smirked.

Quinn joined the Lopez family, accepting the hugs they offered, "pardon my absence I just had to fix something with the dinner."

"Is everything alright?" Santana whispered, looking toward Quinn.

"It's fine." Quinn replied with a small smile.

"It's great to finally get together properly." Mrs. Lopez stated as she pulled off her coat. "Thank you." She smiled as Quinn offered to take it from her. The blonde grabbed Mr. Lopez's coat as well and moved to the closet to hang them up.

"Come on, mom, it's not like you've never met her before." Santana shrugged, shooting Quinn a smile. "I mean, we were on the Cheerios together. We carpooled a few times...she was over all the time."

"I know." Maribel shrugged, "but she wasn't your girlfriend then...now she is. It's different."

"Right, I forgot how much Quinn has changed since you last saw her as just my friend." Santana rolled her eyes.

"Okay, let's move this party to the couches, shall we?" Quinn urged, leading the family to sit, "can I offer you anything to drink?"

"I've got an early morning." Santana's father said, "I'll just take a glass of wine."

"Do you have a martini?"

"We have whatever you'd like, Mrs. Lopez."

"Maribel." She was quick to correct.

"Maribel." Quinn smiled as she moved to fix the drinks.

"You only used two ice cubes right?"

"Yes." Santana nodded, as she took a seat next to Quinn.

"It feels a little too cold." Russell told them before moving to set the drink down.

"Dad Santana knows how to make a drink."

"Are you implying she's an alcoholic?"

Quinn gaped, "no, she's not...I-"

"We were expecting a tour."

"A tour?" Quinn frowned.

"Of your apartment, Quinnie." Her mother stated, taking a sip of her wine. "We want to look around."

"For what?" Quinn asked, "if you were wondering how many bedrooms there are, I can assure you we're only using one of them."

"Quinn." Santana looked at her. "Calm down," She whispered. From the corner of her eye she noticed the Fabray's stand up and begin to wander. "We need to get through this night alive, okay."

"He's being so mean to you." Quinn muttered, "I'm sorry."

Santana shrugged, "I've always known that Russell Fabray is an asshole, Quinn. The man deserted you when you were pregnant...I'm surprised things ever got patched up between the two of you."

"Well, you can thank my mother." Quinn told her, reaching out to take a sip of her wine. "She's apparently fallen under his spell once again." Her eyes watched her girlfriend a moment before she shrugged, "what are you drinking anyway? You can't tell me it's water."

"Oh, hell, no!" Santana shook her head. She glanced toward the Fabray's who had made it back from the kitchen and were now heading down the hall toward the bedroom. "Dealing with them...it's vodka."

"Santana!"

"Don't hate me."

Quinn laughed, leaning forward to steal a kiss, "never."

"This martini is just lovely, Quinn." Maribel smiled, "thank you."

"It was no problem." Quinn assured.

"So, last I heard you were studying at Yale?" Mr. Lopez asked sitting forward. He set his glass down on the coffee table.

"I was." Quinn nodded, "but, I-uh-I transferred to NYU." She squeezed Santana's knee, who in turn flashed her a bright smile. "I just couldn't stand being away from Santana for as long as I was. It was okay for the first few months, but things became too much."

"Young love." Santana's father smirked, "I remember your mother transferring closer to me." He quirked an eyebrow at his wife.

"I did too." Maribel nodded, "transferred my senior year just to be with him. Those were the days." She sent him a wink.

Soon after the Fabrays finished their self tour they asked for dinner. Russell had ended up claiming he didn't want to be there longer than they needed to be. "Let me just clear the air." He started after everyone had dinner set in front of them.

"Russell." Judy looked at him.

"Now, Judy, let me talk." He looked toward his wife before turning to his daughter and Santana, "I want to make myself very clear...You are not accepted into this family. I do not approve of this relationship. I won't support it."

"Daddy." Quinn whispered.

"Once again, you have made me very ashamed to be your father." He reached forward and took a drink from his scotch.

Quinn watched him with sad eyes before she looked at Santana, "I'm so sorry."

Santana reached over and rubbed her girlfriends back for a quick moment before she looked at Russell, "you know, I think you should leave."

"Excuse me?" He glanced up from his plate.

Santana locked eyes with him. "I said, you should leave. This is our home. We invited you here for dinner to get to know us as a couple better. Whether you like it or not, I am part of your family. Quinn is your daughter and I am her girlfriend, and I plan on being her wife." She reached out on the table and grabbed Quinn's hand. "We're a forever kind of thing and I'm okay if you don't support it...But ever since you stepped into our apartment you've been very rude to me and I won't take it anymore. I want you out of here."

"You're the reason my daughter dropped out of Yale."

"I didn't drop out." Quinn replied, "I just transferred...I'm still in school dad."

"But because of her you left and Ivy League college to-"

"Stop." Quinn said, "Santana's right. You need to leave."

Russell stood up buttoning the suit jacket he was wearing and looked to his daughter, "if that's the way you feel."

"It is."

"Very well." He turned to his wife, "Judy?"

"I'm..." She watched Russell for a quick moment before nodding and standing up while Russell walked toward the other room to grab their coats.

"Mom." Quinn started, staring at her mother, "are you really going with him?"

"I'm sorry, Quinnie." She looked to her daughter before her eyes fell to Santana. "I may not feel the exact same way as your father, but I don't exactly approve of this either."

"Come on," Quinn stated, "we've been through worse things and you've moved past them..."

"You will always be my daughter." Judy stated, "and I will always love you, but I just...can't." She shook her head before she followed her husband.

"I'm loving the decorations." Maribel smiled as she followed the girls to the kitchen with her husband. "It's very laid back and calming." Santana smirked as she and Quinn grabbed the plates for dinner, "That was all Kurt...he's an interior designer now."

Quinn dished out the food as the other three sat down.

"He and Blaine started their own home decorating business."

"So," Mr. Lopez looked toward the young couple, "any kind of bells gonna be ringing soon?" He grinned before dishing out some of his dinner and taking a bite. Santana choked back her water, "Dad!" she gasped.

Mr. Lopez looked up with a smile, "just wondering."

Quinn smiled, "I'm sure they'll be ringing sometime in the future...but not quite yet."

Santana spent the rest of the night trying to convince Quinn that she hadn't done anything wrong. And comforting her when she began to cry. "I've lost my parents again." Quinn sobbed, "why can I never be good enough for them?"

"I don't know, Quinn." Santana shrugged, they were laying in bed. It had been a few hours since the Fabray's had left. Santana had cleaned everything up after dinner and met her girlfriend in their bedroom. The sight she saw broke her heart, Quinn was sobbing into her pillow, still wearing the dress she had worn to dinner. So Santana climbed into bed with her and proceeded to try and comfort her.

"I love you." She whispered, "and you'll always be good enough for me...I don't ever want you to change, Q."

"I love you, too." Quinn replied, she leaned up and pecked Santana's cheek. "I'm really sorry for the way that my father treated you. I tried to-"

"I know, Quinn...trust me, you did nothing wrong"

"That turned out one-hundred percent better than when my parents came over." Quinn said as she closed the door behind the Lopez's. She turned to Santana and grinned, "I love your parents."

"And you can clearly tell, they love you too." Santana said, returning the smile. She wrapped her arms around Quinn's waist and rested her chin on the blonde's shoulder. "Help me clean up?"

Quinn spun from her embrace and quirked an eyebrow, "I can think of something even better to do."

"Can you?" Santana asked, wiggling her eyebrows. "I'd love to know what that is?"

"Well, join me in the bedroom and I'll gladly show you." Quinn said before she turned leaving Santana to watch her saunter off.

Judge Fabray, by Brittanyismyunicorn

"Please don't make me do this." I say to Quinn as she drives. I don't want to do this. Why do I really need to do this? I mean we've been dating...about a year and a half. I don't need to meet her family until at least two years, three years tops. Some people may think this visit is overdue but fuck those people. I'm not good with parents, I never have been. Parents just make me fucking nervous. I hate that they do but it happens and when I'm nervous, I don't do well. I don't talk or say the bitchiest things on complete accident. Puck's mom still hates me from three years ago when I accidentally called her fat...it's a long story. I just don't want that to happen with Quinn's family. I want them to like me, I fucking need them to like me.

"Santana it's not a big deal. Why are you so nervous?" She asks me.

"Because everyone's family hates me. I'm not the most likeable person, I know this but I don't want to fuck this up." I tell her. She grabs the hand I have sitting on the middle console and I interlock our fingers.

"You won't, trust me. Just be yourself and they'll love you."

"Don't give me that generic bullshit." I say and she laughs softly.

"Fine but I seriously don't think you'll have any issues. It's just a weekend." Just a weekend she says. No it's three whole days and like six hours or something. From Friday to Monday is not a weekend. We're going to Quinn's family summer home. I just really hope I make a good impression because...I want to propose. I'm pretty fucking sure Q is it for me and I kind of want her father's blessing. It's corny and old fashioned, I know but with the way Quinn idolizes her father, it just seemed appropriate. Judge Fabray seems scary as hell though and I've never met him but from the things I've heard...the man is crazy, like perfectionist crazy. Hopefully it won't go too terribly. When we arrive, Quinn drives through two large gates and down a long pathway before a huge house comes into my view, like mansion huge.

"I thought this was a summer home?" I ask Quinn as she parks.

"It is." She says as she opens her door and gets out. I do the same and make my way to the trunk to get the bags. As I pull out one suitcase I hear Quinn say 'Daddy!' then she moves away from the car and into the grass. I turn my head back to see, what I assume is her mother and father. Russel is about six foot three, he has a head full of gray hair along with the short, close cut beard on his face. Mrs. Fabray is around Quinn's height and Quinn looks more like her in person than a picture, which is saying something because they looked like twins before. Quinn moves to hug her mother and I see two more people come out to the yard, Quinn's brother and sister. Quinn's brother is a little shorter than her father but he's still at least six foot and her sister is a little taller than Quinn. They all have blonde hair and closely resemble each other. Quinn hugs her brother and he picks her up into the air and spins her around causing her to laugh. It's nice how close her family is. I finish taking the bags out of the trunk and close it which draws the attention of the Fabrays towards me.

"Come here San." Quinn says to me. I take a deep breath before I put a smile on my face and walk the short distance to her and her family. Quinn moves towards me and takes my hand in hers.

"Everyone, this is Santana. Santana this is my father Russel." She says. I extend my hand to him though his cold expression is intimidating. He slowly grasps my hand then shakes it firmly.

"Judge Fabray." He says in a deep raspy voice. I just nod my head and smile as Quinn introduces me to her mother Judy, who envelopes me in a hug. Quinn introduces me to her sister Elizabeth, who hugs me and tells me to call her Liz then I meet Quinn's younger brother RJ, Russell Junior. He shakes my hand and offers to help me with the bags.

I wasn't aware I'd be sleeping in a guest house though. I knew I wasn't going to be with Quinn but I thought we would be under the same roof. It's okay though, it's probably better that way. After I settle in the guest house, I walk back to the house and see Quinn and her parents sitting in the living room. Quinn beckons me over and as I walk, I try to calm my nerves. I sit in a chair near Quinn and Russell looks at me, which makes me nervous as hell. I now know where Quinn gets that icy stare from.

"You have a lovely house." I say to Mrs. Fabray. I can't stand to look at Russell anymore. Judy smiles at me.

"Thank you Santana. If you like this, you'll be amazed by our actual home." She says. I smile and as I go to continue our conversation, Russell interrupts.

"Santana." He says to get my attention. I look at him and he leans forward in his seat.

"Tells us about yourself. What do you do?" He takes a sip of water from the glass in his hand and continues to look at me.

"Santana is a really talented musician daddy." Quinn says and Russell lowers his glass.

"A musician huh?" He asks and I nod my head.

"I sing a little here and there. It's nothing big."

"Do you play any instruments?" Judy asks and I nod my head.

"I play a few." I say.

"So where is this music career going? Are you just some wanna be mooching off my daughter or do you actually get paid for this?" Russell asks.

"Music is more like a hobby, an outlet so to speak. I grew up singing, dancing, learning to play instruments. It's just a part of who I am. I'm actually a freelance writer."

"What publication?" He asks.

"I've been in many publications Mr. Fabray."

"She's been in the New York Times at least three times."

"The New York Times? That's great Santana." Judy says sweetly.

"Thank you Mrs. Fabray." I say.

"Why don't you play something for us Santana? Quinn did say you were talented." She continues. I shake my head, politely declining.

"I couldn't." I say.

"You can and will." Russell says and nods his head back to the baby grand behind him.

"Let us hear something. Impress us Santana." Fuck me. I stand from my seat and walk to the piano then take a seat on the piano bench. I lightly run my fingers over the keys, close my eyes and begin to play a song I wrote for Quinn on our first anniversary. I start to sing the first verse while looking at Quinn to calm my nerves. The smile on her face gave me the confidence to make it through to the chorus then I stop.

"That was beautiful Santana." Judy says as I stand.

"Thank you." I say as I walk back to my seat but as I walk past Quinn she grabs my hand and pulls me down into the empty seat next to her.

"I must admit that was impressive but you fell flat towards the end." Russell says.

"No offense or disrespect Mr. Fabray but, I don't fall flat." I say and he raises his eyebrow at me. Quinn got that feature too.

"I see, you also don't take constructive criticism well and aren't very humble." He says as he stands.

"I'll go start dinner." He says then leaves the room. Quinn gives me a soft smile and squeezes my hand that's still in hers.

"I'll be back." She says then kisses my cheek and leaves.

"Don't mind him Santana. You have a beautiful voice. He just has a hard time when Quinn brings someone home. I guess it's because she's the youngest daughter, he goes into overprotective mood. He'll warm up to you, don't worry." Judy pats my knee with a smile.

"It's always the fathers." I say jokingly.

"Not necessarily. Russell's mother still hates me, believe it or not." Judy says and I sigh.

"Don't worry sweetie, he'll get over it." She says then changes the subject. I like Judy, she's actually really nice and sweet. At least one parent doesn't hate me.

—

Dinner wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, but that's probably because I didn't say too much. After dinner Judy, Russell and Liz all disappeared somewhere, Quinn went to take a shower and I went into the living room with RJ who's trying to find something to watch. I sit on the couch and sigh.

"Long day?" He asks and I nod my head. He grabs a beer from the pack at his feet and tosses me one. I catch it with one hand then open it quickly. Russell junior is twenty-three and he's

home from serving a term in the Marines. Quinn told me it's not the route anyone wanted him to take but it's what he chose. Quinn's sister, Liz, is a pediatrician and Quinn is a lawyer planning to be the next Judge Fabray.

"So like, you and Quinn have been together almost two years right?" He asks and I nod.

"Why the hell is the first time we're meeting you?"

"I put it off as long as possible. I don't like meeting families." I say as RJ takes a swig of his beer and nods.

"I don't blame you, dad's a dick." I chuckle and take a sip of my beer.

"So are you like a hermaphrodite? Like how do you have a dick?" And I'm uncomfortable once again.

"Quinn told you that?" He nods.

"We all know. It's another reason dad doesn't like you." Another reason?

"Why?"

"He doesn't want his granddaughter to have a dick or something. Can you even have kids?" He asks.

"I don't know...Can we not talk about this?"

"Does it work normally? What does it look like? It's like a huge clit or a little penis?" I can't take it.

"Goodnight." I say as I stand. RJ tries to get me to come back but I walk out the backdoor and to the guest house. When I walked inside, two slender arms wrapped themselves around my neck and pulled me into a soft embrace. I turn in her arms and lie my head on her shoulder with a sigh.

"What's wrong?" She asks as she lifts my head and cups my face in her palms.

"Your family. Your dad hates me." I say and she shakes her head.

"He's just hard to please. He doesn't hate you."

"He does." Quinn pecks my lips softly and I finally notice she's standing only in her bra and panties...very sexy bra and panties. Normally, I'd be all over this but not tonight.

"Why are you half naked?" I ask her and she smirks.

"Because you haven't gotten me fully naked yet." No way.

"We are not having sex." I say.

"You're seriously that afraid of my dad?" She asks.

"No but this whole day has just been...ugh. No offense but fuck your dad." I say.

"No, fuck me." She says and I roll my eyes.

"I'll be on top." She says then kisses that spot on my neck that drives me crazy.

"Fuck...okay but you won't be for long." I pick her up and walk to the bedroom.

Today is the day I get Russell's approval. I don't care what it takes. Yesterday wasn't as bad as when we first got here. I spent more time with Judy, Liz and Quinn. RJ apologized for all the shit he said but that didn't make me anymore comfortable around him. Luckily I didn't have to be around him much since they barbecued and pretty much everyone who lives in this town was there. Since today is the last day we're here, I have to get this done.

"We're playing tennis today." Quinn tells me as she walks into my temporary bedroom as I change my clothes.

"Tennis?" I ask and she nods as she sits on the bed.

"Yeah, it's been a family tradition for awhile now. On Sundays we play tennis. It's like a tournament and I usually win."

"What happens when you win?" I ask and Quinn shrugs.

"Nothing, you just win." She says.

"Yeah, that's lame. If I'm going to win, I want to win something." I say as I walk over to her. Quinn puts her hands on my hips and rubs her thumbs in circles over my back.

"Who said you'd win?" She says then pulls me closer and gently kisses the left side of my stomach.

"I didn't mean I'd win, I meant in general but you know I'd kick your ass." I say and she playfully bites my stomach. I grip her shoulders, push her back on the bed then straddle her hips.

"You should try to win though." She says as I lean down and kiss her jawline.

"Why?" I ask as I trail kisses from her jaw to her neck.

"It might help you with daddy. He likes winners." She says and I roll my eyes. Of course he does. My kisses turn into bites then light sucks and Quinn moans softly from under me.

"We need to get ready. I bought you an outfit to play in." Quinn says and I nod then trail my kisses down to her collarbone. As I go to slide my hands under her shirt, we hear a throat clear. Quinn pushes me off her and quickly sits up. I look to see who it is who interrupted us and of course it's Russell. I grab the sheet from the bed to cover myself since I only have on a bra and some jeans.

"Quinn, go get ready." He says but his eyes don't leave mine. Quinn nods and rushes past him then turns towards me and gives me a sympathetic look before leaving.

"Get dressed and meet me outside in exactly three minutes." He says with a scowl then leaves. Fuck. I get dressed and go outside. Russell is right in front of the guest house waiting for me. He starts to walk without saying a word and I follow.

"What are your intentions?" He asks suddenly after minutes of walking in silence.

"With Quinn?" I ask but he doesn't respond.

"Look sir." I stop walking and Russell stops too and turns towards me.

"I love your daughter, I have for longer than we've even been together. She compliments me perfectly and all I want to do is make her happy." I say. Russell's face still has this stone expression.

"What were your intentions coming here? You've been together over a year and we're just formally meeting you. Why now?" He asks.

"Honestly...I wanted to ask you if I could marry Quinn." I say and he laughs. He fucking laughs. It's not a chuckle, a giggle, no. It's full on, double over laughter. It took at least three minutes for him to stop laughing and speak.

"You want to marry Quinn? Santana." He puts his hand on my shoulder.

"You are nothing more than a phase to Quinn. Quinn can be with another lawyer, a judge, a senator, a doctor. Hell she could be with an astronaut, and she deserves to be with anyone of those people because they aren't like you. They aren't losers who aren't even worth Quinn's time. You got lucky. I'll admit you seem like a nice person but...you really should move on. Maybe find yourself a waitress or, a gas station attendant, you know someone your own speed." I push his hand from my shoulder and step back.

"Fuck you Russell. I'm sick of playing nice for your stuck up pompous ass. You are the biggest asshole I have ever fucking met in my life. You don't even know me and haven't given me a chance since I met you. I'm not going to kiss your ass and whether you like it or not, I'm not going anywhere." I say and he smirks.

"Are you a betting woman Santana?" He asks. What?

"If you win beat me in a match of tennis, I'll agree to you marrying my daughter but if you lose, I don't want to see you ever again. Now do we have a deal?" He says as he extends his hand to me.

"I'm not betting on Quinn you psycho but I will fight for her. If I win, I want you to take the chance to know me and if you don't like me, fine but at least give me a chance."

"And if I win?" He asks.

"You choose." I say and Russell nods his head.

"Fine." I extend my hand to him and we shake on it. I don't know what will happen if he wins but I won't have to find out because I'm going to kick his ass.

"See you on the court old man. Don't have a heart attack." I say as I walk away.

—

That game didn't go as planned...at all. Russell won the first set then I won the second. We were playing the third set when it happened. He served the ball and it came hurling towards my side of the court. I ran to hit it but the sun got in my eye and then so did the ball. Now I'm sitting in the kitchen with a bag of frozen peas on my swollen eye.

"Does it feel any better?" Quinn asks as she adjusts the bag on my face. She started holding it against my eye a few minutes ago.

"No. It's throbbing and I'm getting a head ache." Quinn strokes my hair and I sigh.

"Well...at least you didn't lose. It was a tie." She says and I sigh again. I hear footsteps and look to my right to see Russell walking in with an ice pack in his hand.

"Can I talk to Santana for a second Quinn?" Quinn nods and I grab the bag of peas as she leaves. I slowly remove it from my face and Russell hand me the ice pack.

"You might need glasses after this." He says as he sits across from me and I don't respond.

"I'm not going to apologize since I did not directly mean to hit you with the ball and it was not my intention for it to do so." He says. I wish I could roll my eyes.

"And honestly that was an amazing serve...but I will apologize for how I've treated you and the things I've said to you...you were right, I don't know you and I didn't try to get to know you but one thing I do like about you is the fact that you didn't let me intimidate you. You held your ground and I respect that. I've always wanted Quinn to be with someone who isn't a kiss ass and actually stands up for themselves. So that being said, you have my blessing but under one condition." He says.

"What?" I ask.

"I want six months to get to really know you before any wedding takes place." He says.

"Sounds fair." He extends his hand to me and I take.

"Welcome to the family Santana."

"Thank you Mr. Fabray." I say as we shake hands.

"Continue icing that. You're going to want the swelling to stop." I put the ice pack up to my eye.

"I'll send Quinn back." He says as he stands.

I can't say I enjoyed this weekend, at all but I can say that it could have gone worse, a lot worse.

More than Just a Roommate, by buffy46143

My life is pretty perfect. I'd say I'm lucky, but that's not really true. I worked hard for what I've got. Not just in my professional life, but in my personal one too. I'm almost 29 years old and I'm about to close on my first house, my dream house with the love of my life. I've got a great job that I actually love. After years of just kind of wandering around trying to find myself and what I wanted to do with my life, it's safe to say that it's finally all coming together.

When I say I worked hard in my personal life, I am of course referring to finally getting Quinn Fabray to realize we belong together after years of her trying to deny it. That girl is work sometimes. After college and some failed relationships, we both kind of just did our thing. She stayed in New Haven and took a job there as a financial analyst. I stayed in New York and taught dance classes while I waited tables and also waited for my big break.

It didn't take long for Quinn to get bored and want something else though and I couldn't blame her. I'd hate staring at numbers all day. Quinn had a tendency to doubt her talent and abilities. For some reason, she lived in a perpetual state of low self-esteem, which made no sense to me because she's gorgeous, smart, funny and can be kind when she chooses to be. I guess I always knew those things about her, but when she quit her job out of nowhere and moved in with Rachel Berry until she could find something else, I really started to notice.

Rachel had her own place in the city that she could afford thanks to her blossoming career on Broadway and when Quinn moved in, I suddenly started spending a lot more time there. Sure, we'd had our hook-up years prior, but I was with Dani and then Brittany after that and I wasn't thinking about Quinn in that way. She was with Puck for a while and we were long-distance friends who saw each other when we could. Since there were no trips via a magic teleportation device back to Lima to check in on the New New Directions for some inexplicable reason considering we all graduated and moved on with our lives, it got harder and harder to keep in touch with her.

But at 22, we were finally spending time together and most of the time it was just the two of us. Kurt called it pseudo-dating because neither of us had dated anyone since our breakups and besides the physical stuff in a relationship, we were basically doing everything else a couple would do. I realized that I wanted it to be more on Quinn's 23rd birthday. She brought a date and I wanted to knee him in the nuts. I'd wanted to do that with a lot of Quinn's exes. That Biff jack-off for one, but Puck took care of that one for me, but this guy was actually nice. He knew Quinn's story and was cool with it. He wanted to meet Beth someday and I could tell he really liked her. I still wanted to shove him off the fire escape outside of Quinn's apartment, but I determined that wasn't because he was a bad guy. She'd actually picked pretty well with this one. It was because I was falling in love with her.

"Quinn, can I talk to you?" I asked her after her birthday dinner was over and her date had gone home so he could get up for work early the next morning. I was helping her clean up from

the small get together in the kitchen. She was washing and I was drying. Rachel went to bed so she could do an early morning interview the next day.

"What's up?" She replied nonchalantly while passing me a plate.

"Are you serious about him?" I asked, trying not to show my hand.

"This was only our 3rd date. I don't know. He's nice."

"What if someone else asked you out? Would you say yes?"

She looked at me with an expression of confusion.

"Depends on who's asking. We're not exclusive if that's what you're asking, but you know that because I would have told you if we were."

"What if it was me?" I paused and gulped while setting the plate I'd dried 3 times over on the rack. "What if I was asking?"

She stopped washing, but her hands remained in the sink submerged in the cloudy water.

"You're asking me out?"

"Yeah." That was not the most confident I'd ever been so I decided to get confident. "I want us to go out... on a date."

"Santana, where is this coming from?" She took her hands out of the water and wiped them with a towel.

"It's coming from the fact that I like you and I want to go out with you. Where else would it be coming from, Fabray?"

"Since when?"

"I don't know. For a while now. It's really a simple question, Quinn."

"No, it's not and you know it."

"You told me it was a hook up that night so if that's still true and you know you're not into girls, then it's simple. It's no. If anything's changed for you though, then maybe it's a yes."

She set the towel down and stared at the counter.

"No."

That was it. No explanation. Just a no and I was left to believe that she wouldn't ever change her mind.

"Okay then. I'm heading home. I think you can finish up drying so I can save at least some of my dignity. Happy birthday, Quinn." I turned to walk toward the door.

"San, don't just go. Let's talk about it."

"It's fine. You said no. I get it. We'll still be friends, Quinn. I just need to go right now."

I left the apartment and it was then that it really hit me. I knew I liked Quinn and I wanted more than just friendship, but I had no idea how much I liked her until she said no. It hit me with an avalanche of emotions and they were all bad. I had to get through it before I could even speak to her again. It took time, but eventually I was able to let her back in. It wasn't her fault. You can't help who you have feelings for. I thought she had them for me, but she didn't and I had to just let it go.

Unfortunately for me, alcohol exists and a little over a year later, I was drunk and Quinn was there. We were at a bachelorette party for a friend we had in common. One we actually made outside our high school circle. We were at a strip club, which meant I was uninterested in the stripping, but was very interested in the cheap drinks being passed around. After a few, I looked over at Quinn who was getting a lap dance. It was about the funniest thing I had ever seen. Her eyes were bugging out. Her arms were hanging over the sides of the chair and she look extremely uncomfortable. Someone handed her some singles and after the guy was done gyrating on her, she hesitated before sliding them into his barely there underwear and she closed her eyes as she did it. I was cracking up as the whole thing unfolded.

Once he walked or really danced away from her and moved onto another girl in the party, I downed another shot for some liquid courage. She hadn't yet moved from her spot in that chair and I made my way over to her. She looked up at me.

"What's up?" She asked and she looked so sexy in that moment that I couldn't resist. I lowered myself onto her lap. "San! What are you doing?"

I didn't answer her. I just starting moving my body against hers. My hips were pushing down and her face was level with my breasts. My hands went to the back of the chair so I could hold onto it and get more leverage to move myself against her even harder. I was making eye contact with her the whole time until she tried to look away and then I used my thumb and forefinger on her chin to reconnect our eyes. I felt her arms move from their dangling position to the small of my back and I smiled as I continued to stare into her eyes. They looked hungry. I could feel my breath moving faster and I could hear hers doing the same. If this place was empty, I would've already had her clothes torn off and tossed aside. I wanted to be even closer to her so I moved so my head was above her shoulder, which meant her mouth was now pressing against my collarbone. She wasn't kissing me or really even doing anything with her lips, but just having them on my skin felt amazing. I knew I was getting wet and I had a thin dress that was tight, but loose enough that I was able to still straddle her. I wondered if she could tell and wished I could tell if I was giving her the same reaction. The song ended and I halted my movements choosing to remain in that position with her lips on my skin, feeling her heart beating and listening to her rapid, shallow breaths. I finally pulled back to again meet her eye.

"Damn, that was hot you two!" One of the other drunk partygoers yelled over the next song that had started up. "Santana, you should consider a change in professions."

"Nah, only Quinn gets a performance like that." I told her before standing and straightening my dress. Quinn's eyes told me everything I needed to know. Her mouth was still slightly open

and she was speechless. "I'll be right back." I told the group, but kept my eyes on Quinn. I walked toward the bathroom because I knew I needed to have a moment to myself. I didn't exactly plan on doing that and I had to get my thoughts together through the drunkenness. I stood over the sink and turned the water on without actually using it.

"What the hell was that?" She pushed open the door and rushed in toward me.

"I see someone finally remembered how to speak." I told her before turning around.

She moved until she was standing only inches away from me.

"You can't just do something like that, Santana."

"You didn't seem to have a problem with it a minute ago. You could've stopped me anytime, Quinn." I paused before taking her in. She still look disheveled. "You also seemed to enjoy the fact that I don't have the same no touching rule as the dancers at this place because your hands were all over me."

"Santana, I'm not-"

"What? Gay? Bi?" I interrupted. "I don't care what you call yourself to other people, Fabray, but you are definitely in to me. You can deny it all you want, but I know you want me."

She moved her lips right up next to mine. They were only millimeters apart. I could feel her breath on my mouth as I parted it slightly expecting the kiss to come.

"Even if I did, it doesn't mean anything's going to happen. I think it's time you moved on, Santana." She paused and looked at the floor. "I can't..."

She took a step back. Her tone wasn't mean or defiant. It was more of a friend telling another friend that it's not going to happen. I tried my best to still exude my confidence, but it was pretty hard considering the thoughts that had been running through my brain only moments earlier.

"Okay. I get it." I turned around and turned off the water that had been running behind me. I stayed facing that direction for a moment so I wouldn't have to look at her. "But Quinn, I can only put myself out there so many times. I've reached my limit. If you can't, you can't, but you're right. I will move on." I turned back to face her and she met my eye. "You broke my heart last time and you're doing it again now. There won't be a third time."

"San, you know I don't want to hurt-"

"I know. Doesn't change how it feels though." I walked toward the door, brushing up against her arm as I did and walked out. I was able to hold in my tears for the rest of the time at the strip club and when they all left to go to a different bar, I feigned exhaustion and went home to drown myself in pity and ice cream. The time honored tradition of heartbroken girls all over the world.

I meant what I said. After two years of pining over her, I had to move on. I recalled how long it took me to get Brittany and how much it hurt when I lost her. I thought that was the worst pain I'd ever have to deal with, but it was even harder with Quinn. After a few months of grieving, I finally started dating again. There were a couple of girls that lasted longer than a few dates. One

even reached girlfriend status, but none of them made me feel how I felt when I was with Quinn. I felt like anyone I dated was coming in at a disadvantage because Quinn knew everything about me. I knew everything about her. We were both bitches most of the time and some of that time was toward each other. She'd been dating a guy from work, but he ended things after a few months and I ended things with my girlfriend around the same time. The two things weren't related. She'd gotten a job offer in Texas and I wasn't about to move to Texas and I wasn't a fan of the long-distance thing so I cut the cord.

Quinn and I hadn't hung out a lot since that night. We'd talked and texted here and there and hung out in groups, but hadn't spent a lot of time alone. I longed to have my friend back, but I just didn't think it could happen. I still cared way too much for her and as long as that was there, things would always be awkward.

Quinn had gotten it into her head that we all needed to do something outside that didn't involve just walking around New York City on our way to and from work. She invited some of our friends to take a weekend, get a cabin somewhere and go hiking. There were three bedrooms in this cabin she rented and paid for with some of her trust fund money that came along with her 25th birthday. Kurt and Blaine were in one room, Mercedes and Sam were in the other, and Quinn got the master. She'd invited Brittany, but didn't think she'd be able to come. Brit finally RSVP'd the day before claiming Lord Tubbington hacked her e-mails and moved Quinn's invite to her spam folder. I'm still surprised that damn cat is still alive. It got awkward when I realized I'd either have to share the master bedroom with Quinn or the pull out couch with Brit until Quinn suggested she and Brittany take the room. I was fine with that and put up no argument, which I guess surprised Brittany because she didn't think it was like me to just take the couch.

"Santana." I heard a whisper and it brought me out of my slumber. I opened my eyes to see Brittany sitting on the edge of the sofa bed.

"Brit? What's going on?" I asked her and sat up a little and wiped my eyes.

"She's saying your name in her sleep."

"What? Who is?"

"Quinn. She woke me up. She's said your name a few times."

"Okay. Why are you telling me?"

"Because you're in love with her."

My eyes shot open. Brit and I had gone our separate ways and had come back together as girlfriends and then as friends over the years. I had never discussed my feelings for Quinn with her though. I thought it might be awkward. Kind of like this moment.

"What? I'm not in love with Quinn, Brittany."

"San, I've seen how you look at her. You look like a dog that lost the kitten it adopted when it found it abandoned in a box on the side of the road and it took it home to take care of it and

loved it and then the family didn't want a kitten. They only wanted a dog so they give the kitten away and the dog is sad lying on its bed with paws over its eyes trying to make the pain go away."

I had to laugh at her. It'd been a while since I'd heard a Brittany monologue.

"I tried, but she's not interested."

"She's saying your name in her sleep, Santana."

"It doesn't mean anything. Trust me, I told her how I felt and she turned me down. She told me to move on so I am." I paused. "Isn't this weird for you? Me and Quinn?"

"Not really. You and I haven't been together in a while. Plus, Kurt told me you'd been trying to get her to realize her feelings for you for a long time so it's not really new to me."

"Lady Hummel needs to mind his own business." I paused again. "Wait. Her feelings for me?"

"You know how I said I've noticed you looking at her?" She stood and pulled back the blanket. "She's been looking at you the same way." She slid into the bed.

"Are you sleeping out here now?"

"Yeah and you're sleeping in there."

"Brit, don't you think Quinn's going to find it weird that she went to bed next to you and woke up next to me?"

"No, I told her."

"Told her what?"

"I woke her up and told her she was kicking in her sleep and that I was going to sleep out here."

"That doesn't mean I have to sleep-"

"Santana!" She whispered and yelled at the same time. "Just tell her I was sleep talking and you needed to sleep in there. I swear. Sometimes, I think I'm the only person with a brain that's actually connected to my heart."

I thought about asking her to describe what she think the human anatomy looks like, but decided against it. I stood and walked quietly into Quinn's room. I closed the door behind me.

"Q?" I whispered. She didn't respond. I slid underneath the comforter and waited a moment to see if she'd notice before I settled in. We were sharing a room for the first time in a long time and I found myself looking over at her while she slept. I couldn't help but think that it wasn't just me feeling this. There had to be a reason we'd both failed in all of our attempted relationships and kept coming back to each other. During the night, she had draped her body over mine and there was a part of me that wanted to pull her off because it hurt to have her this close, but not close enough. There was a much bigger part though that loved how it felt getting to hold her.

The next day, the rest of our group decided to take a short hike by a lake, but Quinn wanted to do one that would take us up a small waterfall. I'm really not much of an outdoors lover. I had to buy hiking boots just for the trip, but she smiled when she saw it in the brochure for cabin rentals and I am a sucker for that girls' smile, which I will never tell her because she would use her powers for evil and not good.

We made it to the top and she almost slipped. I caught her by the waist and pulled her back. After a moment, I realized I was still hanging on. My hands were on her hips and she wasn't pulling away. She was staring out over the falls and into the skyline of the trees surrounding us. My heart was still pounding from her almost fall. I wrapped my arms around her.

"Just in case you try that again, klutz." I told her.

"Please, you just want an excuse to hold me."

"What if I do?" I questioned with a little falseness behind my bravado.

She didn't say anything, but her hands went over my hands and stayed there. I am a little shorter than her so I rested my head kind of against her shoulder.

"Ask me again, Santana."

I raised my head at that.

"Ask you what?"

She turned around and put her arms instead around my neck. Mine just hung there at my sides while my brown eyes stared into her green ones.

"Are you being stubborn are do you really not know what I'm talking about?"

I smiled at her and put my arms around her waist.

"I asked you. You turned me down. I brought it back up. You said no again and told me to move on. What makes you think I'm still interested in you?"

"Look where your arms are right now, Lopez."

"If this is some elaborate setup to turn me down again, Q, I will leave you on this damn waterfall."

"You took me by surprise when you asked me. I wasn't ready. I still didn't think I would end up with a girl... a woman, technically. I guess recently though I've just realized that you're always here. Through everything, you've been there for me. When I needed a place to crash after Rachel moved in with her new boyfriend, you gave me your couch. When I didn't know what I was going to do with my life after I quit my job, you were there helping me look for jobs online and proofreading my resume. When I got the flu, you stayed at my place and called your mom to get your abuela's recipe for chicken noodle soup and made it for me and made sure I took my medicine. You've always been my best friend, San. I was afraid if we tried and we messed it up, then that might change. That's why I told you to move on. I thought it would be better for you.

I'm not good at this stuff. You know that, but I've missed you and I woke up this morning next to you and it just felt right. It felt like what we should have been doing all along."

"I'm always going to be here for you, Quinn. Whether we're dating or we're just friends. You have to know that by now."

"I do. That's why I'm telling you to ask me again."

"You're ready now? I mean, to be with a girl cause we were drunk then and at the strip club you seemed like you wanted to, but then you-"

"Last night, when you got out of the shower, you were just wearing that towel around my room while you looked for clothes to change into, I saw you from the living room and I was tempted to tear it off you and I thought about how that would play out as I fell asleep. So, you tell me."

I laughed at her as I tightened my grip around her waist. I leaned in to try to kiss her, but she pulled away.

"Well, you sure are unpredictable there, Fabray."

"You have to ask first, San. I don't just go around kissing people."

"Quinn Fabray, will you go out with me?"

"Yes."

It was then that I was finally granted the kiss I'd been after for years. People were walking up and down the falls and all around us and I'm sure they were staring and maybe even making comments, but I couldn't hear anything other than the sound of the water crashing beneath us and the sound of my heart beating in my chest so loudly I could swear she could hear it even over the sound of the water.

We got back to the cabin a few hours later and realized it was empty. Brittany had left a note. "I'm taking them to dinner. I'll text when we're on our way back." There was a wink smiley face at the end. That girl is just full of surprises.

"Okay Fabray, let's talk about this first date thing. When we get back home, I think we should make a reservation at that Mexican place you like."

She sat on the edge of the bed, removing her shoes while I plugged my phone into the charger on the end table.

"I kind of thought this was our first date." She told me. "I mean we did kiss on top of a waterfall."

I turned to look over at her.

"Yeah, that is pretty much the cover of every romance novel, huh? I wasn't really thinking about it like that."

I sat down on the bed next to her.

"This is awkward now, isn't it?"

"All the movies end at the big kiss. None of them go into what happens after that and you have to get in the car and drive back to your everyday life."

She laughed.

"I'm not ready to have sex yet." She blurted out.

I looked at her with shock and surprise.

"Who says I'm ready to have sex with you, Fabray?"

"Please, you're ready to have sex all the time."

"I think you just called me a slut, which is not great behavior for a first date." I joked and leaned back on my hands. "Look, it's no surprise that I've been trying to get in your pants since that time I did actually get in your pants, but you know it's not about that, right?"

She leaned back too.

"Yeah, I know. I just... we're in a cabin alone for the next few hours and I just didn't know if you were expecting..."

"I wasn't expecting your little waterfall confession. I wasn't expecting any of this."

"Neither was I. I was talking to Rachel the other day after her show and she caught me looking at a picture of us from the wedding and I guess I smiled and she figured it out and then she called Brittany who then suddenly responded to my email about this weekend."

"I didn't even know she had her number."

"Neither did I."

"So, we do have this place for a few hours. What do you want to do, Fabray?"

She rested her head on my shoulder.

"Well, we could talk for like three hours about what this all means and life and-"

"Or we could make out."

"That works too."

She lifted her head quickly and we spent the bulk of those alone hours moving from between passionate kissing and laughing as I tickled her followed by her holding me and then us making a quick meal together of some sandwiches and chips before starting a movie. When everyone else returned, they joined in and made popcorn. Brittany stared at us for a minute before I nodded at her and she smiled. Quinn reached for my hand beneath the blanket I had covering us both and I was the happiest I'd ever been.

Quinn and I had been together for two years before we finally got an apartment together. It was small, but affordable with our salaries. Quinn wanted to keep her trust fund for an actual purchase. We had this vision of a house somewhere outside the city that we'd buy together one

day. What was left of her trust fund would be our down payment and help with the mortgage payments. It's funny how that all happens. One day you're thinking about your best friend naked at a wedding and then you actually get her naked and years later, you're a couple talking about buying a house and how you'll pay for it.

With Rachel on Broadway and Shelby acting as her manager and us being friends with Rachel, it kind of made it an awkward situation with Shelby being the mother of Quinn's first born, but eventually we all settled into a schedule. Quinn saw Beth once a month on Saturdays. They'd go to the park or the zoo or hang out at Shelby's place. I never asked Quinn what Shelby knew about us. She knew we shared an apartment, but I wasn't sure if she knew we had a one bedroom. It's not like we'd had her own for dinner and given her the tour of our room with the drawer filled with sex toys and the pictures of us kissing that rest on our joint dresser. I figured maybe Berry filled her in since that girl's mouth was bigger than even Trouty Mouth's. It was when we first started looking for our dream house that I actually got up the courage to ask Quinn what Shelby knew, but even more importantly, what Beth knew.

"Babe," I greeted as she stared at a listing I'd bookmarked on my computer earlier.

"Yeah?" Her hair was short again. She knew I liked it like that and I ran my hand through it. She closed her eyes and smiled before opening them again and scrolling down. "It has a nice backyard, San."

"And 4 bedrooms." I explained.

"You could make one a recording studio and I could have an office."

"And then a nursery?" I queried with a hopeful tone.

She turned to look at me and then rested her head on my shoulder.

"Someday."

"What if one room is a nursery?" I paused when she raised her head. We'd talked about kids many times before, but she said she wanted to be married first and settled into the house before we started trying. "Someday." I clarified. "But one if one room is for Beth? She's never stayed the night before and she's getting older now. What if she stayed with us every now and then?" I ran my hand back through her hair.

"San, I don't know."

"Why not? You see her all the time and I don't really get to go and that's fine. I get it. She's your kid, Q, but we're in this thing together. We're buying a house and... It's just that I'd like to get to know her. She's a part of you and I love you. I've only really seen her in passing and you guys are always at Shelby's. What if we get into the new house, give her a bedroom and then have them over for dinner?"

"She doesn't know about us, Santana."

And there was my answer.

"Shelby or Beth?" I asked.

"I think Shelby knows or at least suspects, but I've never confirmed."

"Oh."

"I'm sorry. I just don't know how to tell her."

"Are you afraid of telling her?"

"San, I did some stupid stuff in high school. You know that. I tried to take Beth away from her and she's let me back into her life and I get to see her and-"

"You're afraid you'll lose her if Shelby knows you're gay?"

She hesitated before answering. She took a deep breath and looked at me, placing her hand on my cheek.

"I'm afraid I'll lose her if she knows I'm in love with you."

That, I didn't expect.

"Well, that cuts like a knife there, Q." I pulled back on the sofa and watched as she moved the laptop to our coffee table and tried to take my hands into her own.

"It's not like that, baby. I love you. You know that."

"You just don't want your daughter or Shelby to know that? That you love me? That I've seen you naked? That we share a bed and sleep together? That we take showers together? That we're planning a life together?"

"Shelby knew both of us back in high school, Santana. I wasn't great back then, but neither were you. We were both dealing with a lot and we acted out and she remembers."

"Has she said something to you about me?"

"She asked me about you, yeah. When we first started talking about me spending time with Beth."

"And what did you say?" I was getting upset. I didn't realize they'd had conversations about me like this.

"I told her you and I were best friends. I told her how amazing you are and how successful you're going to be once you get your label up and running." Quinn used some of that trust fund money to help with my little start-up record label. It was enough to get me a tiny studio space and pay for Mercedes' advance on her next album since she was my first official artist other than myself. "I told her you're not the same Santana from McKinley. That we've both grown up."

"And she said?"

"She understood. People change a lot in the twenties. She hasn't brought it up since."

"Quinn, I love you, but I don't love this. Yeah, I was a little screwed up back then. We both were, but we're not kids anymore. We're talking about having kids now. What would you do if we

bought this house and got married? Is Shelby not invited to the wedding? Beth's not going to be a flower girl? Are you going to wear the ring I bought you when they're around?"

"Wait. The ring you bought? As in you have it already?"

"No sidestepping my questions, Fabray. I'm trying real hard not to go Lima Heights Adjacent here."

"I don't know, Santana! I just love you and I love my daughter and I don't want to screw any of it up."

"You have to tell Shelby, Quinn." I took her left hand. "Once I put a ring there, it better never come off." I stood up and walked into our bedroom. It was time for a solo shower and probably some tears that I hoped the water would drown out.

That night, I slept on the couch. The next morning, I woke up and Quinn was gone already. I got ready and made my way over to the studio to record with Mercedes. We took a break around mid-day and had lunch in the small office. If her album didn't get finished soon and then sell well, we'd lose the space.

"I love this song, Santana. It's powerful. There's a lot of raw emotion there." Mercedes told me between bites of her salad. "You've been writing a lot of really good stuff lately."

"Thanks." I took the compliment and pushed my fork around my plate.

"Um... I just gave Santana Lopez a compliment about her music. I was expecting something like 'I know. I'm amazing.'"

"Not really feeling it today, sorry. You'll have to get your sass elsewhere today."

"What's going on, Santana? You seem distracted. You told me take 3 sounded great and I said 'you' instead of 'too' in the chorus. Twice."

"Then, it seems like you're the one who's distracted."

"Woman, I've known you far too long for you to try to lie to me."

"It's Quinn."

"I figured. You've got that Quinn face you get sometimes."

"I do not have a Quinn face."

"Please girl, you've had a Quinn face since high school. That girl's always pushed your buttons. That's why I was shocked when you two got together, but it works. You guys seem happy. What's going on?"

"You know I've got the ring and we're trying to find a house. I have the proposal all worked out."

"Yeah, I know all that."

"Shelby doesn't know we're big ole lesbians who love each other and Quinn doesn't want to tell her."

"Why not? Shelby's surrounded by gays. She works on Broadway."

"Oh, that's the best part. It's not because of the gay thing. It's because of me. Shelby's got a problem with me."

"Does she even know you?"

"She knows the me from high school, but Quinn's really kept her away from me. I love that girl. More than anything and I will do almost anything for her, but I lied about myself before and I hated it."

"Doesn't Shelby know you're gay? Has she really not put it together?"

"Not with Quinn telling her were friends forever and probably showing her our matching BFF bracelets and telling Shelby about her preppy boyfriend or my girlfriend."

"She's not lying about stuff like that, is she?"

"I don't know. Probably not. I just know it bothers me. Beth is so important to her and I want to get to know her and I was kind of hoping our kid would be like a little brother or sister to her in whatever new normal, modern family kinda deal we all work out."

"That sounds nice, Santana. Have you told her that?"

"Yes, I tell her everything. Look, I'll figure it out. Let's just get back to work. We've gotta get this song finished by tomorrow if we're going to stay on track for your album."

We continued to record take after take. Mercedes sounded good on every one, but it's about finding the right mix for me.

"She sounds great, baby." I turned around to see Quinn standing there.

I turned back to the board as Mercedes continued her verse.

"I wrote it for you. It's about finally getting the one you love to realize you're meant to be." I turned back around to see that Shelby had followed her through the door. "I mean, it's about someone realizing-"

"It's okay. I told her. I love you and I don't want you sleeping on the couch again, okay?"

I gulped.

"Santana, I'm sorry if I gave you two the impression I'd have a problem with this. When I told Quinn my concerns about you, it was taken out of context. I'm happy you two are together."

"You are?" I asked and then stood because I felt like I should.

"Yes, if you two are happy together, then I'm happy for you. You know, I have two daughters technically. Rachel's told me how you two have been such great friends to her and Santana, Quinn's told me about your studio and now there's a house you two are going to buy."

"And Rachel never told you about us?"

"No. I had my suspicions though, but I thought you two would fill me in when you were ready if I was right."

Quinn walked over and stood next to me, taking my hand.

"I told her how you wanted a room for Beth."

"Well, I just thought it would be nice to have her stay over sometimes maybe. Only if you're okay with it."

"She's still too young to understand this whole thing so if you two are okay with it, I'd like to keep her in the dark on it until she's older and we can sit her down and explain it."

"San?" Quinn asked me.

"Yeah, that makes sense."

"You're really okay with that?" She asked.

"Yeah, I'm good."

"Um... is anyone actually listening to me?" I heard Mercedes through the glass. I guess I stopped paying attention to the song. She laughed and walked into the room.

"Santana, this is a nice setup you've got here. How many artists do you have so far?" Shelby asked and Mercedes took a drink of her water.

"Just three. Mercedes, Blaine and I. We're recording one at a time right now though. So, it's a slow process. Mercedes here left a big label to join and Blaine is working full-time until we can get to him."

"If you're interested in some help, I could volunteer my time. I do have a little experience in the music world and I'd like to get to know you a little more."

I squinted my eyes in suspicion.

"Is this a test?"

She laughed.

"No, it's just an offer. Feel free to turn me down."

"I'll think about it."

"Santana!" Quinn squeezed my arm.

"What? She wants to get to know the real me, Q. This is the real me."

Shelby laughed again and I looked at Quinn, smiling at her smile and moving her hair behind her ear.

"Can I listen to my song now?"

"Mercedes?" I asked.

"Let's do it."

Later that night, we were at one of Rachel's shows. It was a new one so I wasn't already tired of seeing it like I was the others she'd be in. The show had just ended and there was a curtain call and everyone was standing and applauding. I could feel Quinn turn and stare at me for at least a minute before I acknowledged it.

"Yeeesssss..." I turned and looked at her.

"Shelby knows now and we're going to buy a house once we find one we both agree on."

"Which could be years. It took us months just to pick out our apartment and the landlord didn't ask for a 20% down payment that will basically tap us out unless this label thing takes off."

She smiled at me and leaned in to kiss me.

"Santana, you have the ring and I have one for you. Everyone who knows us knows we're going to do it eventually."

I was about to flip my shit in the middle of a Broadway curtain call.

"Is this your half assed version of a proposal, Quinn?"

"We've talked about it for a while now. Why don't we just-"

"You are just about the least romantic person I've met. This is not how you propose to someone. You don't just say 'we'll do it eventually so why not now' and take a ring covered in lint out of your pocket and hand it to me."

"I guess you're right. I really didn't put much thought into it... or did I?" She smiled and pointed at the stage.

"This is something we do not usually do. We're not supposed to break the fourth wall while we're still in costume, but this is sort of a special occasion for some friends of mine." Rachel started and I looked back to see that Quinn was already at the end of the aisle and she was holding out her hand for me to take. I walked over and took it.

"What's going on, Fabray?"

"Come on."

She pulled me from our second row seats and up the steps to the stage. My heart was pounding louder than that day at the waterfall.

"These are two of my best friends in the world and one of them asked if she could borrow the stage just this once. I hope you'll all be okay with it." Rachel nodded to Quinn just as we were a few feet away from her on the stage. I looked around at the entire cast standing in a row behind us and out through the heavy lights, I could just make out some shadows of people watching us in the crowd.

"Santana Lopez," Quinn began and I could hear the floor microphones picking up her voice and projecting it around the theatre. "I love you so much." She held my hands in hers for a

second before pulling one away and reaching into the pocket of her dress. "I know you had planned to do this, but I hope you'll forgive me for doing it instead because I made you wait so long before finally just giving into the fact that you and I are meant to be." I could hear people in the crowd gasp and cheer lightly as they listened in. "I've had this for a while now. I think I got it before you bought mine and I would really like to put it on your finger now so that the whole world knows you're taken." She paused and I could feel her hand shaking against mine. "Santana, will-"

"Yes!" I blurted out and the room filled with laughter and then applause. She laughed and opened the box to reveal a perfect ring that she then slid nervously on my finger and I pulled her in to kiss her hard because I couldn't believe this was happening.

"You didn't let me finish." She stated after pulling apart from the kiss and hugging me.

"You know how impatient I am. You're lucky I even let you do the whole speech." I pulled back and kissed her again.

Rachel ran over and hugged us both. I waved at the crowd and pulled Quinn off the stage so I could kiss her again.

"I love you and I'm sorry if I ruined your proposal plans."

"You know I don't care about that. Quinn, I've loved you for nearly a decade and it was always me making the move. I asked you out. I gave you the lap dance. You even made me ask you again that day on the waterfall instead of asking me and I didn't have a problem with that, but I felt like I was always pushing you like last night with the whole Shelby and Beth thing."

"I'm stubborn. You know that, but I've been planning this for a while. I asked Rachel for her help and I was going to tell Shelby about us today. That's why I left early this morning. I was meeting her for coffee to fill her in. I didn't want to say anything last night because it would have given this away and I wanted to surprise you. You brought up the ring you already had and I was worried that if I didn't do this tonight, you'd end up being the one proposing and I thought it was finally time I let you know that you don't push me against my will. You're just more impulsive than I am. That's one of the reasons we work so well together. You leap and I pull you back to make you think about it and you make sure I actually take leaps."

People started running off the stage now that the curtain call was completely over. They said "congratulations" and things like that as they passed by.

"Guys! That was amazing! I'm so happy for you!" Rachel told us and hugged us each again. "I've got to go change, but then we're going out to celebrate! Callbacks? Like old times. I can call everyone."

"We'll meet you there. We've gotta run by the apartment first." I told her.

"We do?" Quinn asked.

"Yeah, I want to get your ring. I want people to know you're taken too."

She smiled and we walked off the stage hand in hand to the back entrance Rachel was ushering us toward.

"Did you honestly think I'd propose to you by saying we're going to do it eventually so why not?"

"You've always been unpredictable, Fabray. You zig just when I think you're about to zag."

"I like to keep things interesting." She replied sarcastically as we exited the building.

"Somehow, I don't think that's going to be something we have to worry about."

It took a long time, but we finally found the house of our dreams. 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths and a yard for the dog Quinn always wanted, but we could never have in the city. The wedding we'd been planning for a long time was about to happen. We'd delayed since the label started to take off with the success of Mercedes' album. Blaine's took off shortly after and Shelby's help really paid off when I went to record my own album. I was able to just be an artist when we brought her on full-time to run things. I worried that might be weird since technically I'm her boss, but it never really was an issue.

We signed a million pieces of paper and closed on our new home. They handed us the keys and we went there straight from the realtor's office. We sat on the floor of our new kitchen and ate pizza. We planned what furniture we needed to buy and where we'd hang what pictures. I couldn't believe I was marrying this girl.

"San, I talked to Shelby the other day."

"I talk to her all the time." I paused. "Oh, I thought we were just competing about who talks to Shelby more." I smirked at her.

"Smart ass. I mean I talked to her about Beth." She tossed the crust of her pizza in the box. "She said Beth's been asking her questions about us."

"Well, she's a smart girl, Quinn so that's not really surprising."

"She wants us to talk to her. She's noticed my ring a few times and I just told her it's just a ring, but it's not just a ring."

"No, it's a symbol of our undying love and eternal devotion, obviously." I leaned over toward her and took her hand. "Are you ready for her to know?"

"Yeah, I don't exactly know how the conversation is going to go, but I want her to know about all of me. The good, the bad, the ugly." She kissed me lightly. "You are the good by the way."

"I better not be the ugly." I kissed her again.

"I was thinking that after we get all our stuff in we can go get the stuff for her room and put it together for her and then tell her."

"If that's what you want, then that's what we'll do."

So, we spent the next couple of weeks moving and organizing and getting several rooms in order before we went to the furniture store and got the stuff for Beth's room. We invited Shelby over for dinner and Quinn cooked for the four of us. I could tell she was nervous and I wasn't going to push her if she changed her mind. I went to the kitchen to make coffee to go with the chocolate cake she'd made, which was Beth's favorite. When I came back out, I gave Quinn a wink and a smile to let her know that whatever she decided I was fine with.

"So, are you two like getting married to each other?" Beth asked after she set her cell phone down on the table.

My eyes went big as did Quinn's.

"Beth!" Shelby gasped.

"What? I'm not stupid. They live in the same house. They have rings on."

"Beth, Santana and I... are a couple and-"

"I knew it!"

I hid my laughter as I took a sip of my coffee that was still way too hot to try to drink.

"Honey, let Quinn talk."

"We've been together for a long time now and we're getting married later this year. Your mom and I decided to wait until you were old enough to understand before we told you." It sounded rehearsed, which is just like Quinn.

Beth looked over at me and then back to Quinn and lastly, over to Shelby.

"So you guys are gay then?"

"Yes." Quinn stated bluntly. "And we wanted to show you something tonight if you're up for it."

"What is it?"

"Your room." She paused and looked over at me. I smiled at her and decided to take it from here.

"Quinn and I'd like to know if you'd like to spend the night sometime. We got you a bed and a dresser and a TV and we thought maybe we could go to the store one Saturday and pick out some stuff you like and it would be your room when you're here."

She looked at Shelby.

"Mom?"

"It's okay, honey."

"Can I pick out whatever I want?"

"Within reason, kid. Don't push it." I told her.

She laughed and the tension in the dining room was released.

"Cool. Okay."

"Okay?" Quinn checked.

"Yeah, Santana's cool. She treats me like a grown up and Quinn's cool. Not all the time though. I have slumber parties and stuff for school."

Shelby laughed at her daughter. I looked at Beth, who looked more and more like Quinn every time I saw her.

"Whenever you want and if you don't want to, that's fine too."

"Cool. Can I have my cake now?"

"Sure, honey." Shelby told her and she dove in with her fork.

"Hey, are you two gonna have any kids? She asked us after taking her first bite.

I looked at Quinn and turned my head to the side.

"Yes, the other room will be a nursery. After the wedding, San and I are going to start trying to have a baby."

"I always wanted a brother or sister." She took another bite.

I smiled because I'd been the one telling Quinn for years I wanted us to have kids and she wanted to wait. Looks like we're done waiting.

"You can help us change diapers." I told her.

"Ewe... gross. I don't want to do that." She explained and took another bite while the three of us laughed around her. "Wait. How does it work? You're both girls. How do you have babies?"

"Beth, how about you finish your cake and then we show you your room?" Quinn diverted nervously and I laughed because that was a conversation for a later time.

Qualities Worth Having, by comfortablyobsessed

(Corvus Corvidae)

The day Santana met Quinn's family was, without a doubt, one of the most stressful days of her life.

It wasn't the typical, 'oh I'm meeting my girlfriend's family, better be on best behaviour' type of stress. It was more along the lines of 'I have drugs in my back pocket and you're all fucking cops' type of stress.

Safe to say, that wasn't the norm for most.

So yeah, thanks, Quinn for that heads up. She could have mentioned that her family was having a big brunch for what looked like half a fucking police precinct, with uniforms galore, and oh yeah, a big fucking police dog called Duchess looking at Santana like she just knew what was in her back pocket.

A tiny bit of weed suddenly felt like a kilo of coke, and where the hell was Santana's oh so charming girlfriend to help her get out of there without looking suspicious and flush the drugs?

Quinn wandered in the room only moments after Santana's arrival, to see her girlfriend standing in the hallway, not moving. She frowned before heading over, taking Santana's hand in hers.

"What's wrong? You look like you've seen a ghost," Quinn muttered, frowning.

"Yeah, I have. Mine," Santana puffed out, her eyes not leaving the room overflowing with cops in front of her. They were everywhere, with their intimidating uniforms and scary ass looking smiles.

"Huh?" Quinn shot her girlfriend another look, now very confused.

"Q, I have weed on me," Santana whispered, swallowing the lump in her throat as she spoke.

Really, Santana should have just made a break for it the second she saw the first police officer. But no, she'd been frozen to the spot after having let herself in. Quinn had shown her where the spare key was, and she had been told to use it in the text she'd received that morning. There was nothing out of the ordinary about that, but the sight before her, that was exceedingly extraordinary.

"You what?" Quinn barked, her eyes going wide, swivelling her body so that she was standing directly in front of Santana.

"We were going to shotgun weed tonight, so I brought fucking weed, and now your whole family turns out to be cops," Santana whispered a little bit louder, more panicky.

"What are you even..." Quinn sighed loudly, not able to deal with her girlfriend's nonsense. They had bigger fish to fry. "Just...just go upstairs, empty it in the toilet, but like break it up so it doesn't clog, and then come back down. No one will know," Quinn answered after a moment of thinking, looking around the room carefully, smiling at those that had clocked her talking to someone new. Introductions would need to be made, but not just yet.

"Whoa there partner, where you sneaking off to?" a man's voice boomed, startling them both.

"Uncle Rick, Santana doesn't-" Quinn began, but was promptly cut off.

"Oh, so this is the mysterious Santana?" he oohed, looking her over. "Heard a lot about you," he said, grinning, and it felt like he knew something Santana didn't.

"Not all bad, I hope."

"Jury's still out," he joked, looking serious for one split second before laughing. Santana fake laughter in response was not convincing, Quinn knew it, uncle freaking Rick knew it, but it was the best she could do while having a complete meltdown.

"Hey, guys, have you met Santana?" Rick called, leading Santana into the living/dining room, where everyone was congregated.

It was then a mix of hellos and anxiety as Santana was led around the room, shaking hands with each police officer present, and being given a brief job description. By the time she reached some of the guys on the drugs squad, Quinn's freaking cousins!, she was so close to passing out, it wasn't funny.

"That's enough for now, I think," Quinn said, coming in to rescue her girlfriend. "There's no way she'll be able to remember all these names and faces." The lie slipped easily from Quinn's lips, which wasn't something she was going to think about, as she led Santana back towards the stairs.

"Make a break for it now, just head on up and I'll cover for you," Quinn whispered as they moved closer.

Santana was about three steps away from making her exit when it was all shot to hell, again.

"Where you off to?" Quinn's sister, Frannie, asked, placing her hand on Santana's shoulder. "Brunch is being served, and trust me, you want to get your helping before this lot. They won't even leave you the scraps," she joked, which was followed by another nervous laugh from Santana. Though, it sounded a lot more like a whimper and a whine.

On one hand, it was great Frannie was being nice and welcoming, but the cop uniform and the stern look Santana just knew she could harness meant it was damn near impossible to be friendly in return. Maybe once she had ditched the weed, they could talk, but until then, Santana was sweating bullets.

Returning back to the dining area, Santana watched as the guys helped carry all the found and place it on the available tables, with plates and cutlery lying out for everyone to help themselves.

"Girls, come and sit down," Rick called, waving them over, and there was no escape.

Quinn shot her a look, to just go for it, to make that quick escape, but Santana wasn't an idiot. She knew it would be obvious something was up, and while she was a damn good liar, there was just no way she could convince a room full of cops that she was overcome with food poisoning or was close to pissing herself. It wasn't going to work.

So instead, she squared her shoulders and made to follow Quinn, who had moved through the room and was collecting some food for herself.

Going over there was easy, or so she thought, but there was one obstacle in her way that she had no clue how to get round.

Santana tried to stay as far away from the big ass German Shepard staring at her, but that was so hard. Made so much worse when she literally had to walk past Duchess' makeshift bed to get to the table Quinn was standing at. Yeah, Santana was fucking doomed from the start.

It was as though Duchess was getting some sick pleasure from it, because she waited until Santana had made it three paces past her before barking like mad. Not the 'let's play or you stepped on my tail' bark, but the 'you've got drugs and unless they stop me I'm going to tear you a new asshole' bark.

If Santana hadn't been shitting it before, she was now.

"Duchess!" one of the guys at the table called out, frowning. "Stop it, girl, sit back down." His voice was commanding enough for Duchess to stop barking, but she didn't take her eyes off Santana.

Hurrying to stand next to Quinn, Santana grabbed a plate and put some food on it. Normally, she'd be fucking psyched about the pancakes and the bacon, but nope, with the hair on the back of her neck standing on end and her fight or flight senses in overdrive, she couldn't even admire the good food before her.

She was moving on overdrive, which worked great until Quinn stopped moving, causing Santana to bump into her arm. Her girlfriend was looking at her like she had grown a second head, and the panic was setting in Quinn's features.

"You need to calm down or they'll realise something's up. They're cops, they sniff this sort of stuff out all the time," Quinn whispered, relieved that no one was close enough to hear.

"The damn dog has already sniffed it out, Quinn. What do you want me to do?" Santana replied, looking over her shoulder to see Duchess still watching her.

"Act normal." Yeah, like that was fucking easy.

"I can't act normal, this is my worst freaking nightmare."

"Wow, thanks, Santana," Quinn replied, sass in her words, and now was not the time for them to start fighting. Just no.

"You don't get to be pissy right now, Princess. It's my ass going to jail if I get caught with this shit," Santana muttered, making it look as though she had just planted a kiss on Quinn's cheek.

"Fine. Give it to me." Had Quinn lost her mind? Clearly, because that suggestion was just stupid!

"What? No," Santana argued, shaking her head.

"Why not?"

"Because you have more to lose than I do, so just tell them I'm nervous and want to make a good impression or something, and whatever you do, don't let the damn dog near me." Quinn rolled her eyes but nodded, taking Santana's clammy hand and moving them to the table.

She purposely sat them as far as Duchess as possible, but that also meant they were right next to Quinn's father, Russell. He was enjoying his brunch, only occasionally stopping to comment on something that was being said, but it was his gaze that was more worrisome than anything else.

Santana could feel him looking at her. She could feel him judging her, trying to find a flaw in her armour, and yeah, right then, there were many of them. To combat his heavy gaze, Santana just focused on her food, eating it without really tasting it, and trying to stay out of any and all conversations.

"So, Santana," Frannie grinned, cocking her head to the side. "Ever been arrested?"

"Frannie!" Quinn barked, glaring at her sister, squeezing Santana's thigh under the table.

"What? I'm just curious. If I wanted a proper answer I'd just run a check on her."

"Oh my God, stop!" Quinn whined, shaking her head in mortification.

"She has a point, Quinn," Russell said, finally speaking up. He then turned to Santana, raising his eyebrows, as if that suddenly meant she was to answer.

Shit was too scary not to.

"No, I've never been arrested," Santana replied, her voice sounding foreign to her. It was a shakier than she recalled it ever being.

"Ever broken the law?" Russell asked.

"Who hasn't?" Okay, maybe that wasn't the wisest question to ask a room full of cops, as it certainly caught a lot of their attentions. The whole room now seemed interested in where that damn conversation was going.

"Had sex?"

"Dad!" Quinn cried, slamming her hand on the table.

"What? I wasn't specific."

"You don't need to answer that question," Quinn said, looking at Santana softly.

"Eh...yeah, I have," Santana answered anyway, not too concerned.

"And with my daughter?" The room was silent, waiting, before Russell started laughing. Fucking terrifying. "I'm kidding, I don't want to know, I'd probably have to shoot you if I did."

Suddenly the weed in her back pocket wasn't such a big deal.

"No, but let's get serious again," Russell began, quieting the rest of the laughs at the table. "Ever been drunk?"

"Yes."

"Ever done drugs?" He waited, and as the silence wore on, more and more of them looked up from their plates to stare at Santana.

"Yeah, I have." There was no point lying about it, especially if they ended up finding the damn weed in her pocket.

"Well, I hope those are all past vices, and not current ones," Russell said, turning away from Santana, to look back at Frannie. "Anything you want to ask?"

"Nope, think you covered it," she said, and Quinn's exasperated sigh was heard from the other side of the table.

"You are the worst family ever," she murmured, shaking her head and squeezing Santana's leg under the table.

"What? We're looking out for you, Quinn, that's all. You don't mind, do you, Santana?" The fact her answer was already provided for her told Santana exactly what move to make next.

"Not at all," she replied, nodding soundly. Maybe if she just went along with it, all would end well.

"See?" Russell replied, pointing to Santana, smiling. "Anyway, enough. Rick, tell them about that arrest you had last week." That seemed to be the end of that conversation, and Rick immediately moved in on his story, leaving Quinn and Santana to pull themselves back together.

Once the room was talking loudly enough, Quinn leant over, her mouth against Santana's ear.

"I'm so sorry," she whispered, pulling back enough to look at Santana apologetically.

"Don't worry, it's okay," Santana replied, giving her a soft, reassuring smile in return.

She wasn't actually that annoyed by the questions. Okay, the ambush was scary as fuck, but they were cops, and Quinn was clearly the apple of many of their eyes, given how the whole room seemed to look out for her, so it wasn't surprising. Plus, maybe her honest answers would hide the fact she still had weed on her.

"I really love you, you know that, right?" Quinn added, feeling relief at Santana not having been scared off.

"I know, who couldn't love me?" Santana teased, attempting to look cocky, and making Quinn laugh. "I love you too," she whispered, kissing Quinn's cheek, before reaching for her glass of water.

It was easy enough for them to sit quietly after that, and once everyone was finished, Russell clapped his hands together and thanked everyone for coming. The hustle and bustle of movement and goodbyes meant that now was the perfect time for Santana to make her exit.

"Go," Quinn whispered to her, nudging her shoulder. "I'll call you later when it's safe to come over, and I promise you I'll make it up to you." Santana grinned at the thought and nodded.

Rising from her chair, Santana gave Quinn one last comforting smile, knowing she was done, and headed for the door. She was almost free. It was her time to go, an exit had been made for her, and she was accepting it with open arms.

Only....

"Oh, Santana?" Russell called, effectively quieting the whole room, and making everyone look at her. She turned to see mirth in his eyes, but he still looked like he could crush her with his fist so it wasn't reassuring.

"Yeah?" she replied, sounding pathetic and tired, but fuck, not her fault. She just wanted to go already. Why was the world being so cruel and keeping her there?

"If you ever bring drugs around my daughter again, I'll let Duchess have her way with you." Santana gulped, looking at Duchess who was literally glaring at her, and then back to Russell. "You can leave the bag of weed by the door on your way out." With that, he went back to his coffee and the room moved around her like nothing had happened.

"Yeah, okay," Santana mumbled, feeling like she'd been shot as well as having just dodged a bullet. It didn't make sense, but the door was there so she was fucking leaving, immediately.

Dumping the weed next to the porcelain duck by the door, Santana made her exit, with Quinn following behind her. Obviously they needed to talk about what the fuck had just gone down.

Except, when Santana turned to apologise and freak out, she was met with Frannie, rather than Quinn, and okay, where the fuck had her girlfriend gone?

Was this the part where they said she wasn't good enough for Quinn and to never come back?

"You did good, Lopez," Frannie said instead, grinning. And what the fuck?

"Good?" It did not feel like she had done good, as Frannie had put it. It felt like that was a freaking train wreck.

"Quinn didn't send that text; I did."

"What?!" Santana blurted out, shocked. "Are you fucking insane?" That probably wasn't her smartest move, but she had no time to think about it. The words were out her mouth before she could do anything about it.

"Sort of. But I'm also very protective of my baby sister, and I wanted to see what you would do under pressure."

"This...this was all a set up?"

"Something like that," Frannie hummed, shrugging her shoulders. There was no two ways about it, though, it was exactly like that.

"So everyone...everyone knew I had that weed on me before I walked in?" Santana barked, her world spinning.

"No, you could have turned up without it." Well, shit, yeah, but the idea of shotgunning with Quinn was fucking hot, so no, of course she went and got the weed. "Plus, Quinn didn't know. She was as scared as you were throughout all of that."

"You're all psychopaths," Santana declared, devoid of any emotion, her brain overloading with all the new information she was receiving.

"Yeah, but psychopaths in a uniform," Frannie grinned, and that did nothing to help Santana feel better. "Relax, Lopez, okay? You did good. You didn't let Quinn take the fall for it, which hello, we all thought she would, you didn't run out there immediately, you didn't break down and cry your eyes out, and, you left the weed on the table on your way out."

"I still don't know how that's good."

"You had your partner's back, you played it cool, you didn't cave under pressure, and you were honest with us through interrogation. Those are pretty good qualities to have; or at least that lot think so," Frannie explained, jerking her thumb to point to the house behind her. "You passed the first test, so relax."

"The first test?" Santana repeated, feeling horror creep up her spine.

"Yeah, next time you'll wake up in the back of a squad car. You need to talk yourself out of the charges before you arrive at the precinct. If you fail, you'll be charged and locked up until someone posts your bail. If you get bail, that is. We pull the charges out of hat, it's pure luck." Slowly but surely, Santana felt all the blood drain from her face.

"I'm kidding," Frannie laughed, getting far too much amusement from that situation.

"I don't think you are," Santana groaned, feeling queasy at the thought.

She was fucked. She was in love with a girl who had the craziest fucking family in the world, and they had guns and badges to make it all look kosher. She was completely fucked.

"Whatever, you did good," Frannie repeated. "We like you, so come back some time, just leave the weed at home, yeah?"

"Sure," Santana said, nodding, as if on autopilot.

"Now, I better go, Quinn needs to scream at someone who won't be her boss one day."

"Her what...Quinn wants to be a cop?!" That thought was scarier than the whole damn day she'd just experienced.

"Maybe. That a problem?" Frannie suddenly sounded and looked like the protective older sister she claimed to be, and not the psychopath of moments before.

"No, shit, no. Just means I should probably stop breaking the law so often," her answer was honest, blunt and it earned a bark of laughter from Frannie.

"I like you, Lopez. You're going to be a lot of fun to have around."

"Thanks...I think..." She really wasn't sure if that was a compliment or not.

With a wave goodbye, Frannie headed inside, and Santana was left standing on the porch of the Fabray's house, looking completely lost. It felt like her whole world had been turned upside down. It was definitely, without a doubt, one of the most stressful days she'd ever experienced, and she hoped there would not be a repeat of that anytime soon.

Grabbing her phone out her pocket, she sent Quinn and text, before making the walk to her car to head home.

Your family is fucking crazy, and if I didn't love you, I'd be running for the hills. But, seeing as I do, I guess I can stick around to see what crazy shit they do next. Oh, and the thought of you in a cop uniform is surprisingly a turn on, feel like stealing one sometime? Role play can be fun X

Moments later, she got a reply;

Role play is fun, but do you know what's better? Me actually arresting your ass for encouraging my baby sister to commit a crime! Frannie X

Okay, so maybe Santana needed to rethink things. Today was not one of the most stressful days of her life, it *was* the most stressful day of her life. Nothing could top it. Ever.

*You were never a saint (and I've loved the shades of
wrong), by emilystark21barelylegal (breakingatthecracks)*

Love is a ruthless game unless you play it good and right.

(ALL WE KNOW IS TOUCH AND GO.)

The first time Santana meets Judy Fabray, she almost laughs.

It's in freshman year and really, she didn't think women like that still existed in this century—a typical suburban Stepford wife, neatly combed hair, loads of jewelry—until Judy walked into the clinic and quickly runs to Quinn's side as her best friend nursed a *minor* ankle injury.

"Oh, honey. Are you okay?" Judy asks Quinn with that worried look on her face.

"I'm okay, Mom. I can walk it off."

"But the school nurse called and—"

"I said I can walk it off," Quinn says in that hard and stubborn tone.

It's the moment Santana choses to step in. She'd been sitting on the other bed the whole time.

"She can't," Santana interjects, not letting Quinn *walk it off* because she can't. "It was a hard fall."

"Santana," Quinn warns her, giving her a glare that would've probably sent anyone running but not Santana.

Okay, it is a scary look on Quinn. She just does it so well. Days like this, Santana is thankful looks can't actually kill. But that kid from the Chess Club choked on his *water* when Quinn passed by this morning, he didn't die... but hey, it could've been worse. So, yeah, maybe stares could kill.

Quinn's stare at least.

Judy gives her a look and it amazes Santana how similar it is to that of Quinn's stare when she's judging someone. She gets it, okay? The Fabrays are known in this town for disliking people of color and that includes the Lopezes for some reason.

It's not exactly a family feud but everybody knows that one time Russell Fabray refused to get his chest pain checked just because Dr. Martin Lopez was the only doctor on duty that night. Yeah, not exactly a family feud.

"I'm Santana. I'm in the squad with Quinn," she introduces herself.

Judy smiles and *God*, it's so fake, "I'm Judy Fabray, I'm Quinn's mom."

Santana nods and fakes a smile as well, "I know, I see the resemblance."

Judy nods and her grin widens, probably flattered of the compliment. Meanwhile, Santana catches Quinn rolling her eyes because she knows Santana is faking being nice.

"Well, thank you for staying, Santana. I'll take it from here."

"She's gonna drive me home," Quinn says as she slowly hops off the bed.

"Lucy Quinn Fabray, don't be stubborn now. You're coming with me."

"You're drunk."

Santana just stands awkwardly in front of the two blondes. She doesn't miss the way Judy consciously gives her a look, as if she's suddenly embarrassed of Quinn's revelation.

"Don't worry, mom. She knows everything. She's my best friend."

Now, it's Santana's turn to be a little bit surprised.

Quinn just said she's her best friend.

And no, Santana's heart didn't celebrate at that.

Not at all.

"Just go home, Mom, and meet me there. Santana's father will be here any minute now."

Judy turns to her and looks at her as if asking for any kind of assurance.

Santana gets it, of course. She's a lot of things but she's not naïve. She nods and gives Judy a small smile of reassurance, "My Father is a good driver plus, he's the president of the PTA and he's a doctor. We'll take her home safely, Mrs. Fabray."

"Mr. Lopez is the president of the PTA?" Judy asks and it almost makes Santana laugh because out of all the things she said, Judy grasped the PTA part.

"He is," Santana answers, nodding proudly. "He does the lawn on weekends, too, because Mama won't shut up about it."

Judy Fabray actually laughs and *wow*, Santana feels incredibly hateful of herself for thinking she might like Judy.

"Are we done with the chit-chat?" Quinn interjects.

Santana stands next to Quinn and allows Quinn to use her for support and balance. She puts her arm around Quinn's waist as the blonde slings one arm around her shoulder.

They slowly walk to the front of the school and at some point, Santana has managed to steal a glance in Judy's direction. She's walking by Quinn's other side and as she stares at Quinn, Santana could swear she saw Judy soften, like all her defenses just magically disappeared.

It didn't last long but Santana knows it was there. It's in that moment Santana decides that Judy Fabray is actually a lot more than being the poster child for the town's trophy wives club.

For some reason, Santana thinks Judy and Quinn are alike. Quinn, too, is a lot more than the person she pretends to be.

Maybe, that's why they're best friends—they see past each other's defenses.

But who's Santana to really know.

They've only been best friends for five minutes.

(OUR SLATES ARE CLEAN.)

She encounters Judy a lot of times after that. Mostly, it's during the many sleepovers at the Fabray mansion. They don't exchange words, not even on the breakfast table. She's still Mrs. Fabray and Santana is still the kind of person who belongs in the Fabray Family List of People to Avoid.

But a year later, Santana and Judy meet again.

Judy has left Russell and Quinn is giving birth.

"Looks like we're here again, Mrs. Fabray," Santana says, recalling the last time they actually talked. It was in the school clinic and they're on a waiting room right now. It's vaguely familiar.

"Call me Judy."

"Really?"

Judy laughs, "Yes. Santana."

"Wow, I feel like I should have a picture of this or something."

The older woman laughs again and Santana finally sees the *mom* Quinn's been talking about—that one who gets up before the sun rises on Christmas Day just to secretly bake her daughters Christmas cookies. Christmas cookies are not allowed in the Fabray household because it's not part of their tradition.

"Do you think she's gonna come back from this, Santana?"

Santana doesn't even think twice, "Of course, Judy. She's your daughter, she has your strength."

Judy smiles as tears fall from her eyes.

"Thank you for being a good friend to Quinn."

Santana sighs, guilt embracing her whole being, "Quinn and I aren't exactly close anymore. We kind of drifted apart."

Judy smirks in a way that so similar to Quinn's smirk when she's about to say something so clever or right. It's so creepy how similar it is. The woman looks around her as if showing Santana something, "You're here, Santana. You're the only one who stayed, it's all that will matter to her."

Santana breathes a sigh of relief. "You know, if you need friends, my Mama and Papa will have this barbecue on Saturday. You should be there."

"After all I've put them through?"

"It wasn't you. It was your husband."

"I'm guilty by association."

"Well, I am, too. I'm best friends with your daughter."

The silence that follows almost makes Santana believe that she will turn the invitation down again but after a few moments, Judy turns to her, "What sauce should I bring?"

Santana laughs, actually laughs because wow. She's about to talk to Judy Fabray about barbecue sauce.

Progress?

She thinks so.

(I NEVER SAW YOU COMING.)

Judy became good friends with both of Santana's parents. Turns out, Judy is actually pretty hilarious. She's not exactly as bright as Quinn but she says the best one-liners Santana's ever heard from a woman of her age. She's kinda like an older Brittany but only with more finesse and, well, alcohol. She never really got rid of the habit but after weeks of mourning the divorce, Judy got herself back on track—a few drinks here and there but she's never passed out since.

Most nights, when Quinn's out, she stays up and waits for Quinn to come home. Most of those nights, Santana drove Quinn home and Judy would invite her to stay every time. Quinn would hop off the passenger seat and Judy would come over to invite Santana in, constantly reminding her about how late it is. Sometimes, Santana accepts the offer and stays.

And then the times she said *no* became frequent.

Santana's sure Judy knows exactly when Quinn started hopping off the backseat of her car. It's during those days that Brittany sat in the front.

It's also during those days that Judy stops asking her to stay. She respects it and she also gets it.

Quinn has become Santana's afterthought now.

And as Judy and Quinn's relationship healed, the one Santana had with Quinn started falling apart. A part of it is because of Brittany; the larger part is all Santana.

The larger part is all of Santana's fears.

She was never the strong one.

That's why when she felt her feelings grow stronger, Santana runs to the next pair of arms that will catch her.

Quinn never will.

What's worse is that Santana?

Santana just keeps on falling.

(BUT THIS LOVE IS BRAVE AND WILD.)

The next time Santana's alone in a room with Judy, they don't talk.

Santana is in a stupid pink dress and Judy is crying.

Quinn's been in surgery for eight hours.

The doctors keep saying there's no guarantee.

But Santana thinks about Judy and her strength; about Russell kicking Quinn out, about Quinn giving up the baby. Santana thinks about the Ryan Seacrest tattoo and she thinks about the pink hair.

Santana thinks about Quinn and sees a woman who has survived so much. For the first time in a long time, Santana prays.

She bargains with the god she's not sure she believes in. She doesn't know what she's doing but she bargains.

Just bring her back and I'll never let her go again. I promise.

(THIS IS THE WORTHWHILE FIGHT.)

Quinn wakes up four days later.

The first thing she sees are Judy and Santana watching an episode of Gilmore Girls on a laptop.

Quinn's first words after the accident: "*Unbelievable.*"

Santana doesn't leave her side except for the times it was really necessary. Quinn stays at the hospital for a month and a half and they finish all seasons of Gilmore Girls before Quinn gets discharged.

They take her home that night and when Santana was about to leave Quinn's room to go home, Quinn asks, "Can you stay? For the night?"

Santana nods, "Can I change first? I smell like old people."

Quinn smiles, "Yeah."

"And Quinn?"

"Hmm?"

"I'm not going anywhere."

Tears form in her eyes but she banters, "That's scary."

Santana laughs for the first time since the accident, "Yeah, you better get scared. It's gonna be so damn hard to get rid of me."

(THESE ARE THE HANDS OF FATE.)

Santana's starting to think that the most pivotal conversation she's had with Quinn's mother all took place in a hospital setting—the injured leg, Beth, the accident, and now this.

It's unbelievable but Santana realized that she and Judy actually have one thing in common: *they both love Quinn more than anything in this world.*

"She's premature, Judy," Santana says as they both stare at the baby inside the incubator. IVs and other sorts of machines are attached to her, helping her breathe; survive.

"She's gonna be fine," Judy says. She sounds sure.

Santana looks up at her and sees Judy smiling at the baby girl.

"She has Quinn's eyes and it's obvious that she's blonde. She'd be a wonderful lady."

Santana sighs, "Judy."

Judy looks up at her and Santana realizes how Judy has come so far from that person she met a long time ago. This woman has become Quinn's *mom* now and not just her birth mother. This woman has been sober for two and a half years and this woman has accepted that daughter isn't—and never will be—the person she's always imagined her to be.

It's great because Judy doesn't see that as a disappointment. Quinn growing up as her own person has made Judy so proud. And Judy has taken Santana in, like she's her own.

Judy hums, "Santana, dear?"

"Quinn really wanted to give you a normal family. I'm sorry if Madison is gonna grow up having to defend her moms all the time."

Judy shakes her head, an encouraging expression starts to draw in her face, "No, Santana. You and Quinn are gonna give Madison a home full of love and she's gonna grow up well-loved and accepted. It's the most normal kind of upbringing you can give your child. You're not gonna be Russell and I. Madison is lucky to have you both."

"When did you start accepting me, Judy? You know, as Quinn's other half?"

Judy smiles warmly, "One time after the accident, Quinn and I were talking, bravely, about the possibility she might never walk again and we had this long talk. But you know what stuck with me the most?"

Santana just looks at her, anticipating the next part of the story.

"She said she imagines being 80 years old, still sitting on that *damn* chair. She said she sees you in the same elder home, teasing her about texting and driving."

Santana smiles at the thought.

Judy smiles and takes her hand, giving Santana some sort of a reassurance, "I nearly laughed and I thought, *my God, Quinn is in love with her best friend and she doesn't even know it.*"

"What are you saying?" Santana asks laughingly.

"Santana, she's 80 and she's sitting on a wheelchair and she still sees you there. She sees you in her future. She has included you in her plans."

Tears brim in Santana's eyes and they fall when she looks down at the baby again.

Maybe, Madison will visit them at the elder home. Maybe, she'll take her own family with her. Maybe, their future second baby will be there, too.

And wow, Santana just realized how much their kids will hate them in their old age.

Because they're 80.

And Santana still tells Quinn *I Love You* every single day.

The One Where Santana Meets Quinn's Mom, by empresskris

Santana runs her fingers through her hair for probably the hundredth time while looking in the hallway mirror.

With a sigh, Quinn steps up behind her and encircles Santana's waist with her arms and rests her chin on the girl's shoulder. She catches Santana's eye in the mirror and squeezes her tightly. "You look amazing."

"I think I need a new curling iron. This one piece just isn't staying like it should," Santana grumbles as she fiddles with the strand of hair.

"Honey, don't be so nervous. It's just my mom. It's not a huge deal," Quinn says trying to calm her girlfriend's nerves.

"I don't have a mom. So your mom is like *the* mom. It *is* a big deal." Santana's eyes glance up to meet Quinn's momentarily through the reflection of the mirror. "The closest thing I have to a family is a man-child with a Mohawk who likes to go around punching people."

"You have me," she says kissing Santana's shoulder. She turns her head to the side and smiles down at the scruffy brown puppy peering up at them curiously. "And Rufus." His ears perk when he hears his name and he cocks his head to the side.

Santana glances down at the new puppy she helped Quinn pick out from the shelter and steps out of her girlfriend's embrace to go check the bottle of wine, again, for the hundredth time. "Yeah well, in this instance you two don't count."

"I know you are nervous, so I will not take that personally," Quinn says watching Santana walk into the kitchen.

Satisfied with her choice of wine, she sighs and places it to the side. "I just don't want her to think I'm not good enough for you," she admits.

"Why would she think that?" Quinn's expression softens and she leans against the counter, giving Santana some space. "Are you okay?" She asks off of Santana's look. But before she can answer, there's a loud buzz from the intercom. Santana's head whips around to the clock on the microwave and Quinn grimaces. "She's early," she announces apologetically. Their eyes meet. "Ready?"

Santana nods and Quinn offers her a quick smile before buzzing her in the building.

Rufus trots over to Santana and looks up at her expectantly. She looks down at the dog and scratches him behind his floppy ears. "Here we go," she mumbles.

She runs her hands along her dress, smoothing it out wondering if she should've opted to wear her red dress instead of the navy blue and glances down hoping this dress isn't too revealing. She frowns when she realizes all of her dresses are revealing.

Santana curses herself. She's bungeed off the tallest buildings in Dubai, infiltrated high security KGB offices, taken out drug lords in the most dangerous areas in Venezuela, and battled the Yakuza in darkened alley's... and none of those things came close to the amount anxiety she was feeling just meeting Quinn's mother.

"You look amazing," Quinn says watching her from the door to her apartment, still sensing her anxiety.

Santana's eyes meet Quinn's and for a brief moment, she relaxes. Her eyes trail down Quinn's simple white cotton dress and navy sweater with a matching navy flats. Her hair is pushed back with a navy headband and curled only slightly. When Santana's eyes meet Quinn's again she wonders briefly if the reason Quinn wanted to dress after Santana was so that she could match her girlfriend.

Quinn offers her a charming smile before the moment is interrupted by a loud knocking on the apartment door, causing Quinn to jump.

And just like that Santana's anxiety is back.

"Mom!" Quinn chirps happily. "...And Dan." It's clear from Quinn's shift in tone that she's not happy to see her mother's boyfriend. Santana grimaces at the mention of his name. For the past three months she's heard nothing but Quinn bitch about how he's not at all right for her mother.

"I hope you don't mind," her mother says hopefully from the hallway.

Quinn clenches her teeth and forces a smile. "Not at all." She takes a step to the side and pushes the door open to allow them to enter the apartment.

The couple step into the room and Santana walks out of the kitchen towards them, trying her best to swallow down her nerves as she flashes them a smile. "Mom, this is Santana. Santana this is my mom and her boyfriend Dan," Quinn says closing the door behind them.

Santana extends her hand to the woman whom Quinn very much resembles. "Hello Mrs. Fabray, it's nice to finally meet you."

Adjusting the item in her arm, the woman beams at Santana as she reaches out with her free hand to shake Santana's. "It's so nice to finally meet you, too! Quinn has told us so many lovely things. And please, call me Judy."

Santana fights the urge to lift her brow as her eyes fall to the large plant tucked rather awkwardly under Judy's arm. "You brought a cactus."

As if forgetting, Judy looks down the plant somewhat startled before realizing she was still holding it. "Oh! Yes. Well, I wanted to bring you something but I don't know much about you. Quinn said you're always traveling so I thought this would be easy for you to take care of."

Santana takes the offered cactus and looks down at it, wondering if she should've gotten Judy something in return. "That's... incredibly nice. Thank you."

"I'm Dan," the man says offering an awkward wave.

Santana smiles at his khakis, loafers, button up purple dress shirt and tan jacket. His hair is neatly combed and swept to the side and his cologne is pungent. But Santana knows instantly that he tried to look nice for this evening, and she can't help but feel somewhat relieved that he's probably just as nervous as she is.

Judy looks around the main room in the apartment and frowns. "So are you planning on moving in here? It's rather small. Is yours bigger?"

"Two bedroom," Santana answers avoiding the direct question.

"Oh well, Quinn, you should move in with Santana!"

"Mom," Quinn snaps, her cheeks turning red. Even though the two rarely sleep apart, they haven't discussed future living arrangements. Moving in together had started to play through Quinn's mind quite recently, but she's never voiced her thoughts on the issue, instead waiting for Santana to bring it up. And despite being embarrassed by her mother's prodding, her eyes shift to Santana to gauge her reaction.

But her girlfriend merely smiles. "Would you like something to drink?" She asks, changing the subject.

Judy's eyes light up. "Wine."

"Beer," Dan says simultaneously.

"Coming right up," Santana says as she hurries to the kitchen, giving Quinn a quick wink as she does, her nerves seeming to fall away.

"So those are the highlights," Judy says placing her empty wine glass on the coffee table.

"It sounds like you had a great time," Quinn says sincerely.

"We really did," Dan agrees.

It's been two hours and Santana has been nothing but polite to her mother and Dan. She's listened intently, asked questions, and seemed genuinely interested in everything they said. Quinn glances at her girlfriend from the corner of her eye and shifts closer on the loveseat. Causally, Quinn slips her arm behind her, resting her hand on the small of Santana's back. Santana seems to lean into the touch.

Judy's eyes fall to Quinn's arm wrapped securely around the other girl. She leans back comfortably into the couch cushions and smiles at Santana. "So tell me more about all this traveling you do."

"It's just business related. Not a lot of pleasure involved unfortunately," Santana chuckles.

"Even so you've had to see some amazing places. Where's your favorite place that you've been?" Judy asks curiously.

Santana releases a long breath. "That's rough," she says thinking back. After pushing aside the near death experiences and high pressure situations, she thinks back to the good experiences she's had. To the places that made her take pause and notice their beauty and charm. "I loved Belize. And I really loved Kyoto," she says thoughtfully.

"That's Japan, right?" Dan asks.

"It is. And the Sea of Stars in the Maldives was just, amazing." She turns towards Quinn with a smile. "I'd love to take Quinn there one day," she says reaching out and placing her hand on the other girl's knee.

Quinn returns the smile and slips her arm back from around Santana and takes her hand in her own instead.

Judy's eyes flick back and forth from between the two girls. "So why is it that you've been dating my daughter for almost six months and this is the first time we've met? Not to mention not coming for Thanksgiving."

"Uh," Santana tenses immediately at the question.

Quinn sighs and answers instead. "Mom I've told you. We've both been really busy. Flying back to Ohio just wasn't an option. And I told you we wanted to be alone for our first Thanksgiving," she reminds her.

Judy shakes her head and reaches for the wine bottle, pouring the last of the liquid into her glass. "Well at least we're together for Christmas. Even if we did have to come to you."

"How terrible for you to miss Christmas in Ohio," Quinn mutters annoyed. "Anyway, you've been on your cruise and doing fundraisers. You've been busy, too."

"We still found the time for holidays though, didn't we?" Judy says matter of factly. "I mean I just knew it was serious when I heard about you two getting a puppy together," she says glancing at Rufus sleeping on the floor by Santana's feet. "I was just surprised we didn't meet sooner, that's all."

"Judy," Dan says gently.

But she shakes her head and smiles, bringing the glass to her lips. "But what I really want to know is, will I be having any grandchildren in the future?"

Quinn pulls her hand away from Santana and sits straight up. "Mom!" She shrieks, positively mortified.

Judy nods and holds up her hands defensively. "I mean, I know you kinds of people can't have children the traditional way,"

Quinn slouches back on the couch, hoping the cushions will swallow her whole as she covers her face with her hands. "Oh my God," she groans.

"But there's always adoption or one of you can get inseminated," she says knowingly reaching for her glass.

Quinn quickly leans forward, beating her mother to the wine glass. "No more wine for you," she says seriously.

Judy glances from her daughter to Santana and then at Dan, not understanding. "What?"

Santana shrugs; a smirk on her lips at as she takes in Quinn's reddened cheeks.

"We don't even live together, Mom," Quinn hisses.

"I'm just saying - "

"Judy, leave the poor kids alone," Dan says with a heavy sigh.

Judy shakes her head. "I just think - "

"How about we see some of your latest photography," Dan says interrupting Judy once more.

Quinn gives him a grateful look.

—

"I can't believe my mom," Quinn says shaking her head as she slips out of her dress.

Santana smiles and watches her from the edge of the bed, pulling her hair back and out of her face. "She's just being a mom."

"She's *embarrassing*," Quinn whines.

"She loves you and wants what's best for you," Santana says laughing lightheartedly.

"I guess," Quinn mumbles. She drapes her dress over her clothes hamper and rummages in her dresser for a clean t-shirt. "She told me several times how much she liked you," she says pulling the shirt over her head.

Santana smiles almost proudly. "Really?"

"Yes. Dan too."

The weight of the evening *finally* leaves her body at Quinn's mother's approval of her and their relationship. She reaches out and guides Quinn towards her, pulling her down on her lap. "Well she *did* push for us to start having kids..."

Quinn straddles her waist and slips her arms around her neck, ducking her head in embarrassment. "I am so sorry. I am so mortified about that."

Santana looks positively offended. "You're mortified about the idea of having kids with me?"

Quinn's eyes quickly meet Santana's, wide in embarrassment. "I didn't say that!" She quickly insists. Suddenly a thought hits her and the color drains from her face. "I just... what I meant was... do *you* want kids?"

Santana glances behind her at the scruffy dog sprawled out across the bed. "I think Rufus is enough for now," she chuckles. Quinn sighs in relief. "I had a good time tonight."

Quinn regards her carefully. "Really?"

Santana pulls Quinn closer and holds her tightly. "It was interesting. I've never really done that before. Met my girlfriend's mother," she admits.

"I find that hard to believe," Quinn laughs.

Santana grimaces. "I'm not exactly the type of girl who you bring home to mom," she explains awkwardly.

Quinn's laughter dies when she sees that Santana is serious. She cups her girlfriend's face in her hands gently. "You're sweet, thoughtful, polite... you're *exactly* the type of girl *anyone* would be proud to introduce to their parents."

Santana squirms, slightly uncomfortable as she sidesteps *why* exactly she avoided long term relationships. "I guess I've never been in a relationship where I wanted to meet the family. I was never invested enough. My job always came first and I never really, I dunno, wanted to put the effort in to make it work."

"So you're saying you're invested enough in this relationship to put in extra work to be with me?" Quinn asks with a knowing smile.

Santana rolls her eyes. "Well, duh. We're having kids, remember?"

"Oh my God," Quinn groans knowing for a fact that Santana will never let her live that down.

Santana grins mischievously and leans in, pressing her lips to Quinn's as she falls back on to the bed, pulling the startled blonde with her.

You've changed, by fantaticbs

Quinn handed me my coffee and took a long sip of her own. I kissed her on the cheek and we stared at the arrival boards again, even though we both knew his flight had landed 15 minutes ago. I could have zoned out were it not for Quinn loudly sipping from her cup every few seconds. I turn slowly to look at her in annoyance.

"What the hell are you doing?"

She drops the cup from her lips and sighs. "It's been 8 years."

"He's the one who called you."

She takes another sip. "And I still don't know why."

"You said he wanted to get to know you. To make up for the past."

"Yeah, well, excuse me if I'm skeptical of my father who threw me out on the streets as a pregnant teenager." Her voice has hit that high mark that lets me know I'm on the verge of being yelled at.

"Hey, I dislike your father as much as the next person, but I know..." I grab her hand. "I know how much his approval means to you, even after everything."

She shakes loose of my hand. "It means nothing. He means nothing."

"Then why are we here? Why are we picking him up for a weekend of uncomfortable conversations and awkward silences?"

"Because." She stares back up at the screen as though it will tell her something new.

"Because he's still your father. Just like my grandmother is still mi abuela."

"You don't even speak to her."

"On the contrary, she does not speak *to me*. I've made it clear that I'm willing to welcome her back anytime she'd like. I, for one, am surprised he's come around this quickly, especially with you and I being together."

"Apparently his new church is more accepting of different lifestyles. I'm positive it's his younger girlfriend though." I shake my head.

"Well, whatever the reason, this is a good thing, Quinn."

She takes another speedy sip. "Don't be so sure."

Her father comes through the exit in front of everyone and I'm startled at how tough the years can be. Gray hair has replaced the blonde I remember.

Quinn too, seems startled by his appearance, by the obvious stretch of time they'd lost so visibly on display. When we were younger she always greeted him with an exuberant 'Daddy!', but now all she can muster is a stoic, "Hello, Dad."

He hugs her as though he hadn't shattered her favorite ballerina jewelry box on the floor as she left that night - the music box spurred to play a tortured, tempo-less version of Somewhere Over the Rainbow.

Her arms remain at her side and I stand back a second, letting them have a moment. Quinn doesn't seem to want that though and she presses into his arms to separate them.

"You remember Santana." I reach out to shake his hand, but he pulls me into a hug.

"Hello, again, Mr. Fabray."

"Santana! I always liked your spirit." He slaps me on the back a few times.

"That's funny, if I recall correctly, you said she was the slut who got me into this mess when I told you I was pregnant."

Her father sobers. "Well that was a long time ago, Quinn. I said a lot of hurtful things I didn't mean back then. I apologize for saying that, Santana."

I lift my eyebrows and shoulders simultaneously with a smile. "Can't say it wasn't true at the time, but apology accepted nonetheless, Mr. Fabray."

"Please, call me Russell. You're not little girls anymore."

"Russell." I say to assure him.

Quinn is uninterested in our conversation. "Did you check a bag, Dad?"

"No, I travel light these days."

"Good. Let's get out of here before rush hour hits."

We make it back to our place just before 7 and I start to cook dinner, while Quinn acclimates her father.

He tries repeatedly to engage her, but she's been sticking to mostly one word answers since he got here.

I call out to her. "Quinn, I could use a hand in the kitchen."

She turns the corner, irritation pouring off of her. "What do you need?"

I stop stirring and turn to her, placing my hands on her shoulders. "I need you to perk the fuck up. Your dad is really trying in there and you're not giving him anything."

"Why are you defending him?! He hated you in high school. Hate. And now he's walking around our apartment complimenting pictures of us and asking about our jobs. I can't stand it."

"Why?" It's not that Quinn is wrong, but I don't think there's anything he could be doing right now that would please her.

"Why what? You can't just ignore me for 8 years and then act like nothing's wrong."

"How should he act? Should he be crying? Should he crawl across the rug at your feet?"

"Maybe he should! You're my girlfriend, Santana! Why are you taking his side!"

"I'm not. I'm just saying he's here. He's trying. You could say more than yes and no."

"Quinn, what's that girl you two hated, Rebecca? What's she doing now?" Her father yells from the living room and I can imagine the picture he must be looking at.

"Rachel, Dad! Her name's Rachel. She's performing in Santori on Broadway." She says the next part to me only, resentful, but calm. "We became friends after you threw me out."

"Always knew she was a talent! Even with that nose."

I kiss her on the cheek and shove her back towards the living room. I can hear the faint hum of their conversation as I finish sauteing the vegetables.

"Dinner's ready!" I shout to the other room and grab a few plates to bring to the table.

We settle in and after a few bites, Mr. Fabray smiles brightly at me.

"Wow, Santana. I should have known you'd be a great cook. Your mother always made a delicious meal."

"Taught me everything I know!"

"So, tell me, how did uh, how did you and Quinn. Last I remember-"

I decide to save him. "In college. We got together in college."

"I mean I saw the ads on tv. I want you to know I voted for Sue, Santana." Quinn rolls her eyes and I fight a smirk at his misplaced allegiance. "So I, uh, I knew that you...well, your predilection. Quinn here though, always had her eye on the football players - that idiot, Muck."

"Puck. His name is Noah Puckerman."

"Whatever his name is, I wish Quinn had realized it was you she wanted back then."

Quinn can't contain herself. "Are you saying you wouldn't have kicked me out if I was in a lesbian relationship with Santana in high school, because you're full of shit, daddy! I would have been out on my ass even faster!"

"Now, Quinn-"

"Now Quinn-nothing! I'm trying to be *civil* here, Russell, but I won't have you spout lies to Santana. I won't have you convince her that you're anything other than a terrible, cruel man. You can't rewrite what you've done."

Russell places his napkin on the table before lifting his eyes to meet hers. "I know that I can't change what I've done, baby, but I'm trying to start over. I just want you to see that I'm not the man I was. I can be a father to you." Quinn seems unimpressed, so he takes it up a notch. "I'd like to walk you down the aisle someday, to be the one who hands you to Santana."

I'm proud that my eyes only widen a little – we're not remotely engaged.

"Shut up, will you!" Quinn goes as red as I've ever seen her. "Santana and I...it's not like...she's not my fiancée."

"I'm sorry, it's just you said college. That's got to be at least, what? 4 years."

"5" I share just to have something to say.

"5? You two might as well be common law married. You live together. What's the hold up?"

Quinn gnaws on her roll. "That's none of your business."

Russell leans back in his chair and I glance between them. "I suppose it isn't. You're right, Quinn. I don't deserve to share in your life, but I'd like to, if you'll have me?"

"I'll just go grab dessert." I get up from the table and move into the kitchen swiftly.

When I return they've reached some sort of truce because Quinn is not yelling.

Russell tells us about his new job in Florida and how happy he is with Samantha, his girlfriend. I ask lots of questions and I can tell he appreciates the olive branch, since Quinn has yet to extend it.

We climb into bed after saying our good-nights and I turn off the bedside lamp. I sink into the mattress, happy for the silence.

"You weren't a slut in high school."

"Did you think that would keep me up?" I ask, my voice filled with humor. When she doesn't respond I take her more seriously. "What's on your mind?"

"It's just, how can you shrug it off like that?"

"Quinn, that was a long time ago. We all thought and said different things. I can't say I wasn't cruel myself."

"But we were children, it's different."

"It is," I sigh, "but maybe your dad just needed more time to grow up."

It's silent for a while, just our breathing can be heard.

"Maybe."

I turn over and hold her close, pressing my lips to her temple as she stares up at the ceiling.

"I love you."

She turns her face to kiss my lips. "I love you too."

Quinn has a day planned of touring her father all over the city that has Rachel written all over it. No literally. She's typed up a schedule for us to follow on her signature stationary and I would be surprised if any other Broadway phenom had done this, but not Rachel. The moment she heard Mr. Fabray was coming she immediately began compiling a list of places she loves to

take her fathers. It had to be amended of course, since not everyone has a Berry sensibility, but I could still appreciate the effort.

As we rounded out our evening at Jim's Steakhouse, I had to pat myself on the back. They hadn't fought all day and at times I could even see that glow of love the daddy-daughter duo once had.

Quinn had adored her father when I met her and she was his golden child. Until the moment that Cheerios skirt became a stitch too tight it wouldn't have been false to say they were each others' favorite people.

I knew Quinn wasn't apologizing for her father last night. She was apologizing for loving him so much that his ideas were her own back then. She only realized how dangerous that could be when those razor sharp insults were thrown her way – when she couldn't disentangle what he thought of her from what she thought of herself.

Quinn excuses herself to use the restroom as Russell waves the waiter over to refill his glass.

"Quinn's right. I didn't speak very highly of you all those years ago, Santana."

"I'm not sure I spoke very highly of you either, Mr. Fabray. I think 'hypocrite asshole' was a common placeholder for your name." I take a sip of my wine. "Perhaps we're even."

"It's Russell." He corrects. "Or hypocrite asshole. Whichever you prefer."

Our laughter dies down. "She's in love with you, you know."

"Well, I'm in love with her too."

"When she was a little girl she would play with her Barbies for hours and hours, running all over the house, harassing me and her mother, brushing their hair and changing their clothes...she made a , what do they call it?" He gestures with his hands, but only he can see what the hell he is making. "...a ummm, a gazebo, out of popsicle sticks. With the stains and everything – glued it together and put these dandelions all over the roof. It was too short, they couldn't go inside, but she would have them stand out front – Barbie and Ken – and she would marry them. She'd ask me the words all the time – she'd always say 'And death do us part' I thought that was funny, ya know, instead of 'Until'." He sighs, letting go of the memory. "I guess what I'm getting at is, she may not say it, Santana, but my daughter wants to be married and how she is with you..."

Quinn leans in to kiss me on my cheek. "What did I miss?"

I'm still too stunned by what Mr. Fabray was alluding to.

"Oh, nothing. I was just telling her about that summer you tore into Mrs. Fisher's garden chasing that rabbit and trampled her tulips."

"I said I was sorry!" She turns towards me to plead her case. "It was a white bunny. I was only 5!"

I quirk my brow at her skeptically. "Alright, then, Alice."

Russell laughs, "We called her that for weeks! She hated it!"

"Whatever, I suppose there are worse stories you could've told"

I perk up. "Really?"

Quinn frowns. "That wasn't an offer. Besides it's late, we should get going."

I'm about to protest since Russell just got his wine, but I notice the cup is near empty. That could explain a lot.

I grab Quinn's coat and hold it up for her to put her arms into. Russell catches my eye and holds my gaze, obviously harkening back to our earlier conversation.

I try to ignore the intensity of what he said – try to shake it off, but what if he's right. We have been together for 5 years.

We climb under the sheets.

"You seemed happier today."

She can't keep the smile from her face. "Did I?"

"You did. I'm glad you're giving this a chance."

"What you said made sense. Maybe he just needed more time. I wish he was like this for my mother though."

"Do you think he could have been?"

"No, it's just. Being kicked out. My parents breaking up. It ruined all my fantasies...about love, about everything."

"About marriage?"

She thinks on it for a second. She seems hesitant to answer. "I mean, I guess. It used to be something I saw myself doing."

"And now?"

"Why are you asking? I saw the look on your face yesterday. You'd sooner jump off a cliff than get married."

"That's not true. I was just surprised."

"If by 'surprised' you mean 'frightened', then yeah, you were surprised."

"I've just never thought about it."

Note to self: Never ever, ever, tell your girlfriend that you've never thought about marrying her.

Quinn looks at me for a moment completely offended before turning her back on me and switching off the lamp.

I speak into her hair. "That's not what I meant."

"No, it is what you meant. Goodnight, Santana."

I reach for her shoulder and she leans away from me.

Russell is in the kitchen by the time we walk out of our room the next morning wearing my apron that exclaims in italics 'Muy Caliente!'. Quinn's mother gave it to me and I'm secretly amused that they have the same bad taste.

"Hope you don't mind, I thought I'd make you ladies breakfast for hosting me."

Eggs and bacon sizzle in the pan as toast pops up golden brown. I'm more than pleased to pour myself some hot coffee.

"Thank you, Russell. This is very sweet."

"Yes, thanks, dad."

"It's the least I could do." He turns back to the stove and I reach for Quinn's waist but she steps away from me toward the fridge.

"Did you sleep well, Mr. Fa-, Russell?" I ask while pouring Quinn a cup of coffee.

"I did. Thank you for asking. What about you ladies?"

I can't resist. "Ya know, it was a little cold."

Quinn looks at me with a glare for the hidden complaint as she pours herself some orange juice. She hands her father a cup as well. I pout at being left out.

Mr. Fabray turns off the burners and plates the food. We each take a plate and head into the dining room to sit.

Quinn reaches over to hook a finger around the apron he still wears and Russell blushes, quickly taking it off.

We eat quietly before falling into conversation about the performance art piece Rachel tricked us into seeing where a man in nothing but overalls did ballet all over an abandoned ship yard before dousing himself in black paint. She said it was a Ship Yard Tour.

"What did he say at the end? '*She is...*'" I can't remember his stupid line.

Russell is cracking up, but fake shouts between breaths, "*She is sea-worthy!*"

Quinn couldn't remember either. "Right! Right! *She is sea-worthy!*"

Our laughter settles down and crumbs are all that remains on our plates. Russell wipes at his mouth with his napkin.

"Again, I just wanted to thank you both for welcoming me into your home and giving me a chance. I know this wasn't easy and I know it will continue to be difficult, but I have some news to share that I hope will help."

I look between he and Quinn, scared of what he will say next.

"Samantha and I, we're having a baby! A boy. He's due in November." He can't contain his excitement and the moment he says it I switch my entire focus to Quinn's reaction.

She's shocked at first. That's natural. I'm waiting for it to melt into her next emotion and I'm surprised by what I see.

"That's great news, daddy! Congratulations!"

He's surprised as well. "Really? You mean that? I was so worried. I didn't want you to think this would affect how I feel about you. I know I have possibly been the worst at showing this, but you're my daughter and I love you with all my heart."

"Of course I mean it." I'm still trying to gauge her sincerity.

"He...I want you to be in his life, Quinn. I...to be honest, I've wanted to...to see you for a few years, but it seemed selfish. It is selfish, I recognize that. But I did it for him, I really want him to have you in his life. I had to try."

Mr. Fabray has teared up at this admission and Quinn is equally moved.

"You're sure I won't be a bad influence?" For all he's displayed here this weekend, she still doesn't believe he's changed. I can't say I blame her.

His face is mottled with tears and he wipes them away to beam with pride.

"You'll be the best influence! Samantha and I. We're so excited to have you in his life. His older sister is a Yale graduate! She's beautiful and smart and married to... I mean, I'm sorry, *with* someone beautiful and smart. Not to mention, who could be cooler than an older sister in New York!"

Quinn wipes at her tears and laughs, astonished. "A little brother?!"

"You don't know what it means to me to hear you say that you want him in your life, Quinn. I hope this means I can start to be in your life too."

I'm glad he recognizes the difference.

I think she appreciates it too. "We have a long road ahead of us, but this is a great place to start."

He stands to hug her and she does the same. Russell reaches out for me after a moment and I join the group hug, a little awkwardly.

"This is a new beginning!" Mr. Fabray announces and for once I think Quinn believes him.

We clean up after breakfast and Russell packs up his things for the trip home. All of our conversations have naturally shifted to Samantha and the baby – baby showers, names, prenatal care – which I had somehow forgotten Quinn knows quite a bit about.

I hug Russell and hop back into the driver's seat to keep the police from yelling at us. I can see Russell embrace Quinn tightly then lean back to say something to her. She listens and nods before he kisses her nose and squeezes her once more.

She hops back in the car after he goes through the sliding doors and I put my hand on her thigh.

"Big sister!"

She smiles at me and covers my hand. I decide it's best to leave it at that. As exciting as this is, I'm sure she is experiencing some level of mixed emotions.

We stop to go grocery shopping and to pick up Quinn's dry cleaning, before deciding we'd rather do carry-out than cook any of the food we just bought. We settle on Thai and after unloading the car, we're finally back at the dinner table.

She is a little quiet, but I decide that's normal and leave her be.

Towards the end of dinner, her bites slow and she puts her fork down to look up at me.

"You've really never thought about it?"

Mr. Fabray claimed I was smart, but a smart person would have taken all this baby-distraction as an opportunity to come up with why they told their long time girlfriend that they'd never thought of marrying her. I was not that smart person.

"I don't know. We're gay. It's not even legal." That's what I came up with...real smart.

"That's not the point and you know it."

"I love you, Quinn. I don't want anybody else."

"But you've never thought of marrying me? I've imagined marrying you."

I suppose I should have inferred that she had thought of me in that way given her offense, but I hadn't.

"You have?" I'm embarrassed that I sound so very insecure right now, but it also reveals the root of why I had never thought about it.

Her father's story about the Barbies and the popsicle shack were easy for me to imagine, but where did I fit into that fantasy? I'm no Princess Charming, never have been.

I had seen Quinn struggle with her old feelings for me this weekend - reconciling how she could have thought so terribly of the person she now loved, but I had brushed it aside as something she needed to deal with. I was sure I had dealt with already – In truth, I had just ignored that part of our relationship all these years. Pretended that if she was with me now, then it didn't matter.

It was blocking me from imagining forever though.

Tears spring to her eyes for the second time today and unfortunately, with me, they aren't happy.

"You think that's easy for me to tell you after you looked like a deer in headlights when my dad mentioned being engaged?"

I'm deep diving in long held feelings of inadequacy with her and she's swimming on the surface.

"Quinn, I just said I love you. That I don't want anybody else. It isn't that I don't want to be with you forever, I just-

"You just *can't* imagine marrying me?!"

I need her to come down here with me.

"Let me finish! You hated me! You *hated* me! And don't say I hated you too, you know it isn't true." Quinn is silenced by my sudden emotion, by the drudging up of the past. "You think I can just forget that?"

I can see that she's here with me now.

"But I love you. You don't believe me? We've been together for five years. My father comes here for a weekend and suddenly I'm Quinn Fabray, HBIC, to you again?"

"I'm just telling you why, Quinn. I haven't imagined us married because I never thought you had."

She just stares at me and I don't like it. I stand up and start to clear the table. I grab her plate and glass and she just watches me.

I rinse each item before stacking them in the dish washer and drying my hands. I feel exhausted. This weekend was already so much and now Quinn and I are in a fight I didn't see coming. A fight that could be bigger than any we've ever had.

I'm under the covers with my reading glasses on, finally getting to the good part of this book, when she comes in from watching the nightly news. I don't know why she watches it, you can find out everything they talk about and more with the click of a button and yet she sits through an hour of it every night. Maybe it's a Fabray thing. Her dad did it with her the last two nights.

She stands in front of the bed and I'm forced to put my book down after throwing in a bookmark.

I watch her as she reaches into the closet and pulls out a shoe box from the top, opens the lid and pulls out something before putting it back. I roll my eyes at her for making me put my book down for this, but when she turns back to me there's a look I've never seen on her face.

She rounds the bed and I can suddenly see that what she has is an even smaller box, the tiniest of boxes. The kind only used for one thing. She gets down on one knee beside the bed and opens it towards me.

"Santana Lopez, will you marry me?"

I never played Barbies. I always got an off color dress in that swirl game where you married Brad Pitt. My abuela told my mother in a fit of cruelty that I'd never be a bride.

But here I was, in my well-worn Cheerios National Championship t-shirt, my hair a mess and my glasses perched imperfectly on my nose having all my dreams I never knew I had fulfilled.

Quinn looks so scared, so hopeful, and I couldn't have imagined this moment because it's more than my heart could have handled.

"Yes. Yes, I'll marry you!"

I practically fall on top of her as I leap out of the covers to hug her, completely ignoring the ring – it was beautiful, but who cares.

I was marrying Quinn Fabray.

Meet the Family, by headcannonwip (headcannon)

"Breathe, Q" Santana walked up behind her girlfriend, only stopping when she gently bumped into her back, and rubbed her hands up and down the other woman's arms.

"I am breathing." Turning around and resting her head against Santana's shoulder, she let her girlfriend wrap her in a firm hug. "I'm not doing it well, but I am doing it."

Santana chuckled and kissed the side of Quinn's head. "You have nothing to worry about. She's gonna love you."

Shaking her head, Quinn pulled out of the hug and wandered to the living room window. Staring out at the street below, she asked, "How do you know?"

"Because it's very hard not to love you," the other woman answered. "I tried for a long time, if you remember, and I ended up failing miserably. I'm still pretty pissed about that, y'know? You didn't even try to make me not love you."

Finally turning her back on the window, Quinn said, "I know what you're trying to do, San."

"Blame you for the fact that I don't hate life?" the other woman asked. She frowned comically and added, "Boo. You suck." The smile she tried to hold back lit up her eyes, making her efforts fruitless.

"You're trying to distract me," Quinn noted smartly.

"I have to. Your pacing is wearing off the finish on new wood floors. We didn't spend all that time cleaning this place up to have it look like a worn-out ol' dump." Waving her girlfriend to her Santana said, "You have nothing to worry about."

Except she did.

It's not like Quinn hadn't expected the call. She considered its inevitability a fact like the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. She just thought it would come later – at least five more years later.

Fact: One day Beth would call and want to meet her.

It was with eager anticipation and a sense of dread that she took the call. The giddy thirteen-year-old on the other end of the line kept pausing to ask her mom if it was okay to say this or okay to mention that. Obviously Shelby had spoken to her daughter about Quinn and had trained her to approach with caution. Asking a girl, newly a teenager, to contain her excitement and not push too hard or go too fast was a practice in futility.

Quinn had gotten an earful about how Beth loved to read. She rattled off a dozen or so titles she'd read recently. Quinn listened patiently as the girl waxed poetic about her birthfather and how she was going to see him the next time he was in the city. The call was bordering on being an elongated version of a "What I Did This Summer" essay – except it spanned Beth's entire life.

When Quinn finally got the nerve to ask Beth if she had any questions for her, the girl surprised her by asking only one: "When can I meet you?"

Quinn didn't get into the fact that they'd met when she was a toddler. Even if Beth could remember her, Quinn wasn't then the person she'd become. That Quinn was insecure and angry. That Quinn never felt truly loved. That Quinn would have a long road of hard lessons before she became This Quinn.

"What do you think Shelby told her about me?" she asked for the thirtieth time since Beth's initial call.

"It doesn't matter what Shelby told her or what Puck told her or even what her kinda-sister told her," Santana said, also for the thirtieth time. "She wants to meet you because she needs to see you for herself."

Quinn nodded. "I know – no. I know."

She inhaled quickly and held her breath when she heard the soft, quick knock on the door. Two staccato beats just loud enough to be heard but also soft enough to allow the person on the other side to say she knocked – to rationalize that she'd done her part – if no one opened the door.

When her girlfriend didn't make a move, Santana strode confidently to the door. Just before her hand grasped the doorknob, Quinn said, "No. I should ..."

Stepping next to the other woman, she slowly let out a breath to center herself and covered Santana's hand with her own. "It should be me," she explained.

Clearing her throat, Quinn opened the door to find a girl – hardly recognizable as a 'teen' - looking up at her with wide blue eyes. The two stared at each other for a moment before Quinn was able to pull her gaze away.

"You have brown hair," she noted dumbly.

Beth dipped her head and nervously twirled her light brown locks around her finger. "I – yeah," is all she could say.

"Maybe you should come in – get comfortable," Santana suggested. She peeked into the hallway. "Where's Shelby?"

Blinking owlishly a few times, the girl bit her lip before answering. "I asked her to wait in the car. I just thought – should I go get her?"

Quinn dipped her head to make eye contact with their guest. With a gentle voice she didn't even know she had, she said, "It's not necessary. But if you'd be more comfortable with your mom here, that's okay, too."

Beth peeked up when Quinn referred to the woman in the car as her mom. She was both relieved and slightly saddened by it. She didn't want Quinn to think she had any right to claim her as her daughter – but that didn't mean she didn't want Quinn to want it.

Santana opened the door a little wider and stepped out of the way in an unspoken invitation. Beth took another quick look at Quinn before stepping past her to find herself in an immaculately clean, magazine-quality living room.

Not that her living room was a mess or anything. But this looked like the kind of place they showed in those design shows her mom watched. Everything matched and looked brand new – even the stacks of books liked more like art than stacks of books.

"You have a lovely home," she said politely.

Santana watched her girlfriend and their guest. Their discomfort – their nervousness – was palpable. She knew how Quinn had agonized over every detail of Beth's visit. The texts to Shelby asking about what snacks and drinks to have, the cleaning frenzy that turned their apartment into an antiseptic space with carefully chosen photographs displayed on the shelves – all of it to make a good impression on this kid.

"Thank you," Quinn replied just as politely.

Santana heaved a giant sigh. "Okay, how about this," she began. "You two go sit down. Talk a little." She looked meaningfully at Quinn. "And I'll grab us some drinks."

With her girlfriend out of the room, a new panic rose in Quinn's chest. "Were the directions okay?" she asked, putting her hand out in front of her to allow the younger girl to be seated first.

"I'm here," and a shrug were Quinn's answer.

Quinn sat at the opposite end of the couch and folded her hands primly in her lap. She chewed her lip nervously and, with her eyes on her hands, quietly offered, "I'm glad you are."

Beth squinted at the woman – her birthmother. It wasn't that she didn't believe her. But Quinn's obvious discomfort seemed to suggest the opposite. "Are you?"

"I am," Quinn said with a firm confidence. Meeting Beth's eyes she added, "But that doesn't mean I'm not more than a little nervous."

Peering quizzically back at Quinn, Beth blinked quickly. "Why?"

Quinn couldn't stop the chuckle that pushed past her lips. "Why wouldn't I be?"

"Couldn't help but overhear," Santana said, entering the room with three glasses pressed together in a triangle between her hands. Carefully setting them all on the coffee table, she then set them in front of their respective owners. "It kind of comes with eavesdropping," she admitted.

Beth smiled softly, her shoulders falling from their tensed position, and when Quinn rolled her eyes and blew out a quick breath from her nose, the girl couldn't help but giggle.

"What? I'm an honest snoop." Santana flashed her best smile at Quinn and winked at the younger girl. "So, here's what I'm thinking. You two can dance around each other and answer questions with questions all day, which – not the most exciting or informative way to spend an afternoon. Or ..."

At this point she looked at her girlfriend. With raised brows and a meaningful gaze, she suggested, "You answer the big questions now so we can get to the fun questions faster." Her stare moved to Beth, though she softened it quite a bit, and she said, "And you, don't pull any punches. She's a big girl – she can take it."

Beth narrowed her eyes, checking Santana's for sincerity.

"I promise," Santana said without averting her eyes.

Quinn's head swam with possible questions: Was I a mistake? (No). Didn't you want me? (Yes). Did you love me? (Yes). Do you every think about me? (Yes). Do you have other kids? (No). Are you going to have other kids? (I don't know). Were you always gay? (No – yes. Long story).

Inhaling deeply, Quinn steeled herself. "You can ask me anything. I promise I'll answer as best as I can."

"First of all," Beth began, as though beginning a monologue she'd practiced in front of the mirror. "Thank you for choosing my mom because she's really great. You did a really good job."

Quinn didn't quite feel right saying 'you're welcome' for something like that. "I'm really happy to hear that," she said, instead. That's why Quinn made the choice she made, after all – to give Beth the kind parent she knew she wasn't ready to be.

"And Puck's cool." Beth noted. "He calls a lot and sends me postcards from wherever he is and stuff." She nodded a few times, her body rocking back and forth with the momentum. "That's pretty cool."

Santana's brows lifted in surprise and her gaze skirted to her girlfriend. If Quinn had known Puck was in contact with Beth, she hadn't mentioned it to her. Not that Beth was a topic they discussed much. The most in-depth conversation on the topic came from an even more in-depth discussion about their future together and if children would be part of it.

Quinn continued to shy away from committing to an answer on that.

"Anyway, as you know, I just turned thirteen," Beth said, her wavering voice interrupting Santana's thoughts. "That means I'm allowed to have my own social media stuff – identity or whatever. And that's kinda why I wanted to meet you."

"Okay ..." Quinn drawled out, her tone even as she extended the word. "I'm not really sure I understand."

Beth chewed the edge of her lip and fidgeted with hem of her shirt. "Mom gave me all these rules," she began.

"Good mom," Santana interjected, nodding her approval. She hadn't checked in a while but there was a time when a certain video was listed in the top five hits when she Googled herself. Since then, she'd been wary of having anything – photos, videos – posted online without her review and consent.

"I guess." Beth's sullen reply was a big hint that she didn't agree.

Quinn tilted her head. "What kind of rules?" she asked yet somehow refrained from the follow up question and *how do they involve me?*

Ticking off the list on her fingers, the girl replied, "Locked-down Facebook page – only friends and family, no Snapchat, no YouTube videos, no status updates or photos I wouldn't want her to see, and I'm only allowed to add people I actually know."

Santana bit back a smile as she realized where the girl was going – why she wanted to meet Quinn. "I don't know," she said, her eyes darting over to Quinn who, judging by her wide-eyed stare and rapid blinking, was still working it out. "I think those are pretty good rules. So what - you've got your Mom, no doubt, Rachel, Puck ..."

Following her girlfriend's line of questioning, Quinn's eyes flashed with realization.

"... my best friends Tay and Dunnie, whose name is also Taylor. We use her last name because it's easier. When there was another Beth they tried to call me Corky – " Her nose wrinkled and she shook her head. "I like my name, though."

"I'm with you on that, kid," Santana said, her lips pulling back in distaste at the thought of the attempted nickname. "And it's way better than anything Puck came up with before he finally got Quinn to agree on the one you got."

Quinn breathed out a tiny chuckle. "It was all Puck," she corrected.

"It was the only one you liked," Beth said knowingly. At the other woman's inquisitive glance, she explained, "Puck told me. He likes to tell me stories about high school – and you." Leaning forward, she met Quinn's eyes and informed her, "I think he still has little crush on you."

"Next time you talk to him, let him know he doesn't stand a chance," Santana advised the girl.

Beth laughed and made a soft psh noise. "He knows. He just likes to remember, that's all. It's nice because I get his side of the story to balance out what Mom tells me about you." Her gaze flicked from Santana to Quinn and the girl quirked a half-smile.

"Shelby talks about me?"

"Well, yeah. She tells me what about me is like you and what's like Puck. As much as she knows, of course. Mom assumes you're where I got my love of reading because she doesn't read much and, as much as we love Puck, he doesn't seem the type," Beth explained.

"She's right - Quinn devours books." Santana pointed to the bookcases lining one wall of the living room. "Always has."

Turning her head and taking a moment to look at the collection of books on the wall, Beth inhaled as though she'd made up her mind about something.

"So, I guess the big question I'm supposed to be asking you - " she began as she turned to look at Quinn, again " - is if it's okay to add you to the 'my people' list. I don't know how much you want me to know about you. Or, maybe how much you want to know about me ..."

Quinn hadn't realized she'd been holding her breath and only when she allowed her lungs to expand again did the tension in her chest dissipate. Beth wanted to be connected to her – wanted Quinn to be one of her people.

"I'd love that, actually," she answered reaching out for Beth's hand. When the girl took it, she placed her other hand on top. "I want to know anything you're willing to share with me. I'm sure with how much Puck's been around and how involved he's been it might seem like I'm not interested – "

Frowning, Beth said, "Mom said you just were giving me space ... "

"Your mom is a smart lady," Quinn said. "I didn't want you to feel like you had to include me in your life. I made a choice and, as hard as it was – still is sometimes – I stand by it." She looked at the girl with wonder. "Just seeing how you are right now, Beth – who you're becoming? I know I made the right choice"

Beth's cheeks colored as she sheepishly looked away, obviously unprepared for the compliment.

Santana sighed in feigned annoyance. "Are you seriously not going to hug now? What kind of show is this? I want my money back."

"And I thought she was just here for moral support," Quinn teased.

"I'm the underwire of this family," the other woman said smartly. "Supportive, yet I have the tendency to sometimes makes things uncomfortable."

Beth giggled, her hand covering her mouth demurely. Her hair was a few shades darker and her eyes, almost the color of the banners that decorated Quinn's alma mater, were a different hue. But if Santana squinted and maybe turned to look at the girl from the periphery of her sight-line, she could swear she was looking at freshman Quinn laughing at some off-color joke at her first slumber party.

Quinn stood, Beth's hand still in hers, and pulled up the girl to stand with her. The hug wasn't the kind a girl would give her mother after not seeing her for thirteen years – and it wasn't the kind a teen would give a stranger. It was the hug that family gives each other when they've been apart and neither is sure if the other person remembers them as fondly as the other does.

"This is going to be great," Beth chirped with a wide grin. "I'm going to add you when I get home, okay?"

Even if she wanted to, Quinn couldn't say no to the girl, not when she was looking at her so hopefully. "Sounds good."

"And I can add you, too," she offered, her eyes darting to where Santana sat. "We can play Words with Friends! I'm really, really good at it."

"Yeah – no. I don't play that with Quinn and I'm not about to play it with mini-Quinn." Santana shrugged and pretended not to be touched that the girl wanted to include her. "But add me, anyway. I'll kick your butt at Candy Crush."

Parallel Love (3), by ive-gotta-gay-go-go-ive-gotta-go

(FabrayQS)

December 28th, 2018

Quinn's POV

My hand comes down on the snooze button and a quick smile forms on my lips. The image of last night is flashing continually in my mind. My sleepy state was arranging them, as if I was looking at a sappy movie trailer. Last night seems like a dream now. Those short dreams you know that makes you feel you can do whatever, those dreams that twitch a grin on your face when glimpses appear.

I sat on the bed, studying the area for a second. There were no silver circles around the sheets; however, I was smiling like a dork. I lick my lips reminiscing of her lips on mine. I will never forget her kiss and how subtle she acted kissing my cheek first.

"Good morning." I said to the empty room. "Happy birthday to me."

It feels as if I am not on my own. Obviously, I was. Nevertheless, her company feels at ease and thus typical that I feel like she is still round here. I found myself not sleeping comfortably, like most of the time.

I stuck out from the bed, walking over the bathroom. Along my path, a drawer closes forcing me to twist my torso at the sound. I saw circles of energy on the dresser. She was here. A warm feeling overcome in my stomach, making me grin unconsciously. I cross my arms and wait, intrigued of her actions. What was she doing? Gradually, a red vertical line started forming on the mirror forming a letter 'H'. It was easy to describe the red stain. Lipstick. My teeth found my bottom lip, as she finishes writing.

'Happy birthday, Q'. My stomach feels warm and I feel stupid for feeling this way.

"Thank you." Suddenly the floor was more interesting than anything was. A few seconds ago, I was wishing for her presence, now, I was a shy mess.

I raise my head, finding no circles and writing on the mirror. I was daunted, was it possible to feel this way? It is amazing how a stranger stays in your mind. Everything seems strange and still so alluring. Deep down, I knew that my actions could lead to issues. This merge could turn out complicated and I would have to deal with the consequences, however, I could not shake her face out of my mind.

The memory of last night brush me like the wind, soft, easy, pure, not coerced. I was amazed at how beautiful she is, to get lost in her eyes, to know everything about her or to wish her hands caressing my hair one time more.

She was not a stranger. Not anymore.

My heels sounded continuously on the tiled floor. The office was quiet, calm. I walked over to my office to find my sister leaning on my desk.

"Happy birthday, sis." She stands, moving to hug me. "You are so old." Her excited tone made me laugh.

"Thank you. You are older than me, so who's old?"

"Let's not address our age." I smiled at her nodding.

"Okay..." She says, folding her arms. "Why are you so happy?"

"What?" I knew that look of hers. "It's my birthday, I'm happy."

"I know you, Lucy." She says sarcastically. "I know you enough for me to know you are hiding something."

"Nothing." She knows something is up. Even so, I cannot tell her about Santana. "I'm just happy."

"Suddenly you are happy?" Frannie arches her brow. "You have this glow." She motions her hands in front of me, causing me to look away from her face. "You are blushing." She laughs.

"I am not." I turned, avoiding her gaze.

"Oh my." Frannie says excitedly. "Did you get laid last night?"

"With whom?" I replied.

"It's that or you-"

"Really, Frann?" I interrupted her before I couldn't stop her from talking.

"Everybody does it Q. *Masturbation* is-"

"I am not speaking about this with you."

"I don't want to lecture you about anything. I am barely setting out and noting your happiness. I am okay if you picked up a random girl in a bar last night and slept with her." She shrugs. "Not judging."

"You are an awesome sister." I said, rolling my eyes.

"The best."

Work passes unnoticed when my brain is focused in someone else. Altogether, I could picture the red stain on my mirror. I clutch my jacket. I'll be home in just a few minutes. Just the possibility of a merging today will make the best birthday ever.

I sneered; maybe I get to speak with Santana before dinner with my sister and her girlfriend Jennifer tonight. I grinned, expecting at the city. How charming would it be if she could join us.

"Okay. Right now you are smiling at the window!" Frannie says, snapping me out of my thinking. She smiled faintly. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah," I smile warmly at her. "It's been a good birthday already." She parks the car across the street. "It feels different," She smiles. "It's different."

"You are right." Frann says. "We are going to have a blast." She kisses my cheek. "Get ready, I'll pick you at six okay?" I nodded. "Happy birthday."

"Thanks."

I jump out of the car, shifting my gaze to left and right on the busy street. I remove my scarf once inside the warm building. I even have time to consider if the merge is open before dinner. I stretched my hand, to urge on the elevator button when I saw a hand pressing the silver button for me.

"Hey." Frannie says next to me, her hands drawn back in her jacket pockets. "I need to use the bathroom."

My heart speeds up a bit. Nevertheless, I cannot tell my sister *not use* my bathroom. There were things more important that her using my bathroom. What if she sees Santana? Alternatively, hear her voice? What if she merges? How will I explain this to her?

"Um... I," Frannie furrows her brows and I shook my head. "Sure." I shut my eyes; maybe she was not all there just yet. Perhaps the energy is not enough to form a blend. I fondle my hair and she faces towards me.

"Are you okay?"

I nodded slowly, unsurprised. Fixing my eyes in front. Frannie knows me; she can tell when I'm nervous and right away I was failing miserably at covering my beliefs.

The elevator door opens and my heart quickens its pace. *Fuck*. I open my loft door before Frannie decides to let herself in. I stopped for a second to take a breather. I glanced over the loft, seeking for circles along the base. Still, I knew it didn't matter. Frannie knows what the circles mean, and she can derive a conclusion, easily.

In the floor there was no circles on the kitchen and by today, I was hoping, she doesn't recognize the happy birthday written on the mirror. Its not my hand writing. I sat on the couch, bringing my hands to my face. This is getting to be a horrible option. The fact that she can see Santana changes everything. Today I will probably listen to her rant about how I needed to shut the portal on time.

"Holly. Shit." I heard her articulate and I quickly stood from the cold couch. "Why didn't you tell me you had a girl staying over?"

"Oh no." I whispered, looking over her way. This cannot be happening. As a substitute for finding circles on the floor, I found two pairs of circles, and Santana stands next to Frannie.

"That's why you were so nervous earlier?" My sisters' words sounded far in the loft, all my attention was on the beautiful tan girl.

Santana was wearing gray sweatpants and a tank. Her hair was delicately pulled up, impeccable make up and stunning smile. She is very beautiful.

"Nice to meet you, I'm Santana." She extends her hand and my sister shakes it.

"I'm the sister," She pointed toward me. "Nice to meet you."

"Hello, Q" Santana turns and smile at me. Now, I was blushing. "Happy birthday." My heart was speeding, her smile was beautiful and I wanted to disappear. I glanced over at Frannie and she was smiling, her arms crossed.

"How long you guys have been together?" Frannie said nonchalantly.

Santana smiles, ready to answer the question when my watch clicked twice, alerting me of a decrease in energy. Frannie fixes her gaze with mine, her hand instinctively touching her watch. She noticed the strong energy was coming from Santana. I couldn't decipher her expression clearly. She was confused, amused and worried at the same time.

"I can explain." I mouthed and Frannie nodded, clicking her watch.

"Santana right?" She said pressing her device in her belt. My sister was controlling the modifications of energy in the room. However, why? "How can you be so-"

I pressed the device on my belt, if my sister increases the energy to an abnormal level, Santana can vanish from my time. I lift my head, to an empty room in front of me.

"Frannie?" I called her, circles forming on the base. She must have been intersected her world while I was straining to contain the high energy. I heard her laughing, it was a withdrawn sound, but hard at the same time as if her voice was traveling into space.

"I know. You are beautiful." I heard my sister say and I instantly blushed. What else was I to do?

"No, nothing about me. Your sister is gorgeous." Santana said and I smiled. She just called me beautiful again.

I pushed away the butterflies in my stomach, focusing on the new problem; bring my sister back to present. It just couldn't be happening. I could watch them in front of me, wavering like an old light bulb. The vitality was not enough to support both in my time. I scratch my forehead, checking my watch again, the energy just stopped forming.

"Frann?" I shouted to the empty room. "Santana?" The alert sound of my phone made me leap. The caller ID reads, Francine and I promptly answered.

"Hey, she is beautiful." She whispers. "I approve."

"Can you shut up, please?"

"Why?" She laughs.

"This is embarrassing."

"It's not." She says to me. "Hey, Tana... can I call you Tana?"

"Sure." Santana answers.

"So, Tana. Is my sister giving you a hard time with the merging?"

I think I deserve a face palm for myself. This cannot be happening. Frannie has been just hysterical. *Please don't do anything embarrassing.*

"Not at all. She is a nice girl. I like her company."

Their conversation was fluent; I couldn't always listen to what they were talking. I was experiencing a tough time to keep up communication with my sister over the phone. She called my phone repeatedly, but every time I answered, my watch clicked and the energy decreased. After many attempts to get hold of her, she picked up the phone, laughing.

"Hello, can you hear me, Lucy."

"Yes, I can hear you over the phone not over here."

"Increase the energy on the watch, double click the timer and chart."

"I know what I need to do." I hush. "Just give up controlling the energy from there."

"Don't mind me then. I'm having fun with your girlfriend here."

The call drops once again and I lost communication. The house phone rang and I saw circles on the floor once more. They both came out and went away once again.

"Are you single?" I went over to my living room. Frannie's voice was close to me.

"Yes." Santana responded.

"Are you dating?" By now, my whole body felt hot. I don't think this can be more embarrassing.

"No."

"Do you like bacon?"

"Yes who doesn't?" Santana said chuckling.

"So you been single for a while? Why?" Frannie asks her and for a moment I thought about hide or leave the loft.

The home phone rang again and I quickly pick up.

"Stop asking Santana if she is single, I mean, what are you trying to do?" I said. "She is not my girlfriend. Stop asking stupid questions." I tried to sound as calm as possible. "Oh, and don't try to say she is not my girlfriend, *yet*."

Still, my sister wasn't the recipient of the call.

"I hope she is still single." An older woman's voice sounded from the other side of the telephone. "And I truly hope you are *not* her girlfriend, but because she hasn't informed us yet." She expressed joy. "Where are her manners? I did not raise my daughter like this."

"I- Um." *What was I supposed to say?*

"I want to know everything, dear. She is getting in trouble with me now. Hello, I'm Maribel, Santana's mother. Nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you as well." I took a deep breath. "I'm Quinn Fabray."

"Quinn? What a lovely name dear." She laughed and I smiled unconsciously. "Thank you for clearing up something for me sweetie." I furrow my brows in confusion, my mouth agape. Frannie and Santana appeared in the kitchen. "I recognize why my daughter doesn't want to spend New Year's with me. You can come over as well; my house is your house Quinn."

"Thank you so much ma'am." I covered the bottom part of the phone, mouthing to Santana it was her mother. Her eyes widened and she started out walking over me. I kept an eye on the circles on the floor and her beautiful walking. "I am certain we can set up something." I shrugged. Santana smiled warmly at me and spread her hand for me to handle the telephone. "It was nice meeting you. Santana's here."

"No problem, dear. I'm looking forward to meeting you."

"Likewise." I passed the phone to Santana. She smiles winking at me before answering the call.

"Hey, Ma." Her proximity was affecting me big time. Her peach perfume was all I could smell. Her brown eyes were lost in mine. "Yeah, first conversation with the parents is always creepy. Can't blame her." She laughs shaking her head. Again my cheeks felt warm. "Mmhum, gorgeous." She stated, lifting her hand and sliding her thumb over my flushed cheeks.

Her touch felt electrifying, and I was sure it has nothing to do with the energy floating around her. She has been just-

Frannie *coughed*, snapping me out of my thinking. She has her arms crossed and a smug grin on her face. I walked over her, giving Santana some privacy with her female parent.

"Lucy." She said, drawing the last letter. "What are you doing, Quinn?"

"Are you going to call me Fabray as well?" I turned so Santana could not pick up my facial expression. "Frankly, I don't know."

"She is beautiful."

"I know."

"This is why you are so happy." Her expression changed, I could see her eyes watering. "Shit, it's so nice to see you happy." I smiled. "I never thought I see you smiling like you smile at her."

You are glowing, *glowing*, beautiful." She cleaned a tear that escapes her eyes and she laughed gently. "Sorry, I'm over emotional here. Never seen you this happy, not since before our parents' accident."

I nodded slowly. "I haven't been happier. I reckon I like her, Frann." She jumps and opened her arms to embrace me. "No, no. No hugs. She could be watching us."

"She is." My sister replied. "What is your plan after you shut the portal?" I shrug. "Because you are, right?" She takes a deep breath. "You are closing the portal?"

"I know... I'll have to. Eventually."

"Have you met her at this time?"

"No."

"Figure it out baby sis. I don't want you to get hurt." She said.

"I know."

"Oh and if you are wondering." She smiles. "She likes you too."

"Really? Did she tell you?" She shrugs and walks out to the door.

"Hey Tana, nice meeting you. See you later."

Santana waves at her and Frannie slides the door close. I remain firm in the center of my living room. Santana holds her index finger for me to wait and I nodded.

"Okay, bye." She hangs up the telephone and took to the air toward me. My heart quickens its pace when she takes a place next to me. "Sorry about that, my mother can be very persuasive."

"No, I should be the one apologizing; my sister can be *very* overwhelming."

"Your sister is outgoing. I like her." Her smile grew and I arched my brow memorizing her face. "She must be fun drunk."

I just laughed. "That's what I used to say when I was younger. Now the fun stops once she begins crying."

"Good point." We both laughed. I find myself discovering bits and pieces of her; from how she scrunches her nose when laughing at how she bites her tongue in amusement. "So, birthday girl. Did you see the mirror?"

"Yes, thanks. It worked."

"I'm glad, because that lipstick is my favorite. Would've been such a waste if you couldn't see it."

"Do I have to get you a new lipstick?"

"Maybe." She shrugged. "We'll see." My watch clicked twice and I revised the chart on my belt. "The energy is all around the loft now?" She asks. "I mean, first it was the kitchen, then your room, now the living room."

"Yes, the energy keeps increasing because I am not displacing it." She nodded. "The merges will happen more often now. Your energy is remaining close to my energy." She nodded once more. "Unless you would wish me to close the-

"I don't mind your company. Do you?"

"Not at all."

"Can I make that a rule?" She says arching her brow.

"A what?"

"Our game." I laughed. "Rule number five, don't mind each others company."

"Deal."

—

Santana and I talked a few more minutes before she disappeared. I think at the conclusion it was a good time, or I never would've worked it to dine with my sister and her girlfriend. The dinner was decent; they sang me happy birthday and everything. It was rather embarrassing to gather all the servers, in a circle around our table when I'm not a kid anymore.

I smiled at the memory, sliding my loft door. I promptly determined the energy level in the loft; it was non-existent now. I slip off my heels and removed my scarf and jacket walking directly to the bathroom.

I started the shower, waiting for the water to warm. I slowly unzip my zipper, letting my red dress fall on the wooden floor. I get rid of my underwear, place it next to the sink, and jump in the shower. On the spur of the moment, I heard an electric buzz out the shower. I quickly skimmed over the shower curtain to see if energy was increasing in the bathroom, however, everything was normal, or so I thought.

When I turn in the shower, I found a body wash soap that sure it wasn't mine. I smiled, opening out the orange bottle and smelling the peach scent. *Santana*. I set it back where it belonged, instantly another electric sound happened and the bottle disappeared.

"Q?" I heard behind the curtain.

"Hey." I said, standing still. Was she in the bathroom with me?

"Don't worry, I can't see anything. Just the silver circles. It's just my voice." I smiled snooping out of the shower curtain to reveal the empty room. "How was dinner?"

"It was nice." I said, walking over to and under the water. "What about you? You had fun with your friends?"

"Yeah, too much drama. Feel like I'm back in high school."

"I can relate with you."

"Were you wearing this? I mean, there's a red dress pooling on my floor."

"Where are you?" I asked, gliding the shower curtain a slightly.

"Leaning on the door." I saw that there was no dress on my floor and definitely no Santana leaning on the door frame. I had to take a deep breath in relief because my underwear was static in the sink and not next to the dress. "Did you wear this without underwear? Wanky."

I laughed. "I merely had a mini heart attack because of that."

"Things are merging now." She sounded amused. "That's right," She clapped. "Because I left something on top of my dresser for you, and it went away when I heard the shower. It's not here, then it must be with you."

"Really? Something for me?"

"Yeah." I closed the tap and laughed gently. "I'm leaving now, and I will cover my eyes, scarcely for when a merge happens." She said mocking me.

"Oh, what a gentlewoman." I giggled.

"Yeah, yeah."

I walked out and dressed myself, quickly. Santana was nowhere in the loft, but her voice. I glance at the mirror, verifying I looked great, when I observed a small wine sack with a cream ribbon around it.

"Is it there?" She asked. I could hear her voice coming from the bed. I turned to find my empty mattress.

"Yes."

"What are you waiting for? Unfold the bag."

"What... what if I like it?"

"Okay." She said, stressing the word.

"Well, you will deserve a proper thank you. Not a voice coming from the future." I could feel my hands shaking. How she can manage all these feelings in me with simple gestures? How my body responds, so composed yet so nervous about her?

"You can thank me later." She merely stated, as if this didn't cause any impression on me. "Go on, open your present, Q."

I slowly untie the cream ribbon, opening my left hand and depositing the contents of the bag in the palm of my hand. "Santana," I whispered. There was no other necklace like this, not that I've ever seen, not that perfect and so meaningful. I slowly caress the gold chain, sliding my fingers along the charm. A gold sand watch was hanging from it that read, *Time is always enough*, along the right side. "This is beautiful."

"Do you like it?"

"No, I love it. It's perfect. Wish I could see you now. I would squeeze the hell out of you."

I could still hear her chuckling. "I'm glad you love it, Q. It was my grandmother's, then my moms, mine and now it's yours."

"Santana, I –I can't accept this."

"Oh please, don't start." I could imagine her rolling her eyes. "This is you, everything about that necklace, it's you, Lucy." She said casually. "You fought with time trying to prove seconds chances. You study hard to be where you are today. It's simple, you know. There's always time and I want you to have it." I checked my watch rolling my eyes. Why couldn't I see her?

"Rule number six," I said rising my head. "Don't be so sweet when I can't see you." I whispered to my empty room.

Moving Boxes, by KatieMacLove

"Mmm, Quinn, Baby. Your parents are probably looking through the blinds trying to see if we're here." I say as Quinn runs her hand dangerously close to my heat. I need to stop this before I take her right here in the car.

"Baby, my parents aren't like that." She insists as she moves up my dress and rubs my center. She nibbles my ear and bits my sweet spot. *Damn, she's going to kill me!*

"Fuck! Baby, seriously I think I just saw your curtain move." I say as I nip her collarbone and palm her breast.

"Then close your eyes." I do just that as I throw my head back while she sucks my neck, giving her more access.

"Don't leave a fucking hickey, Quinn! We're in you fucking parents' driveway!" I hiss.

"Okay, no marks. I get it, shut up and let me fuck you." She growls. I'm mad she told me to shut up but I do nothing but gasp while I grab a fistful of short strands and yank her mouth to mines. I'm so fucking close when a knock on the window scares the living fuck out of both of us. I look up to see a blonde man, early fifties and a scowl.

Wait... blonde hair... fifties... scowl... Quinn's dad! I push her off of me in a hurry and practically throw the door open and almost fall out in my haste to get off of his daughter. "Mr. Fabray! Sir! It's a pleasure to meet you. You've raised a wonderful daughter, Sir!" I straighten my dress and hair. I can't bring myself to look him in the eye so I look right above his nose while I try to rid myself of the flushed appearance.

"Daddy!" Quinn comes out the car and looks awkwardly between the three of us. "Santana was just dropping me off from our date." She says while she gives him a hug.

"Glad you're home before curfew, Quinnie." He hugs her while scowling in my direction the whole time.

You know the saying starting off on the wrong foot? Well, I started on the wrong fucking foot, knee, hipbone, and body.

"Okay. Well Tana was just about to go home." She pulls me into a quick hug and I start to get back in my car when her dad calls my name.

"Yes, Mr. Fabray?" I gulp. He gives me and Quinn a one over before squaring his shoulders.

"Why don't you come inside for a quick box of juice or something?" He says before walking in the house.

"Quinn! What the *fuck*?! What happened to 'My parents aren't like that', fucker? Huh?" I hiss why smacking her arm.

"Calm down, woman!" She laughs. "It's no biggie. He probably wants mom to meet you or something."

"Quinn! He is about to fucking *eat* me!"

"Don't be such a big baby. I thought you were from Lima Heights? Thug life, Mami." She laughs and winks before walking into the house.

"You know my dad is a goddamned doctor, *Quinnie!*" I huff and follow her laughter.

I walk into the house and am met with an older Quinn who I assume to be Judy. She rushes towards me with her apron on and give me a bone crushing hug. "Oh, sweet Lord! You must be Santana?" She smiles.

"Yes, Mrs. Fabray." I give her a small smile and an awkward pat on the back.

"None of this Mrs. Fabray stuff, dear! Call me Judy!" She says with a shit eating grin, looking between Quinn and I.

"Yes, Mrs. Judy."

She gives a hearty laugh and looks at Quinn. "I like her, *Quinnie!* She's a catch! Has a nice set of cheek bones and a firm tooshie!" She grins.

Quinn looks about as red as I feel as she rubs the back of her neck. "Mom, Dad... As you already know, this is Santana. My girlfriend..."

Judy squeals and pulls us both into a hug. "I'm so glad to hear you say that word! " She lets us go bug hold onto one on my hands and pats it. "Santana, the way she talks about you is as if Jesus came back! I swear, its Santana this and Santana that! Santana looked so hot in that new dress. Oh, here's my favorite! I wonder if I should call Santana. No I just text her. But I want to-"

"MOM!" Quinn cuts her mom, looking completely mortified while I stand there speechless and trying not to laugh for Quinn's benefit. "Can we just sit down and be normal?"

Judy chuckles and ruffles Quinn's choppy hair. "Okay, Kiddo, let's go see what your daddy has to ask." She sits us down on the couch opposite of Mr. Fabray. He takes a sip of his beer and presses mute on the football game playing on the TV.

I open my mouth to speak but he beats me to it. "Judy, you want to know what I saw these two girls doing." He asks his wife. "I saw Santana defiling my daughter. My *Quinnie!* My little Lucy Quinn who just learned how to ride a bike." He stand up and begins to pace.

"Russell, cool off and sit down." Judy says calmly, arching her eyebrow the same way Quinn does.

"Do you know how I feel to see my little girl being felt up on by a girl I've never met? Judy, how do you feel?"

Judy looks contemplative for a second then shrugs with a small smile. "It's nothing to be surprised about, honey. I mean I've heard something coming out of Quinn's room a few times. She's growing up , Russell."

Mr. Fabray turns around and glares at the both of us. "Are you going to tell me the reason behind these noises, girls?"

My mouth flaps open but no sound comes out so I'm stuck looking like a fish. Luckily, Quinn steps in.

"I, uh, was rearranging my room a few times and I needed Tana's help... to move-um-stuff..." She ends with wide eyes looking between her mom and Dad.

"So that explains the screams?" Her mom smirks. She fucking smirks at me!

"WHAT?!" "MOM?!" The other Fabrays shout. Judy just chuckles as Russell turns to me.

"... I was moving boxes and I pulled a back muscle... so I yelled..." Judy raises another goddamned eyebrow. "So then I got up and stubbed my toe... so I yelled. Ahhhhh!" I end with an over dramatic scream and fall with the Fabrays looking at me like I was crazy as I did a horrible reenactment or what never happened.

Russell rubs his temples and sighs he leans into Judy for support. "Well, I know you're sexually active, I just didn't want to believe it. Just don't move anymore boxes when we're home." He stands and motions for us to do the same. He looks me square in the eye and says, "If you fuck with my daughter in a way she doesn't want, I will kill you and your ghosts."

I almost shit myself.

He then pats me on the shoulder. "Welcome to the family, Santana."

Judy slaps him on the arm and tells him to stop as she comes up to me and gives me another hug. "I'm glad Quinn has you, Santana. Don't hurt her and don't let her hurt you. Oh and Santana, don't move too many boxes yet; I'm not ready for grandchildren." She swats my butt, winks and walks away with her husband.

Quinn walks to my petrified form and pulls me into her embrace. It's when she gently kisses me and tells me she loves me that I am able to half form words.

"But... bu-bu-but, I'm... I have a..."

"I know, baby... I know..."

Slave to the Games (3), by lacksubstance

In seven days hence I am to stand in the Coliseum of Rome for the citizens to bear witness the Champion of Naples in the arena with some of the most skilled Gladiators the Roman Empire has to offer. I feel I am at a disadvantage with the lack of training I have been subjected to based on orders that I must rest and heal before the games. Upon doing so, I cannot help but grow impatient with the lack of movement not recalling the last time I haven't gone this long without a sword in hand.

According to the medic, I can return to my training; however I must take it light. My Dominus was happy when word of my return took to his ear, especially with the viewing being tonight. He was rather close to the medic when quietly addressing my condition as so I cannot hear of what he speaks of. I should be concerned, but I just want to get back out with my brothers on the sand.

I stand with a dressing on my abdomen as I step up to the wooden pole with my sword, throwing a few blows at it. I wish for a true sparring partner, but I cannot till I am no longer sore. I spin around it as I throw my sword at it—wood colliding with more wood.

I stand facing the balcony as my Domina and Dominus look upon us—more specifically me and next to my Domina is the woman who invades my dreams. She stares down at me with a glint of hope in her eyes—almost lovingly and I want nothing more than to have her in my arms; by my side once more.

When she stepped into my cell, I thought I was dreaming as she cared for me, but I knew my eyes didn't deceive me and when she pleased me in a way I've never experienced before, I knew she had me at her will for an eternity.

I turn back to the wood and begin hitting it again with more force and speed, feeling a slight dullness in my abdomen, but it's already forgotten about as I focus on my false opponent before me.

I continue this till the morning sun moves into the late afternoon, that we're told to stop and prepare for the guests to arrive. I sigh and take deep breaths to calm my body. I chance a look up to the balcony once more before I retreat to the bath, but she is no longer there; however, I do not let my thoughts stray to negatives—I know I will see her tonight among the crowd. I will always search for her among thousands even if it means I can only stare longingly in her eyes.

—

I stand upon the pedestal in a line among my brothers as we're looked upon the guests. Most of them stray towards me and place their hands upon my bare chest. I am not the least bit ashamed of my body; therefore I am not bothered by their eyes lingering upon my breasts, before they follow down to the cloth around my waist. I am dressed like my brothers tonight and am at the disposal of the many Romans that walk amongst the house, but my eyes continue to search for all but one Roman and she finally makes her presences known with two others by her side.

From what I can see from where I stand, by the gestures they make towards her they must be her mother and father. I feel my heart quicken at the sight of the two nobles with their daughter, who I had my cock inside her mouth seven days pass.

They stand amongst the crowd till I see Quinn break away from them to approach the line of Gladiators. She walks down the line, pretending to admire the strong statures of my fellow brothers, but I know they do not spark her interests much like I do. As she slowly continues, smiling politely at the other men and women who look upon us, she finally stands before me, granting me the sight of her beauty.

"I am looking down upon a goddess at this very moment," I compliment her as she smiles up at me, running her hands down my washed skin towards to my scar which has healed a great deal since she last witnessed it.

"You seem to manage to use words to make me desire you more," she says in a whisper that is only loud enough for I to hear. She continues to stroke every part of my body, but I fear that her touch is different. It isn't certain and it's striking a worry thought in my mind.

"Something is troubling you I sense," I make my thoughts known to her as my eyes remain forward, staring amongst the crowd. I see her mother and father are starting to break away from their conversation to make their presences known to Quinn, but I must know what is hiding within her thoughts.

I meet her eyes and I see nothing but sadness within them as she continues her ministrations towards me. I feel she still desires me as I do her, but I know she has secrets she needs to place in the light. "Alba and Antonius plan to preserve your innocence no longer in front of their guests—in front of me and the thought—I cannot bear it," she says in utter pain. My posture falters at the news of having to be inside of a woman with an audience—a woman that is not the woman I solely desire.

"Well Quintina had I known you had love for the games so much, I would have taken you to them sooner," her father greets her with a loving grin, placing a kiss upon her head as he wraps a free arm around her shoulder.

"Seems she is far more intrigued with the champion of Naples; as am I," her mother speaks as she begins to run her hands down my chest. I look upon the woman I crave as her mother touches me the way I only desire her to and she too cannot stomach to keep her eyes upon her hand. "Well she certainly is magnificent. I truly do wonder if the whispers are true," her mother adds as she gets ready to lower her hand on my covered appendage, when Quinn clears her throat.

"Alba allowed me to feast eyes upon her glory and I assure you it is true," she places her hand upon her mother's shoulder and I silently thank the Gods that she turns her away from me. "I am famished, why don't you and father talk to our hosts about their plans for the games that will take place in six days hence while I go and eat," she sends them on their way then turns her attention back to me, before leaning closer to me and whispers into my ear.

"No one will touch your cock tonight except for me," I gasp as her hand cups me in my cloth along with the presences of her teeth biting my ear, sending a deep pleasure I cannot express.

"What about the woman I am to fuck in audience?" I ask quietly to only her and she sighs sadly, running her other hand up my back, gently coaxing her nails along the muscles.

"I will make certain you will forget it," she states before pulling away from me, giving my cock one last squeeze, leaving me to return to her parents side when Dominus begins his speech upon his guests and I know for certain the time has come for me to no longer hold my gift.

"My fellow nobles I welcome you to the Ludus Maxius. Here we breed the strongest and most skilled Gladiators that Naples has ever witnessed and in six days hence in Rome!" his guests begin to clap at his words as he smiles down upon them. "The Ludus Maxius holds all true and skilled; however one stands out from the rest—Santana; Champion of Naples!" He holds his arm out to me as I step from my pedestal to his side as his guests admire me with their eyes, but I find nothing more gratifying than those of green and brown staring at me as she claps at her mother and father's side.

"Alba and I are well aware of your questions and desires of Santana, so tonight we have a special treat in store for you all. Santana came to our ludus as nothing but a house slave at ten years of age. We were cautioned that she was nothing like anyone has ever seen, so we preserved her innocence till tonight! She will answer all your burning desires by deflowering another," I look when I see Dani walk up next to Domina completely disrobed and I'm left with a heavy chest. I cannot let them see me falter though as my eyes continue to feast upon Quinn—she is the only one that is going to get me through these passing moments.

"Santana," I hear the voice of my Dominus as he holds his arm out with a large false grin to a pedestal with cushions upon it wide enough for two bodies. Dani walks over to it and gets upon it to lay on her back. I cannot begin to think what is plaguing her thoughts at this moment as I get on it. I look down at her as she blinks frantically.

I can see it in her eyes that she is utterly terrified as am I for her. I know not that it won't be painful for me, but for her I cannot bear to be the reason for the cause. I know I am not allowed to stop to let her get through such ordeal and that I am supposed to show just how much of an animal I truly am. My body is filled with complete misery and as I expose myself to the guests, several gasp at what they see and when I turn back to her; I lay upon her and whisper soothing words to her.

"I am so sorry sister. This should not be your place," I say with utter sadness as I stroke myself in my hand, knowing I will get nowhere if I'm not at the fullest of my capability. I cannot even think to meet the eyes of Quinn because I know this isn't what she desires of me.

"Do what you must Santana. I chose to be yours for tonight because I heard the exchange between our Dominus. I knew they would give me away and I rather I be given to you than a Roman," she speaks as she removes my hands from my cock and replaces her own, stroking my shaft. My body deceives me as I suddenly feel the pleasure coursing through me solely as my cock searches for release.

I feel her slide me inside her—she is so incredibly tight that she suffocates me. I look over at the crowd as they look on with their wine in hand and then my eyes land on Quinn, whose face is not hiding the obvious hurt of watching me with another, but she nods furiously for me to move and I turn back to Dani and start thrusting into her, pushing deep then sliding back out till I bury myself faster and harder.

Tears leak from the corners of her eyes and I feel ill that I'm the one causing her such discomfort. It isn't till I remind myself of the night I shared with Quinn that I remember the pleasure I gave her, that I lift Dani up still impaled on me and sit her down on my lap.

I thrust up into her firmly, wrapping her arms around my neck then slipping my hand between us to rub her between her folds. She moans softly into my ear as I continue to bring attention to the bud as I continue thrusting my cock in and out of her with such force.

"How do you fair?" I ask her breathlessly and she meets my eyes, nodding instantly which I take as her pain subsided and I no longer feel my cock having difficulty sliding in and out of her till I feel her close tightly around me as her release approaches, her nails dig firmly into my back.

I continue to bury my cock inside her a few times more till I feel my seed emptying into her. My stomach clenches as I slow my thrusts down till they cease all together and I chance a look over at the guests—they stare at me with approval that I was true to the rumors. I search for Quinn by her mother and father, who watch among the rest at my endeavor, but she is nowhere to be seen and I feel my heart tense at her absence.

I pull away from Dani and cover myself back up again then remove myself from the house back to my cell.

I am escorted by a guard through the darkness and all my thoughts wander towards is that I betrayed Quinn so much so that she has left and I am certain I will never see her again. I did not want to lay with Dani in such a way. I knew if the time came, that I would have to, but to see that I caused her so much agony originally brought great sorrow to me. I did not want this! I desire to lay with the woman I'm slowly falling in love with who I cannot ever be allowed to love, even if I do gain my freedom.

I finally reach my cell, ready to sleep till I open my door and see Quinn laying on my bed, with her dress discarded on the floor.

"I feared you had taken your leave," I say as my eyes look upon her beautiful smooth skin to the curves of her breasts. She takes her bottom lip between her teeth and the simple action makes my heart race.

"I did as such; however, I only took my leave from the party. I did tell the hosts that I would be returning to my father's villa for the night; however, I intend to lay here as the night turns to day with you," she turns on the bed and stands up to be at my level, slowly removing the cloth dress, freeing me again from my confides.

She steps over to the pot that holds water within it and the cloth she once used to cool my skin. She takes it out and returns in front of me to place my cock in her hand, washing it clean of

any remnants of Dani. "I know you did not choose to lay with her and from the look in your eyes she is of great importance to you," she says as she slowly continues to work the rag up my shaft. I sigh contently at her precision as I look upon her, memorizing her every move.

"She is like a sister to me. She and I were brought to the ludus together and served alongside Domina for eight years time as I trained in the night. She is one of the only people I have closest to me in these walls," I express as she slows her hand removing it entirely from my skin and I know if she continued I'd be bare. She throws it back into the pot and stands before me, placing her hands on my shoulders, making a trail with her fingertips along my breasts with every intention to graze my nipples in her wake.

"She chose to be yours for that moment with the intention of knowing as such," she whispers, placing her lips upon my collarbone, allowing them to travel across to my neck. Her hands still dance among my body, now on my back as she embraces me to her.

"I did not want to be the reason for causing her such pain," I hush my tone for only her ears, even if we are the only two inside. She places her head upon my chest and in that moment I finally place my hands upon her skin—needing her closer.

"You only did what was commanded of you. Had you not there would be heavy consequences. You and I would not be with each other now if you hadn't," she expresses and she is true to her words. I don't believe I have ever questioned my Dominus' requests nor would I ever. I just know that with each passing moment, with Quinn in my arms I dream of a better life than this. I know her mother and father would disapprove of us together in such a way and if she bared my children, she'd be casted away from her home.

I hold her tighter to me, bonding us closer to the touch as I walk us to my bed. I lay her down on my bolster and lay above her. She is even more beautiful under the candlelight as I brush a strand of hair behind her ear, cupping her cheek in my hand before leaning down to take her lips into my own. She welcomes me with vigor, kissing me back like it's the last time we ever do.

My lips descend down her neck, sucking at where her pulse lies as I cup her breasts beneath mine. She moans into my ear softly and it sends a sudden shock into my cock. I roll my hips into her ever so gently and I know she's awakening every sense inside me.

I feel her hands rubbing down my sides till they reach between us, grabbing on to me. I groan at her stroking her hand up and down my shaft—then I hear the whisper.

Make love to me Santana.

I meet her eyes and search them as if I imagine the words being said, but I saw nothing of being uncertain, then she confirms the truth. "Please," she whispers as she continues using her hand on my cock.

I pull them away from me, then slide my fingers inside her. She gasps loudly and when I feel how tight she is just around my fingers, I know I do not want to be the reason for another's discomfort tonight. I pull them out and kiss along her stomach, leaving her skin glistening in its wake as I reach her womanhood. It too glistens of her want for me, but I need more. I let my

tongue glide up her folds, making contact with her clit and I earn another gasp from her beautiful lips. I look up at her as I let my tongue dance across her and from her chest heaving encompassed with the sounds escaping her; I know she is begging for release.

I stop, kissing up her body again connecting my lips to hers and they are welcomed as such. It's only then that as our lips remain connected, that I slip myself inside her. She moans loudly into my lips as I bury myself deep into her. She sighs shakily, digging her nails into my back as I lay there connected with her. I would be content to stay like this for the rest of my life if I could, but then she begins to move her hips and I know now I must do the same.

I start to slowly plunge deep in and out of her, meeting her eyes. She watches me as her breathing turns to be difficult for her. I place my hand between us and rub on her clit as my thrusts continue and it is only then that I see her discomfort replace with pleasure. She begs me to go faster and I do as commanded, burying my cock deeper and faster into her. She moans loudly as I lower my body back to hers again, continuing my ministrations.

She places her hands upon my backside to push me even deeper, digging her nails into it. I groan into her neck as I feel her closing on me. I moan into her and with a few more pushes of my own, she moans my name with a bite upon my shoulder as I soon suffer the same fate.

I am burning and sticking to her body as our breathing becomes uncontrollable. I slide out of her which isn't welcomed from either of us, but I lay on my bed, pulling her on top of me to lay as close to me as possible. Having her look down upon me with spent eyes, I feel myself growing unable to hold it in, but I know I cannot tell her of the words I so desperately want to say—not yet.

"How do you fair?" She whispers, running her hand through my damp hair. Her nails meet my scalp and I feel myself growing tired of the content strokes.

"The question should be mine to ask," My voice has escaped me, but she can still hear my words. She smiles softly placing a kiss upon my breast then meets my eyes again.

"I am more than well; however, I wished to be the first to bear witness to such an act," she says, rubbing my chest gently with her fingertips.

I place her hair behind her ear, so I can stare at nothing but her beautiful eyes. "As do I—I wish for nothing more than to have had it been you," I slide out from her and allow her to lay on her stomach, she turns her head as she watches me search for something to drink. I sip it eagerly, welcoming it as such, before advancing towards her again, laying on top of her, sucking on her neck.

I hold the cup out in front of her as she too drinks it like she hasn't sipped on anything in ages. I place it upon the floor as I bury my cock inside her from behind. She groans at the sudden invasion, but it's welcomed as she slowly rolls into it as I do the same to her. "We know not that you were the first; however, with every ounce of my being you will be my last," I murmur into her ear as I continue thrusting deeper into her as she moans loudly into the cell and watching her coming undone from pleasure—ecstasy; it's enough for it to keep me motivated for my freedom. I

will shed as much blood in that Coliseum in Rome if it means that I can be by her side till the day we breathe our last breaths.

Days Before a Wedding, by LazyWriterGirl

"Come on Santana, it will only be a few days, and at most only a couple hours each day we're there. My family isn't that bad!" Quinn pinches the bridge of her nose gently; she can feel the onset of a slight migraine coming on. They've been out of high school and living together for two years and have been dating for five, but she and Santana can still get into ever-escalating arguments about stupid things that they shouldn't be arguing about; today's topic, Frannie's wedding.

"No way, babe, I'm not going. Send Judy and Frannie my love though," Santana says. Quinn sighs.

"Since when do you like Frannie?" Quinn watches her girlfriend shrug her shoulders in a continuous movement as she sets down two cans of Coke. It almost looks like she's imitating a rollercoaster, not that Quinn mentions it; the last thing she wants right now is to irritate Santana.

"Since she defended me against Russell, that time at the stupid country club. The fucker called me a bad influence on you, and I mean come on! We've been together since you had Beth, not to mention the fact that we've been friends since before we could walk, and Russell has never said anything against me before. Not until he found out that you were getting yourself all lezzied up with me. Fuck him, Q, I'm not going to that wedding. Just tell Frannie and Judy that I'm really sorry, okay, please?" Santana drops to the couch, further than she would normally be. Quinn can see that there's something else bothering the Latina; it's rare that Santana mentions Russell by name.

"Hey," Quinn reaches for her girlfriend, not surprised when the other turns away from her hand. "Hey, come on, look at me," she says, slightly more forcefully than before. She ends up half-crawling over to where Santana is, effectively trapping the other girl between her and the armrest.

"What do you want, Q? I thought we were gonna watch I Am Number Four?" Santana seems distracted and now Quinn knows for sure that she's bothered.

"Fuck I Am Number Four," she says, startling the Latina beneath her; it's rare for her to swear. After all, Fabrays are raised to be proper young women and language like that belongs, to quote Russell, 'On a farm, or in pornography'. "Alex Pettyfer gives me a headache. I don't want to watch I Am Number Four, I want to talk." Santana folds her arms and looks up at Quinn, and the blonde would be awestruck by her own good luck – that face, she thinks, could start a thousand wars – if she wasn't so determined to get to the bottom of all of this. 'So talk' Santana's eyes practically demand, and so she does. "Why do you really not want to go to Frannie's wedding, huh? Are you afraid Russell is going to try something? To take me away from you? Is that it?"

"No," Santana says, "I used to be afraid of that...but I'm not anymore." Quinn feels the Latina's arms coming up and wrapping around her shoulders and waist. "But...you're right,

something is bothering me." Quinn waits for a while; she knows that eventually Santana will drop the dramatics and just tell her what it is that's bothering her. "I want the rest of your family to like me." The self-consciousness in the tanned girl's eyes as she says it is just so endearing that Quinn can't help but laugh. It starts out small, but soon it builds, until Quinn is outright rolling with laughter. Santana's expression mingles between hurt and angry for a minute and Quinn is about to apologize for her laughter before Santana unceremoniously tosses her to the abandoned side of the couch.

"Hey!"

"Well you shouldn't have laughed! God, Q, you know I hate being insecure and all that shit, and then you laugh? Don't be a fucking bitch," Santana says.

"I'm not trying to be," Quinn says, barely even angry about how she's just been handled. She knows that it's difficult for Santana to tell people things like this, and she really shouldn't have laughed, even though it was the most damned precious thing she's ever seen. "Look," she climbs into Santana's laugh, prepared in case the other girl decides to throw her off again. She doesn't, which Quinn takes as a good sign. "I know that my family will love you...not as much as I do, obviously, but they will absolutely adore you. At least, the family members who matter will. So come on, say you'll come with me?" She kisses Santana once, careful not to put too much pressure behind her lips. Just as the other girl begins to respond Quinn switches tack, moving her lips to her girlfriend's neck, to a secret little sweet spot underneath the Latina's jaw.

"Mmhm...okay, okay, yeah, I'll go," Santana says. "Quinn, Quinn, I'll go!" Quinn stops and smiles, eyes shining towards Santana; she knew she would get her to say she'd go.

"Great! Now let's watch something...Oh, I know! How about Moulin Rouge?!"

Santana scoffs, "Am I dating Quinn Fabray, or has Lady Hummel possessed you? No."

A few days later finds Quinn and her girl getting ready in their hotel room. It's so nice of Frannie, renting rooms for everybody, she thinks as she pats down her hair with a shaky hand. Of course considering the fact that Frannie's marrying a doctor from a wealthy family, it could just be her sister's way of subtly gloating. She basically bought out four or five floors of the local Hilton. Whichever is true, she's grateful that Frannie has opted to provide Santana and Quinn with some privacy. They're the only family members on the floor; everybody else is a friend from work or college.

"Hey Q, baby, are you ready yet?" Santana sounds huffy, she thinks as she applies a tad more lipstick to her bottom lip. There, perfect.

"Yeah, are you?" She knows that Santana's been ready for ages, and maybe taking her own sweet time wasn't a good idea but Quinn wants to look good. Frannie would never forgive her if she didn't; she is the maid of honour after all, second only to the bride.

"Can we just skip it? Isn't the official rehearsal dinner not for like, four days?" Santana looks truly anxious, and it's so *frickin'* adorable that Quinn knows she'll have to fight to keep a neutral expression. Instead she just swoops in all suave-like and plants a gentle kiss to Santana's lips. She then promptly chastises herself for thinking that she would 'swoop in all suave-like'; she really has been spending too much time with Santana, she thinks fondly.

"Can't do that baby! Because both Frannie and Norman come from such large families, we're splitting up the reception of all of these people. It's our family tonight; nobody from Norman's family except for his parents will be there, and you've already met them. And besides, I was just talking to my cousin earlier when you went out for a jog, and she's excited to meet you. You're really going to like her."

"Are you sure? You said I was 'really going to like' that vegan noodle casserole thing that Rachel brought to the apartment as thanks for talking her out of that shady student film. Hated it. You said I was 'really going to like' that all-male performance of Hairspray that the pretty ponies, Plastic Face, and Adam's Apple put on at the NYADA theatre. Hated it. You said I—

"Okay, okay, I get it. But I promise... you'll love Belle. She's exactly like you, but looks like me."

"Ooh, my two favourite people. You better not be lying to me, babe." Santana begins to walk to the door, stopping only to take Quinn's hand as they leave the room. On the way down to the hotel's restaurant they run into several of Frannie's friends, Quinn proudly introducing 'the world's most amazing girlfriend, Santana' to everybody who cares. She watches the Latina's face as they draw nearer and nearer to the restaurant. Nearer means family, and family means Santana is going to actually meet Quinn's family, and not just her asshole father, reformed-alcoholic-now-totally-badass-mother, and subtly-elitist-but-also-badass-big-sister. The blonde would be lying if she said she was entirely calm about this whole thing. Quinn offers up a silent prayer to Jesus; her cousin Belle and Belle's parents and brother are amongst her most favourite family members, but they're just a bit...eccentric. As soon as they set foot in the restaurant they can practically feel the interested gazes.

With an almost defiant air about her, Quinn begins to guide Santana towards one of the smaller clusters of blonde women, one hand caressing a tanned bicep as the other hand clasps with Santana's over their linked arms.

"First, I absolutely must introduce you to Auntie Rose and her daughter Debbie. Watch out for Debbie; much as I love her mother that girl is a bitch. Totally stereotypical cheerleader." At this Quinn hears the lightest of chuckles.

"Oh baby, weren't we the same?"

"No," She takes her hand off of Santana's for a second to issue a charming little finger wag at her girlfriend; may as well flirt in style, she thinks. "We were different because, even as bitchy cheerleaders we were flawless. Debbie lacks that ever-important quality."

"You're still flawless," Santana whispers, a few feet away from Auntie Rose and her bitchy daughter. Quinn's blush is a pretty pink as she introduces her girlfriend to her aunt and cousin, her sharp eyes obviously keeping the younger girl from saying anything out of line.

"I didn't know they let lesbians be cheerleaders," Debbie says snidely, and Quinn can feel Santana's grip on her hand tighten.

"Well they do, grades permitting. How have you been doing in school lately, Deb?" Quinn knows that the younger girl has had to see tutors to stay at a C+ average. For her part, Debbie looks appropriately embarrassed, and Auntie Rose is quick to apologize. Santana is gracious, even offering a few words of support to the youngest blonde before Quinn hauls her away quickly. They go through the rest of the family, with Quinn constantly promising that if Santana can get through the boring people, Belle's family will be a real treat. She sees Belle and her brother Warren watching as she circulates around the room; they smirk and wave at her, unoffended because they know that she's only taking this long to get to them so that she can spend the rest of the night talking with them, to the exclusion of everybody except for her mother and Frannie.

Finally, *finally* they run out of cousins, aunts and uncles to speak to, and then Quinn unceremoniously drags her girlfriend towards her cousin's family. "Uncle Gio!" Quinn hurriedly runs to a man with a grizzly looking beard, pulling him in for a tight hug and a kiss on his hairy cheeks. "You look so handsome," she says.

"And you're just getting more and more beautiful every time I see you, Quinnie! Mag, don't you think Quinnie is stunning? Quinn, say hello to your aunt." The blonde woman beside Uncle Gio smiles as she turns and sees Quinn. The pair hug and exchange cheek-kisses, much to Santana's obvious confusion; Quinn has forgotten to mention that her cousin's family is very European sometimes, despite all of them having been born in the United States. Oh well, she thinks, it will come up eventually.

"Oh Quinn, darling, you look absolutely gorgeous!" Quinn smiles at the praise.

"Thank you aunt Maggie; you look stunning. I love what you did with your hair!" Quinn spends a few minutes speaking with her aunt and uncle before she turns to Santana. "Uncle Gio, Aunt Maggie, this is my girlfriend, Santana Lopez. Santana, this is my Uncle Gio and his wife, my Aunt Maggie."

"Hello sir, ma'am," Santana says shyly as she shakes hands with Uncle Gio and proceeds to accept Maggie's cheek-kisses; as a Latina, she's highly accustomed to this greeting.

"Oh dear, there's no need for such formality!" Quinn can see that Santana likes Maggie's openness and friendly nature. "Please, call me Aunt Maggie! So, you're the lucky lady who's set our Quinnie's heart in motion, are you?"

"Aunt Maggie!" Quinn is so embarrassed, but she isn't all that upset; these aren't her favourite family members for nothing, after all.

"Ah, now don't be embarrassed, Quinnie. This girl is absolutely beautiful, you're beautiful, the two of you are a very attractive couple," Uncle Gio says, and he's all smiles. "Did ol' Russ take it well?" The look on Quinn's face is a cross between are-you-kidding and hell-fucking-no and Santana just looks at Uncle Gio blankly. "I'll take that as a no. Hm...well there's the old bastard now; Maggie, I think you and I should go speak with ol' Russ. You should say hello to your cousins, Quinnie, they've been so bored without you." The older man offers the couple in front of him a wink. It's obvious that he dislikes Russell almost as much as they do.

"Of course Uncle Gio, and thank you. I just don't want to have to deal with Daddy right now." Quinn waves her relatives off with a grateful smile, pleased to find her gratitude echoed in Santana's own expression. "You like them!" Santana nods.

"They're definitely a lot nicer than some of your relatives have been. Now, where are those cousins of yours?"

"Quinn!" A dark-haired boy of about fourteen or so, perhaps a little younger, rushes up to greet them. His suit is a little rumpled, but clearly expensive, and Quinn can barely recognize her little cousin Warren. It feels like it's been so long since she last saw him. She wonders if he's still the same.

"Warren!" She wraps the boy up in a hug, mussing his hair a little. It's out of character for him to be so affectionate, but she supposes he must have just missed her. Then she feels the ice shooting down her back and she can't help but laugh; ever the prankster. "Awh, that's freezing! You got me there though, good job bud." He laughs and grins.

"That's why you're my favourite, Quinn, you never get angry with me for my pranks."

"Aw, well aren't you sweet. Warren, this is my girlfriend, Santana," she says, patting Santana's hand. Warren takes a moment to just stare at Santana, and Quinn would laugh if he didn't look so serious about it.

"Are you good to my cousin, Santana?" Quinn searches her girlfriend's face for a hint as to where she is with her mood; if she reacts badly, Quinn figures it's time to excuse them; she can always introduce Belle at some other time. Luckily, Santana takes the question in good-natured stride.

"I try to be, Warren, but sometimes I do lose my patience," she admits, winking at Quinn when her mouth falls open in feigned shock. The dark-haired boy in front of them laughs.

"That's why I prank her sometimes," he says, shooting Quinn his best smile so that she knows he's only playing around.

"I thought I told you not to prank Quinn! Warren I swear I'm going to—"

"Is that you, Belle? My god, you are absolutely dazzling," Quinn says, cutting off the younger girl's anger before it has a chance to really manifest itself into a threat. Santana watches as the two blondes hug, unsure of if she should cut in and introduce herself, or wait for Quinn. She

decides to wait, and when the two pull apart the Latina is obviously confused for a moment at how similar they look. "This is my girlfriend, Santana."

"Hello," she offers weakly. Quinn stands beside her in a firm show of support, "It's nice to meet you." Warren smiles and gives his approval once more before dashing off. Quinn suspects she'll need to talk to Uncle Gio about checking Warren's pockets after the dinner; she's sure he'll come up with quite a bit of money, and only God knows how he'll get it. She shakes her head and is surprised when, upon turning around, Belle and Santana are already deep in discussion about something or other.

"Oh my God, babe, you have to hear this!"

"Sure, sure. What's up, B?" Belle shifts so that she can look equally between Quinn and Santana, though she seems more interested in the behaviour of the latter; Quinn knows that right now, every single thing about her girlfriend is being tested and measured up to some standard of which only Belle is completely aware.

"So you know, Q, how we were uh...sent to live in France for a bit, because of Dad's... work? Well while there I met the sleaziest guy; red-haired—

"Ginger have no souls," Santana chimes in, earning a laugh from Quinn's cousin. "Except for Miss Pilsbury," she corrects herself, to which Quinn nods. They liked Miss Pilsbury while they were at school, and still speak to her when they can.

"Right...Oh, Miss Pilsbury is that awesome guidance counselor you talked about all the time right Quinn? Anyway, so this fucking moron, he tried to convince me to 'get to know' him and a group of his friends at this little river-side park...and of course I was not having it."

"So what did you do?" Santana asks as Quinn internally winces. She knows where this is going already, and that Santana will, undoubtedly, love it.

"I went back to his friend's car, opened the trunk, grabbed a tennis racket, and beat the shit out of him with it!" The way that Belle's eyes light up as she talks, in great detail, about how she laid a smackdown on some poor, stupid French boy is terrifying, but Quinn can tell that Santana appreciates her cousin's untamed (and unsuspected) brutality. Oh well, she thinks. At least they're bonding! Belle is obviously being careful not to mention everything that happened in France; Quinn had heard the story from Uncle Gio and Aunt Maggie a while back, and she isn't too sure that Santana could cope with it all. As it is, Belle and Warren kind of just sound like sociopaths in the making, but looking at Santana's face Quinn can tell that she isn't bothered by that in the least.

"Your family's been pretty cool, Q. Aside from Debbie and a few of your old-guy uncles, I actually like them."

"And Belle's family?" Quinn asks as they dash into a nearly-full elevator.

"My favourites. I understand why you like them so much," Santana says, a little quietly so as not to disrupt their fellow passengers. Quinn breathes a sigh of relief; Belle and her family clearly enjoyed Santana as much as she did them. "You know, I'm surprised though..."

"Why?"

"Because like, not once did anybody mention how much I should be grateful and proud that I'm dating a Fabray." Oh...right. Quinn forgot to mention...

"Uh... about that. All those people that you just met, those weren't the Fabrays..." Quinn could swear that Santana's eye actually twitches.

"WHAT? Why would we spend a whole night mingling with people who aren't your family!"

"They are my family! My mother's side... The Fabrays are coming in tomorrow." They don't talk again until they're in the room and the door is locked.

"So that's why there are so many days before the wedding?"

"Yep." Quinn is treading lightly; Santana doesn't seem angry, but you never know.

"So if I didn't meet the Fabrays, then who did I meet?"

"Well... for various uh...reasons, most of my mum's family have changed their names, even if they were men." Santana waits, and finally Quinn realizes that there's no getting out of this. "You know the Manzoni crime family, in the mafia?" Santana nods, but her eyes are already starting to pop open, wider and wider the longer Quinn waits. "Uh... yeah, my mum's name was originally Judy Manzoni before she married Russell." Quinn waits, half expecting Santana to freak and run like a bat out of hell from the room. She doesn't.

"So...Judy's Italian? Wow, who would've guessed?"

For Real and Forever, by lightblue-Nymphadora

The honeymoon period, as their caseworker and support group had called it, had ended about a month after the twins had been living there. The second and third months had been rough, but now, moving into the summer, a routine had been established and the family was doing okay. Interestingly enough, Nana Judy's bestowing nicknames on the twins (Pudge - Kai and Fudge - Kona) had seemed to be the turning point where the twins realized they were here for good.

"It's like in that book, *Holes*," Santana had said. "Once you get a nickname, you're part of the team."

One surprising aspect was the sleep deprivation. Word had gotten around, after the first misguided person had suggested that they were somehow "cheating" by adopting three-year-olds rather than babies, not to test Santana's or Quinn's patience. The twins had nightmares quite frequently. Now, Quinn or Santana would check on them around ten p.m. and again at one in the morning. Some of the trust issues they were still working through meant the boys would sometimes just stay in bed, wide awake, and not come get them. So they checked in every once in a while - hence the lack of sleep.

Tonight, when Santana peeked into the twins' steampunk-themed bedroom, she found Kona sitting up in bed, staring wide-eyed out of the window. Not wanting to scare him, she knocked gently on the door. "Kona," she said. "Come with me."

He scrambled out of bed and ran over to her, clutching her hand.

She picked him up and carried him to the kitchen. "Can't sleep tonight?"

"No."

Santana sat him in his chair, and grabbed a box of graham crackers, breaking one in half to share with him. "Do you know why you can't sleep?"

He shook his head.

She nodded and kissed him on the forehead. "That's okay. Can I tell you a funny story?"

He nodded vigorously. He was their quiet one - Kai had gotten comfortable with talking to them rather quickly, but Kona was still reserved.

"It's about me and Mama. Way, way back before we got married, when we were still in college, we were getting ready for the summer family reunion with my family - like the one we're going to tomorrow. But I had to tell her something before we went...."

"Baby, I think your copy of Eyes of the Dragon has had it," Santana said.

"It's pretty much held together by duct tape and prayers at this point," Quinn said, closing the book as Santana flopped down next to her. "How were your trainees this morning?"

"Water Zumba attracts a very...interesting group of people. But overall the class went well. Hey, can we talk about something?"

"Sure," Quinn said slowly.

"It's nothing bad," Santana assured her, grinning. "I just thought I should...er...fill you in before the reunion. There's something I haven't told you."

"Oh god, that's how cheesy spy/assassin movies start," Quinn groaned. "How many political figures have you offed, Santana? If that's even your real name!"

Santana laughed. "And people say I'm the dramatic one. No, it's about my family. You moved to Lima right before we started eighth grade, so you never met my brother."

"Brother?" Quinn asked, shaking her head. "You don't have - you do?"

"He's twelve years older than me, and an incredibly sore subject with my family. My mother sort of acts like he doesn't exist, and my dad keeps quiet about him mostly so he doesn't upset mom. But his name is Cesar, and he's going to be at the reunion this week."

"Okay...."

"I know, I know. He's really my half-brother, but Dad didn't like me using that distinction because, in his words, 'Family is family. It's for real and forever.' He's a foreign services officer over in Belgium, so he's not around a lot."

"Any other secret family members I should know about?"

"Nope, just that one," Santana said with sheepish smile. "I...we have a weird relationship, and I really didn't know how to bring him up. 'Hey, by the way, I have a big brother' seemed a little ratchet, but it ended up being how I did it anyway."

Quinn leaned over to kiss her. "I can't wait to meet him."

"Was your brother a spy?" Kona asked, wide-eyed.

Leave it to the kid to latch on to that, Santana thought. "No, he's not. But Quinn was super nervous to meet him. She was nervous to meet all my family - she was afraid they wouldn't like her. But you know what?"

"What?"

"They loved her! And they're going to love you and Kai as well," Santana reassured him.

"For real and forever?"

"Exactly. Let's go back to bed, Fudge."

Meet the Family, by noiseinallthequietspaces

“Quinn,” Santana whined softly, twisting in the passenger seat to see Quinn’s face properly. “Are you sure this is a good idea?”

“Am I sure?” Quinn asked, tilting her head to the side in contemplation. “No, I’m not sure, but I know that I want to do it.”

“But aren’t your parents like old school about all this type of stuff?” Santana muttered, biting down on her lower lip in an attempt to prevent her nervousness playing across her face. “Aren’t they going to hate that I’m Hispanic, not to mention a woman?”

Quinn sighed, shifting her hand from the gearstick of her car to place it tenderly on Santana’s knee, squeezing lightly in order to reassure the dark haired girl. “Yes, they are probably going to care about that, but that’s not why I’m taking you to see them Santana. I’m taking you to this dinner because I want to be able to show off the woman I’m in love with to my parents. They’ve met you before, but not as my girlfriend, and I think that we both deserve to be open with our families.”

Santana’s lips pursed at Quinn’s words, her eyes skirting across Quinn’s face, taking in the sight of the soft smile playing across her lips and bright hazel eyes shimmering with affection. “I just don’t want you to lose your family Quinn, I know that’s a possibility today, and I never ever want to be the cause of that.”

“You wouldn’t be,” The blonde haired girl murmured gently. “Even if my parents decide to cut me off today, you wouldn’t be the cause of it, their arrogance and homophobia would be, but not you. This would happen one day even if it weren’t with you Santana; I don’t want to lie about my life just to make my parents happy. I did that when I was younger and it hurt.”

“Well, you know I have your back right?” Santana said gently, curling her fingers around Quinn’s hand and squeezing lightly. “I love you.”

“I love you too San,” Quinn answered, shifting her eyes away from the road for a moment to look into Santana’s soft chocolate brown eyes. “Thank you.”

“Don’t thank me yet.” Santana laughed, her eyes dancing with amusement. “Thank me when I manage to get through this dinner without swearing.”

“Yeah, like that’s ever going to happen.” Quinn chuckled. “I don’t think you’ve ever made it through a day without swearing at least fifty times.”

Santana smirked, shrugging her shoulders in unabashed amusement before replying. “Normally half of them are due to you.”

“What can I say, I have many talents.” Quinn grinned brightly, her attention drawn back to the road fully allowing Santana to settle back in the passenger seat and watch Quinn drive.

Half an hour later the small Mini Cooper pulled up the driveway into the Fabray family property, Quinn turning in front of the house before parking the car neatly in a corner and turning the engine off. The girl's hazel eyes shifted away from the imposing white painted brick walls of her childhood home to peer curiously at Santana, taking in the sight of the girl's deep chocolate brown eyes and light pink lips, watching as Santana bit down lightly on her bottom lip before huffing out a breath.

"So this is it?" The dark haired girl asked, lifting her eyebrow inquiringly as she nodded her head towards the house. "It's time go and face the music?"

"It's time." Quinn answered affirmatively, worrying her own bottom lip lightly. "Don't worry; if you're uncomfortable at any time then we can just leave."

"I'm not worried about me Q" Santana mumbled, a blush covering her cheeks as she glanced away from Quinn's eyes. "I want you to be all right. I don't care what they say about me, but they're your parents, and I know that you love them."

"San," Quinn sighed, shaking her head affectionately as she leant across the centre console of the car to press her lips lovingly against Santana's mouth. "As long as I have you at my side I'll be all right."

Santana's cheeks darkened a few shades as she blushed from Quinn's words before she swallowed hard, lifting Quinn's hands cradled between her own to place a tender kiss against the girl's knuckles. "I'll always be right here."

The blonde haired girl smiled appreciatively, squeezing Santana's hand as she twisted to take the car key out of the ignition and open the car door. "Let's get this show on the road then." She chuckled, stepping around the car to take Santana's hand before locking the vehicle and walking to the front door.

The pair stood side by side in front of the door, waiting for Quinn's mother to answer the sound of the doorbell, Quinn's right hand clasped tightly within Santana's left hand, the younger girl's thumb rubbing lightly over the back of Quinn's knuckles. After a minute, the thick wooden door swung backward and open revealing a slender blonde haired woman in a light blue dress. "Ah, Quinnie, we were beginning to wonder when you would arrive." The woman smiled brightly, her eyes flickering down to take in the sight of Quinn's hand clasped tightly with Santana's hand before lifting again to peer into her daughter's eyes. "And you brought Santana – I thought you were bringing that boy that you're dating."

Quinn frowned, biting down on the lower lip before stepping into the house pulling Santana inside before answering her mother. "I think that we should go and have a chat with Dad. There's something I need to tell you."

Judy frowned, her eyes darting back and forth between Quinn's nervous expression and the tightly clasped hands of the two girls. "He's in the lounge, is there anything you need or do you want to go and talk now?"

“Now, please.” Quinn mumbled, tightening her hold on Santana’s hand as her mother turned and strode down the corridor. “Oh god, why am I doing this, this is such a bad idea.”

“No, it’s not.” Santana answered softly. “This is you being brave, and coming out to your parents because you want to live openly. This is not a bad idea. I’m right here Quinn, I love you.”

The blonde haired girl nodded slowly, taking a deep breathe, smiling half-heartedly at Santana before turning to stride down the corridor in her mother’s footsteps. Santana’s dark eyes trailed over Quinn’s back, watching the muscles tighten underneath the girl’s skin, her shoulders bunching as she built the protective walls around her heart. Santana’s jaw flexed, her lips pursed in annoyance and anger as she stepped down the corridor in Quinn’s wake, attempting to keep a firm grasp on her temper despite the memories of Quinn’s previous tears because of her father.

Santana remembered the numerous nights she had held Quinn in her arms before they began to date. Quinn’s face buried in the face of her throat as she whispered thousands of nonsense words into the older girl’s ear until she finally drifted off to sleep. Santana’s hands stroking up the length of her back, soothing the tight muscles as the girl slept, keeping a protective vigil until the early hours of the morning. Santana remembered picking up the pieces of Quinn’s heart repeatedly, placing them back into the fractured frame of her heart, gradually losing pieces that were too broken beyond repair.

The dark eyed girl stepped into the lounge, taking her place at Quinn’s side on the two-person couch before glancing over at Russell in his armchair, Judy perched lightly on the arm.

“Your Mother said that you have something to tell us Lucy?” Russell said, his voice a rough growl, his eyebrows narrowed and his lips pinched into a tight line. “Don’t tell me you’ve gone and got yourself pregnant again and the boys run off. There has to be a reason you haven’t brought your boyfriend. I thought that was the point of this meal.”

“I...” Quinn’s jaw fell open at her father’s words, pain flaring through her chest as she struggled to breathe. “No, I’m not pregnant again.” A quick glance sideways at Santana who offered Quinn an encouraging smile gave her the confidence to continue. “And that’s the point of bringing Santana; I wanted to introduce you to the woman that I’m dating, properly.”

“I don’t think I heard you right Lucy,” Russell said with narrowed eyes. “Because I could have sworn you said ‘woman’ that you are dating and I know that no daughter of mine would ever fall so low as to be that kind of abomination.”

“I’m not an abomination.” Quinn murmured softly, ducking her head to avoid her father’s eyes as she took in a deep steadying breath. “But I am dating Santana, Daddy, I love her.”

“No, you don’t.” Russell growled. “You will stop with whatever game it is you are playing young lady, right now.”

“I’m not playing any games Dad, I’m in love with Santana, I’ve been with her for a year now and I want to marry her one day in the future. I want to have children with her and a family.” Quinn swallowed hard. “I love her Dad.”

“Do not say that Quinnie.” Judy murmured softly, her voice breaking as a tear ran down her cheek. “Please don’t say that.”

“I’m sorry.” Quinn sighed, shaking her head as she looked between her parents – watching her father’s anger growing in the cold blue depths of his eyes while her mother’s sadness spread through her entire face. “I’m gay.”

“Get you.” Russell said. The man’s voice remained level but it turned icy cold, his eyes burning with disgust and anger as he looked across at Quinn. “Get out of this house and never think about coming back. You are not my daughter any more. You are nothing to me.”

“Daddy, please...” Quinn whimpered, biting down on her bottom lip as a tear slipped out of her eyes, despite Santana’s tight hold on her hand and a protective arm wrapped around her hips. “I’m still the same person.”

“No, you are not.” Russell answered. “Because no daughter of mine would be like this, I do not know who you are, but I know that you are not welcome here again. Leave.”

Santana’s jaw flexed hard, her eyes blazing with anger and a fierce level of protectiveness as she growled at the older man. “You know nothing of the woman that she is.” She spat. “She’s caring, kind and thoughtful. She’s innocent, clever and brilliant beyond any measure, and for some god unknown reason despite all the things that you’ve ever done to her she loves you. I’m not going to let you sit there and call her an abomination. Perhaps when you’ve grown up you’ll be able to appreciate that.”

The dark haired girl gripped Quinn’s hand tightly, pulling her off the couch before leading her down the corridor towards the front door of the Fabray household. The pair exited the building together, stepping out onto the driveway, Santana’s hands dragging Quinn into a tight embrace as she peppered kisses over the girl’s face reassuringly.

“Come on Baby,” The younger girl murmured. “Give me the keys and I’ll drive us to my house, then we can order food and just cuddle for the day, does that sound good?”

“Yes.” Quinn whimpered, a tear trickling down her cheek. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry Baby.” Santana murmured, rubbing Quinn’s cheeks with the pads of her thumbs. “You have no reason to be sorry. Just try to smile for me, all right, Love? You know I can’t take it when you don’t smile, it breaks my heart.”

Quinn lips curled upwards shakily as she allowed Santana to lead her towards the car and open the passenger side door. “I’ll try.”

“That’s all I ask.” Santana mumbled, pressing a quick kiss to Quinn’s lips before the girl sat down allowing Santana to close the door of the car.

Expect the Unexpected, by SCWritings

"Babe, seriously, you have to move your legs to walk," Quinn said to her girlfriend as they both stood in the driveway of Quinn's mom's house.

"What if she hates me?" Santana replies.

"She's not going to hate you. Who could hate you?" Santana starts to count off people with her fingers, and Quinn literally face-palms. "Okay, no. Stop." The blonde grabs the other girl's hand. "Santana Diabla Lopez. You have met my mom before, so get your sexy ass into that house!" Quinn starts to pull Santana up the driveway.

"I met her when we were just friends! Before she was just a little scary, now she's capable of pulling the shotgun out," Santana whines as she takes small steps towards the door.

"Relax, she'll love you just like I do," Quinn says, intertwining their fingers together when they reach the door.

"Well, I hope not *exactly* like you do, or things could get awkward..."

Quinn rolls her eyes, but smiles at her girlfriend as she rings the doorbell. The door swings open and Judy Fabray is revealed. "Hi, sweetie!" she exclaims as she pulls Quinn into a bear hug, leaving Santana standing awkwardly on the porch, fiddling with her fingers. "Santana?" The Latina whips her head up to meet Judy's gaze. "Why are you just standing there? Come here!" Judy pulls Santana into a huge hug and Santana awkwardly pats her back, taken by surprise.

"Hey, Ms. Fabray," Santana says.

"What happened to 'Judy'?" the older blonde asked.

"Uh, well, I-I didn't know if you, uhm..." Santana stuttered

"Santana, I've known you since you were fourteen. Nothing has changed, except I have a shotgun upstairs that I'll use if I need to." Santana gulps loudly.

"Mom!" Quinn yells after watching the small exchange.

"Relax, Quinnie, I'm just joking. It's a .45mm."

Santana's eyes go wide. "I'm out," Santana starts to back up towards the door very slowly, but Judy grabs her arm.

"I'm joking, honey. It's still the same as when you and Quinnie were friends." Judy smiles reassuringly. Santana looks at Judy skeptically for a minute. "I'm serious! There's no firearms upstairs. Promise."

Santana smiles a bit. "That was cruel, Judy."

"There's my girl!" Quinn says, reaching for Santana's hand again to intertwine their fingers again.

"You two are so cute!" Judy squeals, practically fangurling over her daughter and her girlfriend. "Does this mean I can pull out the baby pictures?"

"No! Mom!" Quinn yells.

At the same time Santana says, "Oh this is gonna be awesome."

"So this is Quinn during her first bath," Judy says, flipping through a small photo album. The picture showed a baby Quinn splashing in a tiny baby tub.

"Babe, you were so adorable," Santana says to her girlfriend who is currently sitting in her lap.

Quinn shows mock offense. "Were?"

"Yes, were. Now, you're beautiful," the Latina whispers into Quinn's ear.

Quinn giggles and when the two girls look back at Judy, the older woman is wearing a sweet smile on her face. "So, Quinnie, how did you celebrate your birthday?"

Quinn was visiting her mom for her birthday weekend, and Judy insisted that she bring Santana. "It was good. Rachel and Finn, and Kurt and Blaine took me out to dinner with Santana. It was like a triple date. Best pizza I've ever had."

"What did they get you for your birthday?" Judy was bouncing with excitement over what Quinn had received.

"Rachel and Finn bought me the entire Barbara Streisand collection, although I'm pretty sure Rachel went birthday shopping. Blaine and Kurt bought me this beautiful cashmere sweater," Quinn replies to her mom with a smile.

"What did Santana get you?" Judy asks.

"I've gotta gay-go, go- I've gotta go," Santana says quickly, moving Quinn off of her lap as she makes a beeline for the bathroom. Judy looks at Quinn expectantly.

"So, what's for dinner?" Quinn asks, blatantly trying to change the subject.

No such luck. "What did San get you for your birthday, Quinnie?" Judy presses for information.

Quinn looks around the room for another excuse, but she can't find any distractions from the topic. "Well, you know San and I have been dating for a couple months, mom." Judy nods. "Well, we decided it was time to, um, consummate the relationship."

Judy's eyes go wide. "I probably should have let it go when she bolted to the bathroom."

Just as she says that, Santana walks out of the bathroom and back into the living room, stopping short at Judy's facial expression. "Do I need a bulletproof vest?"

Judy shakes her head. "No, sweetie, it's fine." She claps her hands. "I'm going to get dinner started." Judy walks out of the room and into her kitchen.

"Am I going to die in my sleep?" Santana asks, making her way to her girlfriend.

"No, babe, I just don't think she liked knowing her baby girl has had sex with anyone," Quinn replied, pulling Santana onto her lap. "What do you say tonight we christen my old bedroom?" Quinn asks, kissing Santana's neck softly.

Santana groans, and pulls Quinn's face up to her own and gives her a chaste kiss. "Baby, I don't think your mommy would like that very much."

"Come on, San, please?" Quinn protrudes her lower lip in an adorable pout.

"Who knew Quinnie had a fetish for her old room?" Santana teases. "I'm sorry, baby, but I don't feel comfortable having sex in a room next to your mom's. I promise that when we get back to New York, we can have some sweet lady kisses as much as you want."

"Fine..." Quinn says, pulling the shorter girl off of the couch and into the kitchen. "Let's go help my mom make dinner." The two girls walk into the kitchen and see Judy frying some ground beef for the spaghetti sauce. "Need a hand, mom?"

Judy whips around, startled at the voices that had just popped up out of the blue, then she smiles. "Sure! I wasn't sure if you guys wanted alone time or anything."

"See, San, she wouldn't mind." Quinn presses the previous subject to Santana.

"Quinn, I am fully confident that your mom would most definitely mind that."

"What are you two talking about?" Judy asks with a tilt of her head.

"Nothing, mommy," Quinn smiles innocently at her mom.

However, Santana walks up to Ms. Fabray, and whispers into her ear. "Lucy Quinn, I would mind that!" Judy yells at her daughter.

Santana full out laughs at the expression on her girlfriends face until she sees the glare she's receiving. "Oh, am I sleeping on the couch now?"

"Yes," both Quinn and Judy reply at the same time, except for different reasons.

"Quinnie, will you stir the sauce and watch the noodles for a minute? I would like to talk to Santana alone," Judy says.

Santana looks at Quinn for help, but the blonde just smirks. "Sure, mom."

Judy walks out of the kitchen and Santana mutters, "If I'm not back in 15 minutes, send a search party." She stalks out of the room.

She walks into the living room to see Judy sitting on the couch. She walks over to the couch and sits down. "I know you're probably expecting the 'If you hurt my daughter, you die' speech, right?" Santana nods. "Well, it's not really that." The younger girl tilts her head in confusion. "Okay, I know it's only been a couple months that you two have been together, but I could tell

that when you girls were friends that there was a connection there." Judy pauses. "I want you to end up together."

A small smile appears on Santana's lips. "I would like to end up with her, too. I love her."

"Does she know that?" Judy asks with a genuine smile of her own.

Santana shakes her head. "No, I want to tell her when the time is right."

Judy nods. "Well, the reason I wanted to see you alone, is because I wanted to give you this." Judy reaches into her pocket and pulls out a velvet box.

"Judy, I'm flattered, but I'm dating your daughter," Santana jokes, seemingly comfortable with a ring coming from her girlfriend's mother.

"San, stop it," Judy laughs. "I'm not saying now, and I'm not saying years from now. Just someday." Judy hands Santana the box, and she opens it. Inside is a beautiful diamond ring with emeralds on each side of the rock in the middle. "Best friends should marry each other, and I know you have loved her since high school. If you two break up, I'll have to kill both of you because I know you belong together."

Santana feels tears rising in her eyes as her vision gets blurry. "Thank you, Judy."

Santana hugs the woman, and she hears Quinn's voice, "I'm sending the search party." Quinn leans against the wall. "Well, aren't you two adorable? Sorry, mom, but this girl is taken."

Santana clenches her hand around the velvet box, not wanting Quinn to see it. At least not yet. The girl gets up off of the couch and discretely puts the velvet box into her pocket, then walks over to Quinn, giving her a sweet kiss. "Damn straight she's taken." Quinn smiles at her words. "Is dinner ready?"

"Yep," Quinn says, popping the 'p'.

The three women eat spaghetti, taking about how college is going and what their friends are all doing. Santana talks about Rachel getting the lead in *Funny Girl*, and how after the show ends, she and Finn are going to get married. She also talks about Kurt and Blaine wanting to start their family soon after they are married themselves.

After dinner, Judy excuses herself, saying that she's going to take a shower, and then head to bed. Quinn and Santana decide that it would be a good time to get some sleep as well if they are going to make the drive back to New York at a reasonable time tomorrow. They exchange hugs and 'Goodnight's before Quinn heads up the stairs.

She's about halfway up the stairs when she realizes Santana isn't following behind her. She turns around and sees Santana standing at the bottom of the stairs. "I believe I have been banned from your room," she says with a slight smirk.

Quinn rolls her eyes and walks back down the stairs, wrapping her arms around the shorter girl's waist. Santana wraps her arms around Quinn's neck in return. "I heard you break the rules," Quinn whispered to Santana, her breath gliding against Santana's lips.

Santana smirks, and pulls away from Quinn heading up the stairs. Quinn follows behind with a smile on her face. "We're still not having sex in your room," Santana says. The smile drops from Quinn's face. "I'll give you some sweet lady kisses though," Santana says with a smile. Quinn's smile returns full force onto her face as she practically runs up the stairs.

The girls are in the bed, sharing small kisses when Quinn speaks, "Today wasn't that bad, was it?"

Santana laughs and then cuddles into Quinn's side. "No, it was actually really good."

"What did you guys talk about?" Quinn asks.

Santana kisses her girlfriend. "Buenas noches, hermoso."

Meet The Family, by seemenopeu

Quinn and Santana walked hand in hand as they strolled down the sidewalk. Quinn looked up at the night sky and sighed at its beauty.

"Tonight was great," she said as she glanced over to Santana.

Santana smiled and grasped Quinn's hand tighter, "Sure was."

As they approached their apartment Santana stopped them, "Hey, Q. Can we talk?"

"Great, what did I do now?" Quinn teased as she fixed the collar on Santana's jacket.

Santana just laughed and fixed a small strand of out of placed hair behind Quinn's ear, "You're not in trouble, Blondie."

"Good," Quinn sighed as she leaned into Santana's lingering hand.

"Quinn, we've been seeing each other for a while now and you're like the most amazing person I've ever met. You know I'm not very good in the feelings department, so I'll just get to the point. Quinn Fabray will you-" Santana paused and looked over the blonde's shoulder, "Is that your mom?"

Quinn was smiling from ear to ear at this time but furrowed her brows, "What?"

Santana pointed to their apartment and Quinn followed her finger until she spotted a blonde woman on their front steps, waving frantically at them.

"Mom?" Quinn quickly dropped her hands away from Santana's jacket.

"Quinniebear!" The woman whom she hadn't seen in a year screamed as she walked up to them. She looked exactly how Quinn had left her, perfectly arranged from hair to dress, but as she engulfed her daughter into a hug, the facade barely masked the stench of wine on her breath.

"What are you doing here?" Quinn pulled back to look at the woman.

"Visiting, Quinnie," she looked over to the girl beside her daughter, "And who is this?"

"I'm Santana," Santana put out her hand for the woman to shake, though it wasn't returned.

"Quinnie, are we going to be standing out here all day or are you going to let us in?"

"Um yeah," Quinn walked to the apartment door to unlock it. She fiddled with the keys in the lock trying to remember if her mom had told her that she going to visit.

"So, Samantha," Judy started as they walked into the apartment, "Do you live around here?"

"Um, it's actually Santana not Samantha," Santana hung her jacket in the closet, "Actually I live here. With Quinn."

"Oh, like roommates!" Judy clapped her hands together.

Santana squinted her eyes at the woman. Yeah sure they were roommates. If roommates slept in the same bed and were dating.

"Right," Quinn interrupted, "So, where's dad?"

"Oh, he went to get take out," Judy said as looked around the apartment, "We wanted to have dinner tonight here without having to suffer through your god awful cooking. No offense, Quinnie. He'll be back in a few minutes."

Quinn clenched and unclenched her jaw, "That's great mom. How about you make yourself comfortable."

She then turned to Santana and flinched at the expression on her face. Quinn took a deep breath, "Could you help me hang up my coat."

Santana's face went from furious to polite as she turned to the older Fabray woman, "We'll be right back."

She followed Quinn down the hallway and into the bedroom. She sat on the bed, folded her legs, and waited for an explanation.

"Um, I guess I should explain," Quinn closed the door and faced Santana. The Latina sat there quietly, so Quinn decided that she should start, "I didn't tell my parents that I was dating you."

"I've guessed," Santana muttered and looked away, "Why?"

"There's a lot of reasons to go over. I mean, I've come out to them a million times and they pretend whoever I'm dating doesn't exist so I stopped telling them. And I know it's been getting serious between us and I probably should have told them by now but," Quinn stopped so that she could pace herself, "I was just scared, okay?"

Silence from Santana made Quinn nervous, so she had to ask, "Are you mad at me?"

Santana laughed, "I'm pissed, Quinn."

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry," Quinn repeated as she sat next to her, "I'm sorry."

Santana sighed, "I just don't get it. You could have just told them. They can't be that bad."

"San," Quinn placed her hands on the other girl's leg, "They're horrible."

The door bell rang, making them both shift their attention. Quinn stiffed once she realized, "That must be my dad."

"Don't keep him waiting," Santana stood up and walked into the bathroom, shutting the door behind her.

Quinn bit her lip before standing up and walking out of the room. To her bitter delight, her mother had already let in her father into the apartment. With large bags of Thai food still in his hands, he opened his arms and greeted Quinn once he saw her, "Lucy!"

She embraced him back, "Hi, Daddy."

He pulled back to look at her, "God, look at you. I feel like I haven't seen you in ages."

"It's been a year, Dear," Judy said as she pulled the bags out of his grasp.

"Right, right," He pulled away and scanned his eyes around the apartment, "I can't wait to catch up! You have to tell me about all your accomplishments so far."

"Yes, accomplishments," her mind went straight to the girl currently sitting by herself in the bathroom, "Is it okay if we have an extra for dinner?"

"Of course, Lucy!" He smiled, "Are we expecting a suitor?"

"It's probably going to be Quinn's roommate, Sandy," Judy said as she took out the contents in the bags.

"I'll be right back," Quinn rolled her eyes as she walked back into her room. She headed straight for the bathroom and knocked on the door, "San, come out."

"You first," a mumble from the other side said.

"What's that suppose to mean?"

The door peaked opened, "I'm just really mad at you."

"I know," Quinn put her hand on the door to open it a little more, "That's why I want you to come to dinner. Not just as my roommate, but also as my girlfriend."

"I know you, Fabray. You're not gonna say jack shit about me being your girlfriend and it's going to be really awkward."

"You'll never know till you come out of the bathroom," Quinn sung as she backed away from the door.

Only three seconds passed before the door opened all the way and out walked a freshened up Santana, "Fine. Let's go."

They walked out of the room and back to the older couple who were busy snooping around the place. Judy stopped once she saw them and clapped her hands, "Great! Let's eat! I haven't eaten all day."

"What about all those olives you ate out of those three margaritas you had this morning?" Russell commented as they all sat down at the not-so-spacious round dinning room table that had all the food laid out on it like it was a feast and not takeout.

"Funny." Judy dead panned. She then turned to her left to face Santana, "So, Sandra, what do you do?"

Santana gave a polite smile, "I'm still in school at the moment. I'm going to take the bar test in May."

"Oh! Do you go to the same school as Quinn?"

Santana looked over to Quinn on her left, "Unfortunately no."

"That's too bad," Russell started digging into the food, "I know how hard it was for Quinn to make friends at new places before. I'm sure it would have been a delight to see at least her roommate around."

Quinn sighed and started to put food on her paper plate.

"She's actually really popular there," Santana said. Quinn may not tell her parents everything, but they could at least know that she's not antisocial.

"Like with love?!" Judy almost jumped out of her chair with excitement, "Tell me. Is there a guy chasing after our darling Quinnie?"

Santana smirked, "Not technically."

"Don't tell me she's doing the chasing," Russell shook his head, "What did I tell you, Lucy? Fabray women don't chase."

"Can we change the subject?" Quinn intervened.

"Why?" Santana looked at her, "Are you embarrassed about something?"

"No, I'm just," She looked around to find a new way to describe what she was thinking, "I'd rather discuss anything of those matters at a different time instead of during a conversation on whether or not I have a male suitor."

"Are you saying that there might be a male suitor?" Santana squinted her eyes and tried to play along.

"I am and am not saying that there is or is not anyone of the suitor type in my possession."

"In your possession?"

"So if we may not discuss these matters within the presence of certain in the discussion on whether or not or maybe if I might possibly vaguely possess a suitor during this situation then we can go along with preceding in this affair. Not in the affair of love though. Cause we're eating, and that's what we should continue doing. Eating. Not talking."

Santana furrowed her brows. Had Quinn been reading her law books? And if she had, had she been high during that time, "You lost me there, Q."

"Let's go get drinks from the kitchen," Quinn stood up and looked to her mother, "You still like red wine right, mom?"

"She likes any wine," Russell grumbled, "Also get me a glass. Both of your continuous, and might I say confusing, talking has caused me to catch a headache."

Santana stood up and followed Quinn into the kitchen, where the blonde thanked her past self for arguing against the open kitchen they were going to pick out when they first bought this apartment.

Santana pulled out some wine glasses from out of the cabinet, "So, what do you want to talk about now?"

Quinn hushed the other girl, "Not so loud. They're probably listening."

Santana rolled her eyes and went to check if they even had red wine, but Quinn stopped her, "I'll tell them. Just give it time."

Santana placed the glasses on the counter, "Are you seriously saying that, that wasn't a fine enough moment to be all like 'Don't be silly, parents. There's no boys chasing after me, just a girl. Whom I'm dating. Who happens to be sitting next to me.' "

Quinn hushed her again and began whispering, "I couldn't have done it that way, they would have heart attacks. Like literally die. They need to be told at their own speed. Once they get comfortable with you. Once they get comfortable with me again. Then I'll tell them."

Santana sighed and went for the wine, "Whatever, Quinn. As long as it happens."

"Yep," Quinn grabbed the glasses from off the counter and muttered, "Some day."

"Quinn," Santana whined, cradling the wine like a child.

"Kidding. I'm kidding," Quinn put down a set of the glasses so that she could cup Santana's face, "I'll tell them. Tonight. Just put on a polite face and smile at everything they say."

Santana rolled her eyes again, this time in good humor, "Okay. Just so you know, parents love me so you'll be the only one who'll need to put on a polite face."

Quinn leaned in to kiss her but stopped herself, "They might be watching."

Santana laughed and grabbed the glasses from off the counter before leaving the kitchen. Quinn followed behind and they both were met with Russell laughing hysterically. The couple must have moved from their spots at the table because they were now sported on the couches in front of the television.

"What's so funny, Daddy?" Quinn asked as she and Santana poured the couple two glasses.

"I was just telling your mom a joke I told at a lunch with my colleagues last week. It's a knee slapper."

"We would love to hear it," Quinn handed him his glass.

"It's really not that funny," Judy commented and Russell glared at her.

"Of course it was funny. And here's how it went," then he continued to explain, in great detail, the most racially offensive joke that Quinn had ever heard. It went on to stereotype every race under the rainbow and ended with a bit of sexist humor. She blinked a few times in response, not knowing exactly what to do once the punchline rolled in.

Santana had heard tons of racially charged jokes in her time but none made her as pissed as this one. It wasn't even funny. Jokes are supposed to be funny. She almost asked Russell at the end to explain what was so funny but decided against it. She also decided to humor him because, well, she's heard worst. So Santana gave a fake laugh, "Funny."

"I thought so!" Russell looked at the other two women in the room, "I guess Fabray women don't have a sense of humor."

"I guess not," Judy mumbled as she took a sip out of her glass.

"So," he looked back to Santana, "I know you're going to school here like Lucy, but please tell me that you're not as unlucky in the love department as her."

"Not really, I guess-"

"It's weird," Russell interrupted, "Our eldest was already engaged by her second year of college. What's going on with our Lucy? Right, Judy."

Judy just shrugged and looked away.

"Anyways," Russell brought the attention back to Santana, "Tell me you at least have a boyfriend. It would be sad to be sitting in a Lonely Hearts house."

Santana bit her tongue, already completely annoyed with the man, "I don't have a boyfriend. Not because it's a choice, but because I'm gay."

"Oh God," Russell downed his drink, "Another beautiful woman going to hell."

"There's a lot of them down there. I don't think it'll be that bad," Quinn said more to herself but loud enough for everyone to hear. They all looked at her, some faces confused while one was suddenly happy. Quinn sighed and decided that she might as well get this over with, "You guys know that Santana and I aren't just roommates, right?"

It was silent in the room only for a moment before Judy clapped, "I knew it!"

"What did you know?" Russell snapped.

"That they're together," Judy shook her head at the man, "I mean seriously, Russell? She is her father's daughter. Sandy here is a beautiful girl, could you really expect Quinn not to date her?"

Santana blushed and Quinn reached over to take her hand. Russell seemed mad, though, and stood up from his seat, "But Quinn is not a... Homosexual!"

"She's told us like five times now, Russell. Now I don't have the greatest memory, but you have no excuse for not remembering," Judy motioned down, "Now sit down. You're embarrassing us!"

Russell stomped his foot before sitting down and Quinn was majorly impressed with whatever she had just seen, "Thanks, mom."

"No problem, Quinnie," Judy reached over to grab the wine bottle, "Now tell me how you two met and all the details and everything. And though your father looks like he doesn't want to hear it, he really does. I promise."

Quinn smiled and began to tell the story as vividly as possible. Russell sat quietly for the rest of the night, except every now and then to comment on something that Santana had said

because they kind of bonded sort of. Judy had also bonded with the Latina, but still called her every name under the sun except her own.

By the end of the night, once Judy and Russell were getting ready to leave and Quinn was kissing them goodbye, Santana knew that she had made the right decision to be with Quinn. She also made the decision that tonight, before they went to bed, she would propose to Quinn Fabray, the love of her life. She'd be happy to share those parents.

And One More Makes Fifty (1), by solvethebomb

"Santana," she breathes, surprised that I'm standing at her door.

"Hi," I whisper with a small smile.

I don't let her speak another word, pushing her back into her apartment and dropping my bag off my shoulder as I bring my mouth to hers.

Quinn's hands fly to up to my hair, pulling me against her, as my hands grip her hips tightly. I don't waste any time, sliding my tongue into her mouth at the first opportunity and swallowing the hot moan that comes from her throat. We lick and nip at each other's lips, competing for dominance.

I walk her backwards to the nearest wall and press her firmly against it, grabbing her hands and pinning them above her head as I move my mouth to her jaw and neck.

"*Jesus...*" she sighs quietly when I suck hard at her soft skin.

She pushes me back and immediately reaches down to pull her shirt off, not even pausing before bringing her hands behind her to unclasp her bra as well.

I stand frozen for a moment, taking her in. I'd almost forgotten how beautiful she is.

Quinn takes in my expression and smirks at me, reaching out to undo the buttons on my uniform top. Her movement snaps me out of my reverie and in just minutes we have left a trail of clothes on our way to the bedroom. She pulls me by my hand as I stare at her perfectly round ass.

There is no way I can wait another 20 steps or so.

I stop and grip her hand tighter, turning her back to me. She flashes me a questioning look as I press her body between yet another wall and myself, but I chase it away with a kiss, my hands braced on either side of her head for the moment.

My breath catches as her fingertips glide lightly up and down my sides, hitting spots that only Quinn knows will make my muscles jump involuntarily. She grins against my mouth as my body reacts to her touch, and I feel a rush of love and desire for her.

I slide my hand down between us, pulling back to look at her face as my fingers slip along her wet slit. The widened hazel eyes, the harsh gasp, the way her forehead falls to my shoulder, I never realized it was possible to find such individual reactions from a person so fucking sexy.

I use just enough pressure to part her swollen lips and ghost over her clit, reveling in the way she bucks against my hand, seeking more from me. I refrain from indulging her just yet, even though I want to be inside of her more than anything. She picks her head up to look at me from half-lidded eyes.

"Santana," she breathes my name again, but now her voice is harsh and deep, "*please.*"

Quinn says "*please*" like it's an oath, a substitute word falling from her lips when she'd rather be saying "*fuck*." It's more air than sound, and she sucks in a short breath when she's finished with it, her mouth dropping open as her eyes snap shut.

Sexy looks so fucking good on her.

My fingers slip down to her entrance and I slowly insert one finger, watching her face as her head falls back against the wall. The uneven breathing coming from her heaving chest mesmerizes me as I begin to move inside her, but Quinn wants more, her need evident in the taut lines on her face and the way she tries to meet my hand. She shakes her head in frustration.

"More, San. Harder."

It's a simple whisper that sends heat through my body. I will always have a weakness for Quinn's raspy sex voice telling me what it is she wants.

I oblige, adding another finger and picking up the pace immediately. A smile flashes across her perfect mouth and she wraps her leg around me, pulling me even closer.

She tilts her head down to kiss me. It's a hot, wet, sloppy kiss because I'm thrusting into her so hard and she is canting her hips to meet my hand.

This beautiful blonde girl is coming undone around me and it's intoxicating. I angle my hand so that my palm slaps her sensitive mound as my fingers work inside of her. The change hits Quinn immediately and her straightened knee gives, dropping her slightly before I pin her to the wall with my body.

I laugh lightly at her whine as I slide my fingers out of her and wrap my hands under the curve of her ass, pulling her up so that she can wrap both legs around me. She kisses me intensely as I walk us the rest of the way to the bedroom and lay her on the bed.

Her legs fall open as I hover over her, the expression on her face so incredibly needy. I don't wait, sliding my fingers back inside of her and slowly building the rhythm back up. Quinn's body arches into my touch as I take one of her perfect nipples into my mouth.

I play with her hardened peak, my tongue flicking against it before my teeth graze it lightly. Quinn opens one eye for the barest hint of a second, snapping it shut again when she sees the inside of my bottom lip run over her nipple. A smile forms on my lips of its own accord and I brace myself above her as I concentrate on bringing her to the edge.

My hand picks up speed and a steady stream of swear words begin to fall from Quinn's mouth. One of her fists grasps at the sheets, the other comes up to grip my shoulder.

"Oh God. *OH GOD!* So close, so close, baby *so close*," she promises, her voice desperate.

This face, her expression, are almost my undoing. She pulls her bottom lip between her teeth for a moment, her eyebrows rising even as her eyes stay shut. The lip falls free when she sucks in a deep breath and quivers beneath me, every muscle going rigid as she rides out her orgasm.

She's beautiful. She's sexy. She's *mine*.

I've missed her so much my heart aches just thinking about it.

Quinn sighs. It's a deep, contented sound that washes over me as I move up her body and lay down next to her. Hazel-green eyes slowly open to look into mine, and a smile plays at perfect lips. She reaches out, pulling my body against hers, and presses a gentle kiss to my forehead.

I prop my head up on my hand and just look at her, overcome, as I often am, by how gorgeous she is. Quinn gazes steadily back at me, so vulnerable and yet so comfortable at the same time. We share a soft kiss.

"I've missed you," I whisper, closing my eyes. Those simple words don't even come close to the emptiness I've felt without her.

"Oh baby, I've missed you too," she answers, and tingles shoot through my body. I've never wanted to be loved by anyone the way I do with Quinn. "Why didn't you tell me you were back?"

"They kept changing the dates on us. I got stuck in Kuwait for days, which, by the way is still a complete and total hell hole," I tell her, rolling my eyes at the shit mess my travel back from Afghanistan has been. "I didn't have much internet access there and once I got back to the States I realized I somehow forgot to turn my cell service back on. So I just hopped in the first cab I saw and told the guy to take me to you. Besides, seeing the look on your face was so worth not telling you."

"You're so mean! I thought I was imagining things at first!"

I raise my eyebrow and smirk.

"You must have a *very* vivid imagination."

"So you have 15 days starting today?" Quinn asks, ignoring my suggestive statement.

"I have 15 days starting tomorrow, and I'm all yours until I have to go back," I promise.

Quinn's brow furrows with concern.

"You won't be seeing your parents at all?" she asks in a small voice. This is a sensitive topic, and I don't really want to discuss it right now. I flop onto my back and look up.

"No. My mother wants me to come home but I have no interest in seeing her and her new boyfriend. And my dad is still in Afghanistan. He doesn't get to take mid-tour just because I am. I'll see him when I pass through Bagram again."

Quinn nods. I don't tell her that I had lunch with my dad when I stopped there on my way home, so we're good for another year or so. Any other lunches are just bonus.

"Well then we better not waste a minute of our time," my girlfriend says lightly, leaning forward to give me a quick kiss. "And step one is to get you in the shower. You smell like sand and sweat and foreign countries."

I laugh at that, because I don't doubt that it's true.

Quinn's calves are on my lap and I'm rubbing them absently, enjoying the feeling of her smooth skin under my fingertips while we watch *The Walking Dead* and wait for the Thai food we ordered. I'm woefully behind on so much pop culture, but this is my favorite show and it's nearly impossible in the Stone Ages of Afghanistan to download a full episode of the new season without the internet going out and starting the download over. It's infuriating.

The screen freezes and I turn to Quinn in confusion as she puts down the remote.

"So I was wondering..." she begins, her hazel eyes dropping to her hands. It's rare to see my pretty blonde girl so hesitant. She's usually such a driven, confident person.

"What, baby?"

Quinn sighs and brings her eyes to mine, gathering the courage to ask whatever it is.

"I was wondering if you'd be willing to come with me to my family's vacation house next weekend," she finally admits, her gaze steady but her body language apprehensive.

My eyes widen in surprise. We've been together, officially, for almost a year. I've been gone for nearly six months of that, but even when I was still stateside I wasn't exactly close by. We've built our relationship around long weekends, Skype, and an instantaneous connection that took us both by surprise.

I'm ready to marry this girl, but haven't given much thought to when I'd meet her entire, humongous family.

I'll never forget the conversation in which Quinn told me about her family, sparking a small envious flame in me as she described how close-knit her mother's side is.

*"So wait, you're all **numbered**? How exactly does **that** work?"*

"Basically, when someone is born or married into the family, they get their number. So, for example, when I was born on June 5th, 1984 there were 21 people in my family already, so I am number 22."

"Wow. So how many are there now?"

"My niece just brought us up to number 49."

"49?! You have 49 family members on one side, and you actually know all of their names?"

Quinn laughed.

"Yup. Every summer since I was an infant we've gone to our vacation house, which we just call the House, and spent holidays or summer weeks there, so I actually know my cousins pretty well."

My mouth dropped open. This idea was unimaginable to me.

"Wow. That sounds kinda awesome."

"Yeah, it's pretty cool."

Quinn is looking at me expectantly.

"Umm, yeah. Sure babe, if that's what you want to do, then I'd love to," I finally tell her, swallowing down my nervousness.

The most beautiful face in the world brightens radiantly when I agree to meet her gigantic family in one place, over one weekend. I've only ever spoken to her mother on Skype one time, and now I'm about to meet a family of 49 people.

"Oh my God, you will? Thank you, San, thank you so much!" Quinn leaps up and straddles me, her arms draped over the back of couch. "They're going to love you. I've pictured you coming to the House for so long now."

"Really?"

"Well yeah, baby. I talk about you all the time, I want everyone to finally see how amazing you really are."

"You talk about me?" I don't know why this is so surprising to me. Probably because my dysfunctional family is so detached that we rarely talk unless something big comes up. Quinn cocks her head to the side and studies my face.

"Santana...you are...you're the most important thing in my life. Of course I talk about you. My entire family has been waiting to hear that you're back in the States ever since I mentioned your mid-tour break would be around this time. They made me promise to bring you to the House if you were home during one of the big weekends," she tells me earnestly. Her eyes are intent on mine, trying to read my reaction.

I lean up and kiss her gently, my hands resting on her slender hips.

"You know I love you, right? I think about you all the time, over there. Whether I'm out on foot, walking some shitty mountain, or back at the base, hitting the gym—you are always on my mind. Every minute I'm there I'm just counting down to seeing you again."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, babe."

Quinn smiles and ghosts her lips over my own.

"I love you, too."

I'm holding Quinn's hand as she drives us towards her family's vacation home. My mind is being blown by the speed at which we're moving, having only driven in weighted down armored trucks on nonexistent roads for the past 5 months. I haven't moved at a speed greater than maybe 25 miles an hour on the ground, and that's on a good day. Right now we're going almost 60. I have to keep reminding myself that this is normal, and absolutely not a reason to crush my girlfriend's hand with my death grip. She keeps smiling over sympathetically, unsure what will ease my discomfort.

"We're almost there, San. Do you need me to stop or something?" Quinn asks gently.

I shake my head and marvel at the telephone poles whipping by. It bothers me more than I expected that things in America seem weird to me now. This isn't my first rodeo, I've come back from deployment before, but it's still a fresh feeling, and it makes me worry about how I'll feel after 6 more months over there. I close my eyes and focus on the good things.

Quinn. Fresh air. Real mattresses. Reliable internet. *Quinn*. Food options. Civilian clothes. **Quinn**. Alcohol. Movie theaters. *Quinn*.

"Santana, open your eyes."

I comply with Quinn's request and am instantly overwhelmed. Lining a long driveway are the members of her family, holding up American flags and signs welcoming me home. I know it's her family based on the matching shirts adorned with big numbers.

At first I just gape at them, but then roll my window down and smile and wave, listening to them cheer as we pass by until we finally park next to a beautiful house. Before we get out I look at my girlfriend and shake my head at her, overwhelmed. She gives me a radiant smile and a kiss before jumping out of the car and starting to greet her many family members.

I climb out of the car and take in my surroundings. The House is clearly pretty old but well maintained, a recently repainted white. A large American flag hangs from a balcony in the front, in good shape but faded from being flown regularly. Another sign hangs next to it that says "Welcome Home SSG Santana Lopez."

I blink back the tears that have begun to form. This family that isn't mine has gone to such great lengths for me. It's amazing.

Quinn makes her way over to me and takes my hand, leading me slowly to the House, where her extended family has slowly started to gather after walking back down the driveway.

I immediately recognize Quinn's mom, Judy, when she steps forward to wrap me in a tight hug. She's wearing a shirt that says "5."

"Welcome home, Santana. We're so glad you're here," she says in my ear before releasing me.

"Thank you so much. This is really just...too much," I reply.

A handsome older guy wearing number 1 loops an arm around Judy's shoulders in a brotherly manner and smiles at me.

"Welcome to the House, Santana. I'm Quinn's Uncle Charlie and the old man around here. We've got cold beer in the coolers and dinner is getting started shortly. I hope you like good old fashioned American barbecue?"

"Yes! God, definitely. I've missed real barbecue so much," I confess with a grin.

"Good! We're going to let Quinn here take you up to the room you'll be staying in, but I just wanted to welcome you as the patriarch of the Carlson family. Oh, and Quinn, your new family shirt is up on your bed."

"Thanks Uncle Chuck, we'll be right down," my pretty girl says with a light squeeze of my hand.

I'm introduced to a few more people as we pass through room after room and then head upstairs. Quinn stops at a room with two twin beds in it and an air mattress.

"This is where I always stay. I'm the youngest of the first cousins, so I've always gotten a sleeping bag on the floor. For your visit though, I finagled us an air mattress big enough for both of us." She looks adorably contrite, as if this would bother me at all.

"Q, I've been sleeping on a three inch thick foam "mattress" thrown on top of a piece of plywood. An air mattress next to you sounds like heaven to me," I say, leaning in to give her a light kiss that she smiles into.

She picks up her family shirt from the air mattress and quickly changes, turning to proudly present her "22" designation. I outline the numbers with my fingers and shake my head.

"You know this is kind of crazy, right?"

"Oh, totally. I love it though. Coming here has always been a kind of refuge for me. After dinner I'll show you some of my favorite places. I was that kid that always wandered off to read a book in some hidden location, I'd love to show you." Quinn has the cute shyness thing going for her right now.

"I'd love to see anything you want to show me," I whisper truthfully, my hands on her hips. I get a big grin in response, along with a slight blush. This girl is seriously the most adorable human being on earth.

"Let's go downstairs, babe. I apologize in advance for any stories about my childhood you have to endure, and also the high likelihood that my older guy cousins will try to corner you and ask your intentions for me. They take no small amount of pride in intimidating the significant others of their younger cousins, but it's all for show, don't worry."

"First of all, yes to all of your childhood stories, I cannot wait to see you blush when they start telling them. Secondly, I'm not worried about your cousins because my intentions are nothing but pure."

Quinn laughs at me.

"Liar," she whispers.

—

This family is amazing. I don't know how else to put it. We are sitting at one of the many tables set up for dinner and I am being regaled by Quinn's greatest hits while she is, predictably, blushing.

"Wait, wait, wait. Has anyone told the story about when she was a flower girl in Rob's wedding?" Quinn's sister Frannie interjects as she passes through holding Quinn's *gorgeous* niece. The whole table reacts excitedly when they're reminded of a story they'd evidently forgotten.

"Oh God, no. Come on Fran, give me a break!" Quinn is already burning a brighter shade of red than I've ever seen and I'm so excited to hear this story it's not even funny.

"Okay, so get this: Quinn is like what, 9 years old? Anyway, she's around 9 and she is the flower girl for Robbie, one of our older cousins. So it's maybe a week or two before the wedding and she and I are playing soccer or something in our backyard, and the ball goes in a slightly wooded area."

Quinn has her face buried in her hands and she's shaking her head.

"Well Quinnie goes running after it, just a little ball of energy, she really never stopped running. So she grabs the ball and turns around, still running, and just catches a face full of tree, she just runs straight into it."

"No!" I interject, because I did not see that coming.

"Oh yes, and her face is just completely gnarly. Half of it is covered in bark and blood, it was actually quite horrifying to look at."

"Aww, baby!" I kiss Quinn's cheek even though she's still covering her face.

"*Miraculously*, her face healed enough before the wedding that she didn't look like a hot mess, and she obviously didn't grow up looking like Harvey Dent. Still, I'll never forget her just turning and full on sprinting into a tree. Classic Quinn." Her sister laughs in an affectionate way that tells me this is a story Quinn is used to being teased about.

My girlfriend shakes her head at everyone, rolling her eyes in mock irritation. One of her cousins clears his throat and speaks up.

"Okay, all of the Carlson's, we're going to need you to clear out so that we can have a little conversation with Santana here."

"Guys...no. It's the first day!" Quinn objects, but I just cover her hand with mine.

"No, it's fine Q. I don't mind at all." In truth, my stomach is clenching nervously, but I give her a smile anyway.

"You're sure?" Her eyes search mine.

"Absolutely. Go hang with the rest of your family. I'll come find you when we're done."

Quinn gives me a quick kiss and glances back at me as she heads outside with her mom and aunts and uncles that were sitting with us. I look back at the five guys left in the room.

"Okay, gents, before you ask, I'll just go ahead and tell you. I intend to marry your cousin. I'm absolutely positive that she is the one for me, and I will do anything to make her happy for the rest of our lives. The ring is upstairs in my bag, I just need to find the right moment and ask Judy first. Now, what are your questions?"

Five slow smiles spread across handsome faces and I know I've made allies out of Quinn's "intimidating" cousins.

"Just one: what can we do to help?"

It's our last evening at the House, and I'm taking a walk with Quinn over the slight rolling hills of a meadow on the property. All of the pieces have fallen into place perfectly, and I know I'll soon have my chance to ask this incredible, perfect girl to be mine forever.

The cousins worked up a ruse to distract Quinn and get me time alone with Judy so that I could ask permission first, which was a big step. I felt confident that she'd grant it to me, but I was still so nervous. Quinn and her mom are extremely close after surviving the fall out of Judy's divorce from Quinn's dad. She doesn't talk about it much, but I get the impression he disowned Q after she came out and Judy chose her daughter over her marriage. Having Judy approve of us getting married is huge.

I listen to Quinn talk about wandering around out here as a little girl and try to picture her as a tiny blonde ball of energy going on adventures with a book and her brilliant imagination. Our fingers are loosely intertwined, and I pull the back of her hand up to my lips for a moment. We're almost to her favorite spot, and I need to steady my nerves.

As we walk into the clearing she like to read in as a child, Quinn pauses, taking in the sight before her. The five eldest Carlson boys have set up dozens of electric tea candles around the clearing, contained in various white lanterns and holders that Frannie promised to pick out, not trusting the Boys with the task. It's not very dark out, but the candles shimmer beautifully against the dusky light of the evening.

I continue forward, leading Quinn to the center of the clearing. She gives me a questioning look that surprises me because she is so smart and I thought for sure she'd have picked up on what this is by now. I'm glad though, as I lean forward to gently brush her lips with mine before taking a step back to look her in the eye.

"Quinn," I begin, more than nervous than I've ever been, "I love you more than I ever thought I was capable of loving. Every single moment we have spent together has been pure magic, proof to me that soul mates do exist and that you are mine. I want, more than anything, to spend the rest of my time on this earth loving you and being there for you. So..."

I shakily remove the princess-cut diamond ring from my pocket as I kneel down, hazel-green eyes widening as she watches me.

"Will you marry me?"

Decades, centuries, millennia, eons pass in the breath between my question and Quinn dropping to her knees in front of me, kissing me as she squeals, "Yes. Yes! YES!"

Yes. She said *yes*.

I pull back reluctantly from her barrage of kisses and grab her left hand, sliding the ring over her finger. It's a perfect fit and she stares at it for a second before kissing me again, slower this time.

"I love you, Santana. I can't wait to start our life together."

My heart swells at her sweet, soft voice telling me that she feels exactly how I do.

"I love you, too."

We lie together in the meadow for a little bit. Quinn won't put her hand down unless I wrap my fingers in hers and pull it down. I love the way the ring feels on her finger grasped between mine.

Before we get up to walk back we've agreed on a month and debated a few locations for our wedding. I've promised to help as much as I can with the planning while I'm away. She has admired her ring for the thousandth time. We've kissed for the hundredth time.

We can both hear the hushed din of her family waiting for us to return as we get closer to the House. By now I'm sure the Boys and Judy have told everyone that I've asked Quinn to marry me. I smile at my fiancée as we emerge and the Carlson family seems to hold its collective breath.

"I said YES!" Quinn shouts, holding our linked hands up in the air.

There is a loud cheer and then we're surrounded by a wave of family love that buoys me, lifting me somehow even higher than the ecstatic joy of being engaged to Quinn has taken me. I'm hugged over and over before Uncle Charlie quiets down the Carlson crowd.

"Now, as we all know, it is tradition to welcome our new family members with a shirt bearing their number once they've officially joined the family. We're going to break tradition just this one time since Santana will be returning to Afghanistan in less than a week," he announces, taking a shirt from someone behind him and holding it up to display the large "50" it bears. "It's been pretty clear to us for a while that Quinn wants to spend her life with you, Santana, so we had this shirt made with the rest of ours in anticipation of you joining the family eventually. We'd like to give it to you a little early, so that you can have it while you finish your tour overseas. Welcome to the family!"

Tears are rolling down my cheeks as I take my new shirt and hug Quinn's uncle fiercely. This family has embraced me in such unexpected, amazing ways, and it's just mind blowing that I get them along with the girl of my dreams.

The Boys start handing out beers and directing us towards the bonfire pit, and the engagement celebration is under way.

It doesn't end until the early morning hours.

"Look at me, baby."

Quinn's eyes slide slowly up to mine, and my heart contracts at the sadness I see in them.

"Please don't cry, Q. I'll e-mail as soon as I get somewhere with internet access, okay? We're halfway through, I'll be back before you know it."

It's never been harder to wear a brave face than it is right now. I know that if I cry neither of us will be able to stop. I shift my focus to the noise and bustle of the airport for a moment to regain control over my emotions before I look back at my favorite face.

Quinn is nodding in a way that tells me she doesn't really agree, but is trying to be brave too.

"I love you," she finally whispers.

"I love you too, more than *anything*. I can't wait to make you my wife, Quinn Fabray."

I finally get a smile out of her with that, and I lean down to capture it with a light kiss.

"Talk to you soon, babe." I hoist my heavy pack onto my back and give her a smile before I turn to walk inside the terminal.

"Santana."

I turn back to her and wait.

"You have to come back. Promise me."

Her beautiful mouth is twisted to the side as she fights back her tears.

I don't want to promise her something I can't control, but I know it's what she needs to hear from me to be alright with this. My throat is so tight I'm not sure how I'm breathing.

I nod first, trying to get enough control to speak to her without wavering.

"I promise," I say solidly, offering a light smile that doesn't match the heaviness I feel.

It takes all I have in me to turn from her and walk inside, praying to everything holy that I won't break that promise.

Always Interrupted, by TakeMyBreathAwayTwoTimes

For Quinn, meeting Santana's parents was quite normal for her. She always met people close to Santana when she was in trouble and this was no different.

'Santana, principal's office now!' Was shouted from their class teacher as said girl mercilessly struggled against the grip of three jocks.

Once Finn was lifted out of sight and off to the nurse, Santana immediately slumped in her restraints and with Quinn's nod, they reluctantly let go. Quinn who had been pushed up against the lockers as Santana launched herself at Finn, quickly moved towards Santana but didn't dare touch her. Although she knew that Santana would never hurt her, she knew how angry Santana could get.

'San, it's okay. He didn't do anything to hurt me. You just came up at the wrong time and took it out of context.' Quinn explained quietly.

'Oh so I took it out of context? It had nothing to do with that giant grabbing your arm and leering at you.' Santana spat still disgusted at what she had seen. 'Fine, I won't try and get him away from you next time, you clearly want the attention.'

Before another word could be said, Santana stormed off down the hall towards the principal's office. Quinn quickly ran after her.

'San, come on stop! That's not what I meant.' Quinn called as she grabbed the girls arm. 'I know you were looking out for me and everything and I appreciate it I promise but I was going to move away I swear I just was interrupted.'

Santana tried to pull her hand away from Quinn but she wouldn't let go and she resorted to sighing loudly and rolling her eyes.

'Well I apologise for interrupting your incoming get away even if you didn't look like you were going to do anything. Now let me go, I have to go see Figgins again.' Santana snapped.

'What is wrong with you it's as if your jealous....are you jealous, San?' Quinn asked thoughtfully as she watched the girl's reaction.

Santana immediately tugged her hand successfully free with extra force and crossed her arms. Her brow furrowed as she defensively took a step away from Quinn.

'What? Of course not. God you're so full of yourself Q. I've got to go.' She poked quickly and defensively as she turned on her heel and walked quickly to the principal's office.

'Ah Santana Lopez! You can wait outside while your parents arrive while I deal with Bret here. Come on Bret.' Principal Figgins said loudly.

Quinn turned around the corner, into the office and sat down next to Santana who was staring at the floor with her arms and legs crossed.

'Go to class Quinn. You need to keep up those straight A's.' Santana snarked softly without looking up.

'No, I got you in trouble. The least I can do is plead your case.' Quinn said matter-of-factly.

'No you didn't tubbers, you didn't do shit. I decided to go all Lima Heights on Finn, not you.' Santana reasoned.

'For me.' Quinn added smiling at the girl beside her.

'No it wasn't, shut up. I did it because I just really don't like Finncompetent.' Santana defended.

'Bullshit.' Quinn said, making Santana look up at her due to her bad language. 'Thank you for defending me.'

Santana couldn't help the blush that rose on her cheeks, which only got redder as Quinn leaned into kiss her cheek. The sparks she felt from that one touch drove Santana crazy as she turned her head to look at Quinn. Quinn who was pulling away slowly, found herself stopping as she looked into Santana's eyes. Without thinking she leant forward towards Santana's lips. Seeing this, Santana did the same.

The first brush of lips was soft as they both unsurely connected their lips in a timid kiss. Santana however, regained her footing quickly and moved a hand to the back of Quinn's neck to pull her in closer. The kiss became heated as both girls relaxed into the embrace.

Before things could heat up, they were torn from their reverie by loud ranting in Spanish.

'Ella está constantemente en problemas. Todo esto es tu culpa. Debido a que ella recibe de su lado de la familia!' Was heard as the strong footsteps of heels powerwalked down the hall. ***(She is constantly in trouble. This is all your fault. Because she gets it from your side of the Family!)***

Santana quickly moved away and pushed herself back against her seat, trying to act casual as her mother finally came around the corner, snapping her mobile shut.

'Santanita! ¿Por qué estás siempre causando problemas? I never get a moments peace. You are constantly fighting.' Maribel scolded as she tapped her foot and looked down at her daughter sternly. ***(Why are you always causing problems?)***

'Lo siento mami' Santana apologised as she looked up at her mother regretfully.

'¿Quién es este? Is this who has been leading you astray?' Maribel asked as she looked over at Quinn.

'No this is Quinn Mami. She is my friend on the cheerio's with me.' Santana explained.

'Hello Mrs Lopez. It's lovely to meet you finally.' Quinn introduced politely as she offered her hand to Maribel.

'Do you know why my daughter continues to cause me high blood pressure Quinn?' Maribel questioned as she shook the girl's hand firmly and gave her a once over.

'I'm afraid it is in fact my fault this time. I was being harassed by a boy we know and she stepped into get him away from me.' Quinn explained.

'How much Chivalrous of you Santana. I suppose I should be proud.' Maribel smiled slightly at her daughter for the first time and sat in the chair on the other side of her daughter.

'Yes it was, very.' Quinn replied as she smiled at Santana, watching her from the corner of her eye.

Santana concentrated once again on keeping her blush at bay as Quinn's finger brushed against her own as their hands rested side by side on their seats. The three continued conversing quietly until Figgins emerged once again.

'Ah Mrs Lopez, thank you for coming down. If you could join me in my office please. You too Santana.' He greeted politely. 'Ms Fabray, I don't remember sending for you. Go back to class.'

'It was nice meeting you Mrs Lopez.' Quinn said as she stood to leave.

'Likewise Quinn. You must come over to keep Santanita Company!' Maribel insisted as she pulled the girl into a quick hug and passed Figgins into his office.

'Bye S, text me later okay?' Quinn asked smiling shyly.

'Yeah sure okay. See ya.' Santana replied equally as shy.

It would take her three hours to send that text as she went back and forth over what to say.

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Santana's meeting of Judy Fabray for the first time was less than comfortable for either of them or Quinn for that matter. They have all agreed to since pretend it never happened.

Santana had stayed over at Quinn's house for the weekend, as Judy was away on a business trip and the couple needed some time alone. Early Sunday morning, Santana snuck out of bed to prepare breakfast in bed for her still sleeping girlfriend. Quickly throwing on Quinn's shirt, she made her way down the stairs and began sorting through the cupboards and fridge to find something to make. She settled on French toast and quickly turned on her iPod as she began cooking. There was no point in cooking without music.

As she put the bread on the pan, she began to sing along to her music quietly hoping not to disturb Quinn. She was almost finished her last batch when she felt a body press up against her and lips press against her shoulder. She jumped slightly before turning around in the arms around her mid-section.

'No, no, no! How am I supposed to bring you breakfast in bed if you're up?!' Santana said as she pouted at her girlfriend.

'Well, don't I feel special. Santana Lopez is cooking for me! To what do I owe the pleasure?' Quinn asked as she pecked Santana's jaw with kisses.

'Do I have to have reason to cook for my girl?' Santana asked as her pout deepened.

'Aww baby, don't pout. You know I can't take it.' Quinn replied as she kissed away the frown. 'What's with the breakfast?'

'I just wanted to do something nice.' Santana informed her as she wrapped her arms around her neck and pulled her closer. 'Is that such a crime?'

'Never' Quinn answered as she pulled Santana in for a heated kiss. 'I just feel I should be thanking you after last night.'

With that said the girls quickly became tangled in a scorching kiss. Santana pulled back to bite down on Quinn's lip, only to have Quinn pull her in again to battle for dominance with tongues. Santana's hands went to pull at Quinn's hair as Quinn's hands moved up her sides, lightly scratching. She moved to kiss down her neck, leaving marks on her path down as she ran her teeth along Santana's collar bone.

Santana could only moan out as she returned Quinn's mouth to her own and let Quinn tug her shirt over her head. She moved her hands to cup her ass and Quinn skated her nails up Santana's stomach to cup Santana's breasts. The moan that escaped Santana was soon over ridden by a loud shriek from the kitchen door.

There stood a mortified Judy as she watched her daughter maul a brunette. Her hands covered her mouth as she leaned against the door for support. Santana and Quinn quickly jumped apart to stare in shock at Judy. Santana was then struck with the fact she was completely naked in Quinn's mother's kitchen. She quickly slid across the floor to throw on Quinn's shirt, inside out and back to front, before slightly hiding behind Quinn for protection.

'Hey mom.' Quinn greeted as casually as she could manage. 'I thought you weren't back until this evening?'

'Yes, well my meetings were ahead of schedule and I didn't want you staying home on your own for so long so I got an earlier flight.' Judy explained before adding, 'Though I clearly need not have worried about you being alone...'

'Hi, I'm Santana.' Santana said as she waved embarrassedly from behind Quinn.

'Judy Fabray nice to meet you.' Just replied casually as she moved to shake the girl's hand. 'I'm surprised we haven't met sooner.'

'Well...I...I mean, we were waiting for the right time to tell you and it never came up.' Quinn defended as she stepped back to take Santana's hand. 'We'll just go up and get dressed and be back down.'

'There's French toast on a plate in the oven, enough for all of us if you're interested...'
Santana offered as she was lead from the kitchen by Quinn.

'Thank you, that's very kind. Don't be long now!' Judy called after the girls as she laughed at her daughter's expense.

Meet The Family, by team-valkyrie

"Fuck Quinn, I'm shitting bricks here," Santana whined as she paced back and forth in their living room.

"Baby, will you relax? You've met Beth before," Quinn's soft voice said, trying to calm her girlfriend down. Shelby and Beth were coming over any minute now and she didn't want them to see Santana having an emotional breakdown.

"Yeah, as her Auntie Tana! Not your girlfriend!" Santana yelled frustrated. She took a deep breath and sighed. "I want her to like me. I know how important she is to you and how much you want to rebuild your relationship with her. I don't want to be the asshole that's fucks it up for you."

Quinn's heart melted at Santana's confession. It never ceased to amaze her how thoughtful Santana truly is. Not that she ever doubted it, but these were the rare moments that Quinn always treasured.

"Santana," Quinn cooed as she made her way to her restless girlfriend. She pulled Santana in for a tight hug and kissed her temple. "I love you so much. And Beth will learn to love you too. Whatever happens tonight, we're in this together. It won't be easy but I have complete and utter faith that this will work out, I promise."

Santana leaned back and gazed lovingly into Quinn's hazel eyes. "I love you too, babe. And I swear I will do everything in my power to help you with this."

"That is all I ask. Knowing how charming you are, though, I don't doubt you'll make Beth like you," Quinn teased with a smile.

"Let's hope so," Santana chuckle. They kissed and soon after heard the doorbell ring. "Okay, let's do this."

Both women made their way to the door. Before they opened the door, they took deep breaths and gave each other loving looks, knowing that whatever happened, they were in this together.

The door opened and there stood Beth and Shelby.

"Hi," Quinn said softly, in awe of how similar she was compared to her daughter. They were exact replicas. They had the same build, long blonde hair, cute smile and expressive hazel eyes. It was obvious Beth was Quinn's baby girl and it made tears spring to her eyes. Santana noticed and quickly wrapped a supportive arm around the blonde before nudging her towards Beth.

"Hi," the young girl said with a shy smile. "It's been a long time since I've seen you so can I give you a hug?" Quinn couldn't stop the tear of joy that involuntarily fell from her eye. She nodded and pulled the girl into a warm embrace. Santana and Shelby looked upon them with love in their eyes. Santana looking like a proud girlfriend while Shelby looked like a proud mama bear. They shared a knowing look before smiling and giving each other a hug as well.

After the blondes separated, Quinn took Santana's hand and tugged her towards where Beth was. "Beth, you remember Santana, right?" Quinn asked, since they had only met a handful of times.

"Auntie Tana!" Beth exclaimed happily before jumping into Santana's arms. The Latina was in shock but quickly recovered and returned the hug with a huge grin on her face. "Hey kiddo!"

Santana held the girl in her arms and they all walked towards the dining room table she sat down with Beth on her. They chatted about random stuff, lost in their own little bubble, while Quinn and Shelby brought the food.

"So, it looks like Beth has warmed up to Santana," Shelby said with a smile, happy about how her little girl had simply clicked with her favorite former student.

Quinn let a huge grin overwhelm her face as her heart burst with joy. "I know, I'm so glad. Santana was really nervous about how they would get along, but I knew she would eventually won her over."

"Santana has a way with charming people, that's for sure." They both nodded, knowing it was true.

Both women gathered the food and drinks and made their way back to the table, where Santana was showing Beth a gift they had gotten her. It was a beautiful custom made dress of Elsa from Frozen that Kurt had designed and made himself. Beth was excited since Frozen was her favorite movie and her eyes sparkled with happiness. She looked at Santana with a look of adoration that matched the one Quinn was wearing. It made her tear up, incredibly relieved Beth liked her so much.

They all sat down and ate, laughing and sharing stories about McKinley, Glee Club, Rachel, and Beth's hilarious stories about kindergarten. When there was a comfortable silence, Quinn decided to tell Beth something very important to her.

"Beth, there's something I need to tell you," Quinn said slowly. Beth nodded so Quinn decided to continue. "Santana... is my girlfriend."

Beth looked at the both and shrugged "I know."

"Wait what?" All three adults exclaimed at the same time.

Beth gave them the signature "Fabray eyebrow raise" and said, "it's kinda obvious they're in love. Santana looks at Mama Quinn like she's her world and Mama looks at Tana like she's her universe."

They were all in awe of Beth's observation and Santana decided to ask the fateful question, "Are you okay with all of this?"

"Of course, why wouldn't I be? Love is love," Beth said with a toothy grin.

They all shared a look. They knew it was going to be a hard road to get their family together but they also knew this was an amazing first step.

Family Feud, by tehedward

Quinn sat back in her seat off to the side of the large hall and chuckled as she watched Santana dance with all of her little cousins and sister and sister's friends. For all of the tough girl badassery that Santana liked to project to the world, her girlfriend was a total softy when it came to her family.

They were currently back in Lima for the weekend to celebrate Santana's little sister Anna's quinceañera. It was the first time either of them had been back home since getting together and so Quinn had been a little nervous about meeting up with the Lopez's again. They had met before obviously, but she hadn't been Santana's girlfriend at the time.

But she had been worried for nothing. Maribel and Aiden, Santana's parents, had both been very quick and gracious in their welcoming of her into the family and Quinn had always gotten along with Santana's sister and brothers so nothing had changed there. They had been a little surprised that it was Quinn who was dating Santana, and considering the fact that they knew who her family was it was warranted, but they were fine with it. They were just happy that Santana was happy and they just wanted to make sure that they were treating each other right. They had certainly taken it better than her own mother who was currently refusing to speak with her.

Quinn supposed she should have felt sadder about it, but honestly her mother had ruined any real connection they may have had a long time ago. Quinn could take or leave the Fabray family, they no longer held any real connection with her. She hadn't spoken to her father since he had kicked her out of the house all those years ago and her sister even farther back than that. And as for extended family, well as scary as it was to admit, her family had been the nice ones of the Fabray clan so losing contact with them had been no real loss.

But that wasn't important, what was important was here and now and getting to watch her girl interact with her family and getting to see what a real family was like. And who knew, maybe someday she could be a real part of their family too. But for now she was content to be just the girlfriend and to sit back and watch her Santana look and feel so at ease.

Quinn giggles and laughs when she catches Santana's eye who waves at her from across the room, a big goofy grin on her face, and looks to be trying to mouth something to her when one of her cousins pulls on her arm to get her attention. She mouths sorry to Quinn with an apologetic smile but Quinn just waves her off. As this was happening she didn't see, but she certainly felt the presence of someone taking the seat next to her.

She discretely checks who it is out of the corner of her eye and sends up a quick prayer to give her the strength to not strangle the person who had just sat down. It was Santana's grandmother, Alma Lopez. There were few people outside of her father and the Fabray family that Quinn truly despised, and unfortunately for her the person who topped that list had chosen to sit down next to her and give her the stink eye.

Quinn hated the woman, not for anything she had ever done to her, but because of the way she treated Santana. Santana had been close to the woman all her life, they had had a warm and loving relationship all until Santana had come out to her. For the next few years she wouldn't even talk to Santana, and nothing anybody said or did could change her mind. Not that anybody had really tried anything from what Quinn could tell. Alma Lopez was the Matriarch of the family and in a family of equals she was just a little bit more equal than everyone else.

Recently she had started speaking to her granddaughter again but it was always to imply or say in some backhanded way that Santana was a sinner and that what she was doing and who she was, was wrong. Quinn could remember the first night that the woman had finally spoken to Santana, she had called her up and then Quinn had spent the rest of the night holding and comforting her crying girlfriend who had been told was a disappointment.

Yeah, that night, Alma Lopez was given a special place at the top of Quinn's shit list. But she knew how much being able to re-forge a relationship with the woman would mean to Santana and so Quinn decided to follow the golden rule and just not say anything. If she wanted to be a bitch and just sit there like that then that was her problem, not Quinn's. She wouldn't start anything for Santana's sake.

"So you must be the little whore who is leading my Santana down a life of sin and deviance." The older woman says conversationally to her, looking straight ahead as they both watch Santana with her family.

"And you're the bitch who abandoned her when she needed you most." Quinn replies just as smoothly. She wasn't going to start anything but if the woman wanted a fight then Quinn was more than happy to give it to her. Quinn enjoys the look of shock on the older woman's face at being spoken to like that, probably the first time it's happened in what must have been years, if not decades.

The older woman, for a moment looks like she had just been slapped but she recovered her composure remarkably fast, even by Fabray standards. She watches Quinn for a few seconds, sizing her up before finally saying what she had obviously come over here to say. "I don't appreciate you being here. I don't like that you are here ruining my Anna's quinceañera with your presence, I don't like that because of you my Santana is all confused in the head, thinking she's some kind of dyke. I don't like that you tempt her and corrupt her and lead her away from what God would have her do and I don't like you." She finishes glaring at Quinn as if her words should have some kind of devastating effect on her.

Quinn just arches an eyebrow at the older woman, completely unimpressed. "Then I guess it sucks for you because you happen to be talking to the one person in this entire building who doesn't give a flying fuck about what you like, think, or have to say.

Get comfortable because I'm going to be laying down some harsh truths for you. First and foremost, she is not your Santana, she's my Santana and don't you ever forget that. You gave up the right to call her yours when you tossed her to the side like she was nothing.

Two, I don't care that you don't like that I'm here. And as for ruining Anna's big day, from what I can see it's going great. I'm just sitting here enjoying the festivities and everyone else seems to be as well and the only way I can see this day being ruined is if you decided that you don't like something about Anna and you cut her out of your life for no good reason as well.

Three, Santana's not confused anymore. She's found herself and she's grown into the most remarkable woman you will ever meet. She struggled long and hard to come to terms with her sexuality, with realizing that she is exactly the way that God made her and no amount of useless antiquated dogma can change that.

Four, I didn't realize that you had a direct line to God and he told you first hand that he is disappointed with what Santana is doing and how she is living her life. Of course it's always been my experience that the people who use God as an excuse to justify their hatred are the people who are the least likely to be following his teachings. But hey I could be wrong, you could be that special sparkly snowflake that God has decided to communicate with.

And finally, like I said. I really don't care that you don't like me, because quite frankly it pales in comparison to how much I don't like you and especially what you do to Santana. Santana is a strong, confident, beautiful woman who knows who she is and what she wants. She is the best person I know. She has overcome every trial, every obstacle that the world has thrown at her and she has come out on top each and every time, and she has done it all without you.

I honestly think she should do to you, what I did with the people like you in my family and just cut you out of her life completely, but luckily for you Santana has the biggest heart out of anyone I know. She doesn't do anything halfway and despite the fact that you have been a colossal bitch to her she still loves you with all of her heart. And while I would tell you to go take a running leap, if you came to Santana and told her that you were sorry and that you loved her she would forgive you anything."

Quinn sneers at the older woman. "She was outed on television. She was struggling with a deeply personal matter and she felt scared and alone. She was afraid and she wasn't ready to come out but the decision was taken out of her hands and she was forced to step forward and face it. And right then, when she took that first scary step forward, when she turned to you for help and acceptance you abandoned her. She would forgive you anything if you asked it of her, but she shouldn't and you know it and it kills you inside because you know I'm right. You know that the problem is all on you and you hate it so you take it out on her and just now you tried to take it out on me. Grow up."

Quinn watches as Alma Lopez trembles with emotions. She is shaking with fury and Quinn idly wonders if the woman is going to attack her. "Who..." She takes a shaky calming breath. "Who the hell are you to talk to me like that!?" Alma finishes with a snarl, Quinn's words having affected her more than she would like to admit.

"Me? I'm the girl who is madly, deeply in love with your granddaughter. I'm the girl who is going to one day marry her, I'm the one who is going to raise a family with her. When she laughs, I'm the one who is going to be making her laugh. When she cries I'm the one who is going to be

the one who comforts her. When the world stands against her or in this case," Quinn looks Alma up and down with complete disdain, "when her family stands against her, I'm the first person who is going to step forward and stand by her side. And of the two of us I'm the one who loves her completely, irrevocably, and unconditionally."

Quinn waits a moment for her words to sink and when she's sure they have Quinn decides to end the conversation. "And finally, I'm the person who is going to cause a big scandal by asking her girlfriend to dance with her. Scary, I know, two people in love dancing together, what will the neighbors think? Now if you'll excuse me, I have better things to do than to listen to the hate filled ramblings of an old woman."

And with that Quinn pushes off her chair and leaves the other woman alone with her thoughts. When she reaches Santana she wraps her arms around her smiling girl and gives her a kiss on the cheek. "Hey, you won't mind if I steal her away for one dance, would you?" Quinn asks the people around and as luck would have it a slow song begins to play.

"Sorry, I've kind of abandoned you." Santana says as her hands rest comfortable on Quinn's hips as they slowly sway to the music.

"It's your sister's birthday, I don't mind. It's really nice to see you so... free, I guess." Unable to think of a way to really describe how Santana seemed around her family.

"Still-"

"No still, if you really want to make it up to me, wait till we're alone tonight." Quinn interrupts with a smirk on her face.

Santana laughs, before leaning in close and whispering in her ear, "You have no idea what you're in for later."

"Ooh, promises." Quinn teases back. "San..." Quinn says after a moment.

"Yeah babe?"

"I don't want you to be too mad but..."

"You had a fight with my abuela." Santana finishes for her, a small sad smile on her face. "I know, I saw her sit down next to you. She looked super pissed off and you had on your Ice Queen face, I was pretty sure hugs and puppies were not being discussed."

"I'm sorry, I didn't want to fight... no that's not true, but I didn't go looking for one. I just didn't walk away from it. So I'm sorry, I probably just made things worse between you two."

"Its fine Querida, honestly you probably handled it better than I would have if I had to talk to either of your parents."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah, at least you guys just talked, all I have for the assholes in your family-"

"So basically my entire family." Quinn interrupts with a laugh.

Santana laughs as well although she doesn't find it funny, but rather sad that Quinn's family was the way that it was. "Yeah, so basically your entire family. Anyway, all I have for them is five knuckles and a lot of anger so the fact that you kept it to just words is much appreciated and I know both you and her, you wouldn't have started anything and I know whatever she said to you couldn't have been all that nice."

"Still-"

"Uh-huh, no more apologies. I'm slow dancing with the most beautiful girl in the entire world, I should be thinking of ways to get you out of here and naked, not my," Santana shudders jokingly, "grandmother."

Quinn throws her head back and laughs before staring at Santana seductively and biting her lip. She tilts her head towards the door. "Just say the word."

Meet the Parents, by vampyre in hiding

Quinn was terrified. It was the annual Lopez picnic – an occurrence the last Sunday of every month. It was also the first time Quinn would be meeting Santana's parents...and the rest of her family.

"You can do this," she whispered to herself before exhaling heavily and knocking on the Lopez's front door.

There was a rustling and the yelling from the front of the house grew louder. Quinn could hear the doorknob moving and she prayed deeply that it was Santana or her little sister, Kara. It swung open and she sighed thanks to the heavens when it was just her loving girlfriend.

"Baby! You made it!" Santana squealed, throwing her arms around Quinn's neck and kissed her soundly.

Quinn felt the nerves drain away and she smiled against Santana's soft lips. "Hi, gorgeous."

"Come on. You have to meet everyone," Santana said, taking Quinn's hand and dragging her through the house, going through throngs of Lopez's.

There was a ton of people littering Santana's backyard and pool. Quinn noticed a few of Kara's friends from school and the rest were obviously a part of the Lopez family. They were splashing around and enjoying the get-together while most of the adults chatted about their months and lives.

"Mami," Santana greeted as she dragged her girlfriend toward the older version of Santana. "This is my girlfriend, Quinn. Q, this is my mami, Maria."

Quinn couldn't believe what her girlfriend would look like in twenty years. Her mother didn't look over twenty five and it amazed Quinn beyond compare. "Hi, Mrs. Lopez."

Maria studied her daughter's anxious girlfriend with a critical eye before a smile broke out across her face and she embraced the blonde, catching her off guard. "Welcome to the family, Quinn. It's nice to meet the girl Santana talks about all the time."

"It's nice to meet you too." She returned the hug awkwardly, not too sure what to think.

"You should take her to meet your father next before showing her off to the rest of the family." Santana grinned, but it was dimmed when Maria continued. "And don't go bragging to your cousin Raoul about being able to keep a girl longer than him. He's already jealous of your cousin Rachelle having been married before him."

"Raoul is an a-" she was cut off by Maria's glare.

"Don't talk that way about your cousin, Santana Victoria." Santana pouted. She knew not to go against her mami when she used her middle name.

Quinn smiled lovingly at Santana and grasped her hand. "Come on, San, I want to meet your dad."

Santana peered around before clearing her throat. "Papi!" She screamed so loud Quinn actually flinched while the rest of her family looked at her like she was crazy.

"Yes, Santi?" an older gentleman inquired from behind the pair. "Is there a reason you screeched?"

Santana swiveled to face her papi and grinned. "Papi, this is Quinn."

Enrique pursed his lips as he stared at Santana's girlfriend. He'd seen her once or twice before, but never really realized who she was.

"It's nice to finally put a face to a name." Quinn reached out and they shook hands. He seemed to size her up and Quinn merely watched him with curiosity. "You might want to go ahead and introduce her to the rest of the family. They haven't stopped watching you two since you came in," he winked before walking over to his wife and hugging her close.

"I'll introduce you to my Aunt Candice. She's married to Uncle Ricardo." When Quinn's face came up blank, the Latina giggled. "He's the one that let us rent out the restaurant in Cleveland."

"Oh..."

Santana smiled and kissed Quinn's cheek softly.

"Ew!" Jake, one of Ricardo's kids, whined, shaking his head in disgust, "Sanny! You'll get cooties."

Santana grinned before leaning down and kissing his forehead. She rose up and gasped in mock horror. "Oh no, now you have them too!"

Jake 'eeked' and ran to the pool, jumping straight in without stop.

"That was mean," Quinn chided half-heartedly.

Santana shrugged. "Oh, well." She laced her fingers with Quinn's and slowly introduced her to everyone, stopping every-so-often to make sure Quinn was handling her family okay. Santana managed to put Raulo last on their introduction list.

"Quinn, this is Raoul," Santana said with a look of disdain. She didn't trust her cousin not to make a move on her girl and she didn't want to have to kick his ass. She trusted Quinn, just not him.

"It's an honor," he smiled charmingly and bent to take her hand and kiss it, but Quinn snatched her hand back. He appeared annoyed, but the blonde didn't care that much.

"It's nice to meet you," Quinn replied. She subtly inched closer to Santana and the shorter girl wrapped her arm around Quinn's waist.

Raoul scrunched his nose up. "Santana, why don't you go get us some drinks while I get to know your *beautiful* girlfriend," he said with a sleazy smile.

"Now, wait –" Quinn touched Santana's arm and her rage eased away. "Alright. What do you want, baby?"

"Just some water." She kissed Santana's cheek and watched her walk away without even asking Raoul what he wanted.

"So," Raoul drawled, "How would you like to be with a real Lopez?"

Quinn sputtered at the blunt proposition. "Excuse me?"

Raoul stepped dangerously close to Quinn and whispered, "Come on. I'll show you what it's like to be with a Lopez man. You'll leave my cousin the minute..."

He was shoved hard from the side, cutting him off violently.

"Oh hell no, you don't, you piece of shit! You don't and I repeat *don't* talk to my girlfriend like that."

Raoul dusted himself off and opened his mouth, but Santana's knee slammed into his crotch and she took him by the ear. She dragged him toward the pool and shoved him forward. He nearly fell in, but he managed to catch his footing, but Santana pressed her finger into his back and he fell forward into the pool with a splash.

Santana walked away with a huge smile and returned to Santana's side, linking their arms. "Come on, babe, let's go talk to someone else." She brought them toward the house and Quinn raised a brow. "Okay," the Latina admitted. "There won't be any talking done." She winked and Quinn laughed.

After a few hours, the Lopez party wound down, leaving the four main Lopez's and Quinn in the house.

"Did you really have to push Raoul into the pool?" Maria giggled.

"He went too far," Santana replied simply, pulling Quinn nearly into her lap.

"Well, it's getting late," Enrique announced with a clap, "But Quinn," he waited until he caught her eye, "You are more than welcome anytime and I do hope you decide to come back for the next Lopez get-together."

Quinn smiled. "I wouldn't miss it for the world."

"Good," Santana said, kissing her girlfriend's cheek. "Good."

Welcome, by wonderlandwaitforme (BlessYourSoul)

Meeting the family of a significant other is always a nerve wracking experience, because, first impressions are important after all. Questions constantly stream in to the mind; *will they like me? What if they don't? What if they disapprove?* This event could be described as a make or break point in a relationship. Regarding Quinn and Santana, will it make them or break them? Who knows....

Fidgeting nervously in her seat is one Quinn Fabray, looking out of the window, distractedly chewing on her lip, waiting for the car to arrive at the Lopez household. Sitting across from her in the driver's seat is Santana, her best friend, roommate, girlfriend, and love of her life. She reaches across the centre console to grab Santana's hand, hoping her nerves don't shine through, but Santana knows her too well and gives her hand a comforting squeeze, temporarily assuaging some of her fears. She's met some of the Lopez clan before, namely her brother Diego and her sister Marie and a few unnamed cousins, and of course she's met her parents, Marco and Maribel Lopez, in their high school days. However, that was before they came out as a couple, and she was anxious to be re-introduced in some way. What made her feel uneasy though, was that she would be meeting Santana's abuela, Camila Lopez.

Santana had been devastated when her abuela had basically abandoned her when she came out in high school, leaving Quinn to pick up the pieces. Over time, Santana and Camila patched things up and Camila is relatively tolerant of Santana's sexuality. But throw in having an actual girlfriend, a pale, blonde, WASP descendant, and what do you have? Impending Doom. At least that's what Quinn thought.

The pair had been back in Lima for a week and had gone to visit Quinn family, which consisted of her mother Judy, and older sister Frannie, a few days prior. It had gone well, seeing as the Fabray house is no longer ruled by Quinn's ignoramus father, Russell, and Santana had been welcomed with opened arms. *I swear they like her more than me.* Quinn rolled her eyes at the thought. Who wouldn't love Santana? She's beautiful, talented, witty, caring, loving, and beautiful, *did I say that already.*

The blonde is pulled out of her Santana appreciation when they pull up in front of a modest house in the suburbs of Lima. *Lima Heights my ass.* Silently, the two leave the car and meet at the beginning of the path that leads towards the house. Quinn reaches for Santana's hands, trying to ease her anxieties when she sees the front door open. Gulping audibly, she sees a woman she knows to be Maribel stepping out of the house and walking towards them.

"Mija!" She wraps her arms around Santana, eliciting a giggle from the younger Latina.

"Hey mami, I missed you."

"We missed you too mija. Now, are you going to introduce me to this gorgeous girl you have next to you?" Santana laughs as her mother winks in Quinn's direction, making said girl blush all the way up to her ears.

"Mami, meet my girlfriend, Quinn Fabray." She said proudly. Before she could do anything, Quinn is pulled in to a bone crushing hug. She hears Maribel whisper in her ear.

"I'm glad you make my Santi happy." Quinn pulls away and nods, a smile tugging at her lips.

"I'm glad too." Maribel beams at this and pulls the two girls in to the house.

As they enter the living room, Quinn feels her nerves rise as she sees Camila sitting in an armchair in the corner. For a little old lady she sure is intimidating. Sitting on the couch are Santana's siblings, controllers in their hands playing some war game, or is it Mario? *Heavens knows*. Upon entering all eyes fall on them, some welcoming, and one in particular makes Quinn feel dread throughout her body.

Marco Lopez, comes from the kitchen and seeing Santana, rushes towards her, hugging her and lifting her off the ground, making her squeal in happiness. This in turn makes Quinn smile, loving how close Santana is with her family. Releasing Santana, Marco turns to her, and pulls her in to a hug as well, catching Quinn by surprise as he lifts her as well. She can hear Santana laughing behind her, telling her papi to '*Put her down!*' He does so instantly, and smiles at Quinn, before escaping to the kitchen where the faint sound of football can be heard.

Introductions and becoming reacquainted stop there, Camila Lopez not even rising from her seat, even after Quinn walked to her and introduced herself, using as much Fabray charm as possible, her attempted handshake being ignored.

The rest of the evening went off without a hitch, despite the tension between Quinn and Camila, all other members present treating the blonde as if she was their own. It calmed Quinn for the most part, however Camila's rejection and clear cold attitude towards her stung a bit. But, she was a Fabray, and she just powered through, engaging in conversation as often as possible, offering to help clear the dishes after dinner, and helping Marie with her English homework seeing as she was still in high school.

Hugs and sweet goodbyes were shared at the end of the night as Quinn and Santana were set to leave. Santana and her abuela were in the middle of their goodbye when Quinn heard something that made her blood run cold and boil at the same time. '*I don't like that girl!*'. Steeling her resolve, Quinn stood straight and walked with an icy calmness towards the two. Santana had a frown on her face, preparing to berate her grandmother when Quinn cut her off.

"And what exactly is it that you don't like Mrs. Lopez?" Quinn asked, her tone sending Santana back to their days of ruling the school with their HBIC attitudes. Ignoring Camila's wide eyes, Quinn continued. "Is it that I'm a girl? That I'm white? Not the perfect *Latino* you imagined her with. Is it that I love her with all of my heart? That I care, help and support her? Or do you not like that I make her happy, smile, laugh? Because I can tell you *Mrs. Lopez*." Quinn sneers. "is that no matter what you say, I will continue to love Santana and be a part of her life, whether you like it or not!"

The room was silent, you could hear someone sneezing in Madagascar it was that quiet. Santana stood wide eyed, her parents trying to hide their smirk, *I knew there was a reason I liked this*

girl, Marco thought. Her siblings gaped at Quinn, not knowing if they should be scared for her or glad she stood up for herself. Camila, on the other hand, donned a blank expression, that is until she quirked her brow, looking impressed.

"You've picked a good one here mija." Quinn blinked. *Is this real life?* Santana beamed, wrapping an arm around her girlfriend's frozen body. "Welcome to the family blondie." And with that, Camila left the room. Quinn stood dumbstruck. *Seriously, is this real life?*

Parental Guidance Is Advised, by WordsHaveMelodies

Your parents sucked and you'd told Santana exactly why a couple months before when she'd asked about them. You'd never get to introduce her to your dad because he wasn't in your life anymore and you wouldn't wish the drunken craziness that was your mother upon even your worst enemy, so that meant that she was pretty much safe as far as parental approvals go. It's not like you would've cared if they gave their approval either way because you were in love with her and that was all that mattered but still, it would've been nice to have.

Her parents were different though. She and her mom were super close and although her and her dad weren't, he still pretty much gave her whatever she wanted, whenever she wanted. You'd been together for almost 10 months and even though you'd spoken to her cousins and even to her uncle that one time, you still hadn't got to meet or talk to her parents yet and she hadn't mentioned it either. You wondered if she thought that you weren't worth introducing them to.

"Hey Santana," her throat making a hmmm sound while her eyes stayed focused on her textbook, "Can I ask you something?"

"Sure," she says glancing at you briefly before going back to her notes, "Unless it's something sexual. You're gonna have to wait until I've at least memorized this riveting chapter on brain function for that."

"No it's not something sexual," you say sitting up and closing your notebook, "It's something technically personal actually."

She stops looking at the textbook then.

"Sounds serious," the pen nestled between her teeth when she sits up and runs a careless hand through her hair slightly making you rethink this whole 'not sexual' question thing, "What do you want to know?"

"Have you ever introduced anyone to your parents?" the pen you once envied hitting the book on your bed with a thud, "I only ask because-"

"You want to meet my parents?" her lips quirking in amusement, "Why? My expertly done marks of approval no longer good enough for you?"

"Your vanity isn't nearly as amusing as you would think Lopez," her smug retort of 'uh huh' paired with another careless hand through her hair, "And I never said that I wanted to meet them, I just asked if anyone ever had."

"Does it matter?"

"Yes, Santana. Yes it does."

"Why?" she asks with a shrug, "It's not really that big of a deal if you ask me."

"Maybe," of course it was a big deal! "But I still want to know."

"Fine," she says through a sigh, "Yes, I have introduced someone to my parents before."

"I see."

"No, uh huh you do not get to do that Fabray."

"Do what?"

"Get irrationally mad at me for that."

"I'm not mad and when I am it's never irrational."

"Oh please, you're the queen of irrationality."

"And you're the queen of taking things out of context," you say ignoring her protests, "I'm not mad."

"Oh yeah? Then why are your arms folded and your eyes burning holes into my head?" and you roll your eyes because you don't have an even remotely logical response, "Seriously Q it wasn't that big of a deal. It wasn't even like a planned thing or anything, it just sort of happened and it was weird."

You'd never admit it but the fact that it wasn't planned did make you feel a whole lot better.

"Look," her hands pulling yours away from your chest and tangling your fingers together, "When the time is right I'll let you meet my parents ok? I'll actually plan it out and everything if it's really that much of a big thing to you."

"That's the thing Santana, I don't want you to just do it for me," her head tilting to the left, "I want you to do it because you want to, because you think that I'm worth it. Do you think that I'm worth it?"

"Of course I think you're worth it," and she looks at you like you're crazy, "Why would you think that I didn't?"

"I don't know," your eyes focused on your still entangled hands, "Maybe because we've been together for like 10 months and you've never once mentioned it."

"That doesn't mean that I haven't been thinking about it," a smile coming to her face at the surprise on yours, "There's never been anyone that I've actually wanted to meet my parents more than I want them to meet you. I just want it to be perfect is all."

"Really?"

"Really," and you accept her unspoken kiss request meeting her halfway, "but now that we've got the personal questions out of the way," her eyes taking on a playful gleam, "I'm more than ready for something sexual."

You had refrained from bringing it up after that and she hadn't either. You wanted to but you decided to just sit back and let her do it in her own time, which just so happened to be exactly one month afterwards during a leisurely stroll hand in hand through central park.

"What do you want to do this weekend?"

"I thought we were going to see the new exhibit at the MET this weekend?" you respond as you follow her lead towards the bench, "You don't even like art but you've been looking forward to it more than I have."

"I was looking forward to it because you were looking forward to it," her other hand reaching into her study bag to pull out an envelope, "But I know that you've been looking forward to this even more so here."

You take the expensive looking envelope from her hands before taking a seat on the bench. It's addressed to you and your name's written all fancy in black with a calligraphy pen.

"What is this?" you ask turning it over in your hands, "And why is it so heavy?"

"It's heavy because apparently regular old cards and words that aren't written all fancy like just won't do for a Lopez invitation," her head shaking in annoyance or possibly amusement, you weren't sure, "It's from my parents."

"Your parents?" the envelope suddenly feeling a lot heavier, "You're kidding?"

"You wanted to meet them right?" she says with a shrug, "I told them and my dad's in New York for a work thing this entire weekend so we'll be having dinner with them both on Friday."

"Why the invitation then?" your eyes locked on the card that you had still yet to open.

"It's her new hobby," she adds through another shrug before placing a kiss to your cheek, "Tomorrow I'm taking you shopping."

Tonight was the night that you were meeting Santana's parents for the first time and you were no closer now to being all Zen about it like she was than you were two days ago.

"Quinn baby what are you doing?" she asks trying to stifle a laugh, "Are you seriously praying right now?"

"Don't laugh," you respond sitting on the edge of the bed where you'd just been on your knees, "Praying helps."

"Yes it does," her smile one of unbridled amusement, "So what advice did Jesus give?"

And you smack her lightly on the arm because now wasn't the time.

"Ow! I was kidding," she says with a laugh, gingerly rubbing the spot on her arm before holding out her hand to you, "They'll love you so stop worrying so much and you'll be fine."

"Are you sure because I mean-"

"Yes I'm sure," her hands slipping around your waist, "You're fine, we're fine, they're fine, it's all fine."

"Kiss for good luck?"

And she rolls her eyes before doing exactly that.

"Table for Lopez," Santana says to the hostess as you enter the Ritz Carlton dining room, "They should be here already."

"Yes they are," and Santana takes your hand in hers when she feels you shift beside her, "Right this way."

"I don't think you should be trying to start a fight with the hostess right before you meet my parents," Santana whispers as you walk through the dining room, "Imagine what Jesus would say."

"Haha very funny," you whisper back as you entered into what looked like a super private area, there were literally only a handful of tables in here, "And I wasn't going to fight with her, I was merely just going to politely ask her to remove her eyes from your cleavage."

"You said the same thing about the girl from Starbucks if I remember correctly," the smile evident in her voice, "Now thanks to you we've been banned from there for life."

"Their coffee sucks anyway."

"I thought you liked that?" She whispers directly into your ear and you almost trip on your own feet trying to pretend like you weren't suddenly harboring thoughts of abandoning dinner.

"Santana!" your eyes immediately drawn to the woman with the long dark hair and warm chocolate eyes who looked so much like the girl who was embracing her, "Mi carino, te echo de menos mucho."

"I missed you too," she says placing kisses to both of her cheeks before turning her attention to the man standing beside her, "Papi. Haven't seen you in awhile."

"Santana we've been through this," his jaw tenses exactly like you've seen hers do more than a few times before he audibly sighs and hugs her to him, "I miss you to."

You can't help the smile that comes to your face at the sight of the strongest girl you know turning to complete mush in her fathers' arms. He hadn't been around much when she was growing up due to his crazy doctor schedule but for as much as she denied that she missed him, you know that she did.

"Santana where are your manners?" two steps to his right bringing him directly in front of you, his eyes dark and unreadable just like hers could sometimes be, "You must be the Quinn that we've heard so much about."

"I was going to introduce her before you started slobbering all over me," she says appearing beside you, "Please refrain from doing the same to her."

"Watch your mouth mija," his eyes narrow even further, "Don't take that tone with me."

"We've been reunited for less than 5 minutes and already with the fighting," her mother says hitting them both lightly on the arm before turning her attention to you, "It's nice to finally meet you Quinn and please pay no attention to them. Apparently they didn't care to read my 'be on your best behaviour' memo."

"I have work in two hours," Santana's quiet retort of 'of course you do' going unnoticed by no one, "Can we get this show on the road please?"

"Do you really have to go?" Santana asks in the quietest voice that you've ever heard, "I thought tonight would be just us?"

"I got called in-"

"You always get called in," her voice slightly higher, "Something is always more important than family time."

"Santana-"

"No don't Santana me-"

"Santana!" and even you flinch at the tone of his voice, "We will not do this here or now, entiendes?"

"Si papi," she responds after awhile, "I understand."

You take your seats then, quietly. She's sitting next to you, with her mother in front of her and her father in front of you and the tension's so thick that it's hard to breathe.

"So Quinn," he begins after the waiter leaves with your orders, "I've heard that you're into art."

"Yes, yes I am," you respond under his steady gaze, "I draw and I take pictures to."

"Is an artist what you want to be?" his arms folding over his chest while he regards you, "Or is it just a hobby?"

"It's what I want to be," you answer honestly, "I've loved art for as long as I can remember and I don't really see myself being anything else."

"Are you any good?" her mother asks.

"She's more than good," Santana answers for you, "She wins the school art competitions all the time."

"I'm sure your parents are very proud."

"Like you would know anything about that." Santana bites in his direction but her mothers' hand on his bicep stops his retort.

"Santana," her mother admonishes, "Cut it out."

"May I be excused?" her chair already pushed back, "I need a moment."

"God dammit Alejandro," her mother getting up from her seat to follow her, "Must we end it like this every time?"

She leaves then and you're tempted to follow but you decide to stay seated instead.

"When she was a baby I promised myself that I would do anything for her, that I would do anything to make her happy," he says after awhile, "I work my ass off to make sure that she has everything that she needs and what does it get me? She hates me that's what."

"She doesn't hate you." you hazard to say.

"Then why does she always get so crazy when I'm around?" the frustration apparent in his eyes, "Help me understand because I've tried to but I don't."

"She doesn't care about the material things. She appreciates them and she loves them because they're gifts from you but she'd rather have you over stuff any day," you answer with a shrug, "She just wants you to be around more."

"Thank you Quinn," you see the realization dawn behind his eyes and when he smiles you know where she got it from, "Would you be willing to help me with something?"

—

"I can't believe that I thought tonight would be any different," Santana says as you walk hand in hand down the street that led to her apartment, "I mean how stupid was I to think that he'd ever choose me over work."

The rest of dinner had been uneventful. He'd been completely quiet for the most part and she'd been woefully subdued. Her mother liked you though and she had told you that much when you hugged her goodbye a few hours ago. It wasn't exactly how you pictured meeting them going but at least you'd met them.

"He loves you though," her scoff coming as predicted, "Really he does. He just wants you to be happy."

"You sound like my mother," she says as you walk into the building, "Who thinks you're a godsend by the way."

"That's because I am," her lips quirking in amusement, "But now I must bid you adieu."

"What? Why?" her smile turning to a pout, "I thought you were spending the weekend? Who's going to cuddle with me tonight?"

"Jesus is," you say placing a chaste kiss to her lips, "I'll see you tomorrow though ok?"

"Don't count on it blondie."

"I love you too."

She was going to kill you when she walked into her apartment and found him waiting there for her but it needed to be done. Maybe you were a sucker for fairy tale endings or maybe it was because you'd probably be willing to fix your relationship with your dad if it ever came down to it but they needed to talk, not yell and you were happy to help. You just wanted to see her happy to.

"Quinn!" she shouts as soon as she enters your apartment the next day, "We need to talk."

"Bedroom!" you shout back.

If you were going to die, you wanted to do it in your safe place.

She walks in, drops her bag on the floor and props herself against the wall.

"I already know what you're going to say and I'm sorry," you begin before she can start yelling, "It's just that he-"

"I'm not mad."

"I know you're going to... wait what?" her words finally catching up to your brain, "You're not mad?"

"Nope," she says shrugging off her jacket and kicking off her shoes, "I actually came over here to say thank you actually."

"Really?" your eyebrow rising in skepticism, "Where's your dad?"

"Mingling with New York's elite," her body now laying across your bed with her head on your chest, "He said to tell you 'thank you' by the way."

"So I'm guessing it went well?" your hand playing with her hair.

"After the initial shock wore off which I mean, thank you for the warning princess," she says glaring at you without any real power behind it, "We talked about a lot of stuff, like actually talked and he told me what you said to him. Every thing's not fixed but he gets it now and I owe it all to you."

"No you don't."

"Yes, Yes I do," she says rolling off of you to prop herself up on her elbows, "He never would have understood if it wasn't for you taking the time to explain it to him."

"So you're really not going to kill me?" you ask just for fun and you're rewarded with her laughter and then a blinding smile.

"Nope. I have something way better than death in mind."

There's a moment that follows hours afterwards when you awake naked, sated and wrapped around her sleeping so soundly next to you and it's in that moment that you realize that there was nothing at all better than being alive.

Meet the Family, by WriteForYou

"No." Santana replies flatly. Santana and I were alone in the locker rooms after Cheerios practice.

"Please, Santana!" I beg. "It will be only for the weekend!"

Santana huffs. "Q, why can't you take someone else?"

"Because..." *You're the only one that I want to be with.* "...everyone else has already made plans. I don't want to spend this Christmas weekend with my entire family alone in a cabin."

She crosses her arm and leans against the locker. "And what makes you think I don't have plans this Christmas?" She retorts.

"I know you don't have plans because you were boasting how you had the entire house to yourself this break since both of your parents will be on business trips." I quip. Santana is about to make a snide comment when I interject. "Would you really rather stay at your big house by yourself watching re-runs of Christmas movies or spend a weekend with me in a beautiful cabin with a warm fireplace and cup of hot chocolate?"

Santana mules on the thought for a moment before responding. "Okay, even if I do say yes—which I haven't—would you're folks even want me there? Would your extremely religious family want a lesbian Latina with them for the whole weekend?" Santana articulates.

"They said I could bring whoever I wanted."

She stares at me for a moment. "And you want me?" I nod my head. "I don't know Quinn...I have a bad feeling about all of this."

"It'll be fine, Santana. Please, San. Don't let me endure this torture all by myself."

Santana exasperates. "Fine." I smile and hug her.

Friday

Santana is standing at the front porch with her duffel bag swung over her shoulder. Her eyes were glaring at me and her jaw hinged open.

"Fuc—" I immediately cover Santana's mouth. I look over at my little cousin and conservative family members hoping they didn't catch on.

"I'm sorry." I whisper to her closely.

I slowly remove my hand from her mouth to let her speak. "You didn't tell me we were all driving in the same car!" Santana whispers harshly.

"We're not. We're riding with my cousin and his girlfriend." I reply evenly.

"Fabray, I thought it was just going to be me and you in your car trailing behind everyone else." Santana growls.

"I know, I'm sorry I didn't tell you. I knew you would back out immediately if I told you." Santana gives me a look. "It will just be for a couple of hours to the cabin, you'll survive."

"4 hours! Quinn, 4!" She barks.

"Shhhhhh." I chide. "Look, I'll make it up to you."

Santana raises her eyebrow. "Really? How?"

I shrug my shoulders. "I don't know. What do you want?"

A coy smile paints her face. "Let me think about it and I'll let you know." I nod my head.

"Quinnie let's go!" My cousin, Gabe, yells out from his car.

"We're coming!" I yell back. I look over to Santana who had a sour look on her face once again. "Come on, grumpy." I reach for her hand and pull her along.

"NO."

Santana and I were squished in the back between my two other cousins, Alice and Tyler. Alice was only 6 years old and the sweetest thing ever. The next cutie was Tyler, Alice's older brother who was 7. In the front of the car was my cousin Gabe and his girlfriend Anne.

Gabe and Anne were in the whole "honeymoon phase" and were overtly expressive in their budding love. They sang to each other when a love song came on. They would make loving comments like "No, I love you more!" and that went on for almost 30 minutes into the trip.

Needless to say, Santana was already losing it. I tried calming her down for the second hour by wrapping my hand around hers. She was about to break when *another* Taylor Swift song came on and Anne started screeching at the top of her lungs.

"I rather listen to the hobbit talk about her love for Finn than *this*." Santana whispers in my ear. I nod in agreement. *She's so close*. The warmth of her breath close to me felt so calming. "I mean she sounds like a cat hacking on a hairball." I nudge her and bite my lip to keep myself from laughing. I feel Santana lips curl up against my ear and I get goose bumps from the touch. She continues to make more jokes about Anne's horrendous singing and I have to bury my head in her shoulder at one point because I nearly broke out in laughter.

But by the third hour, Santana bursts out 'NO!' when Gabe and Anne suggest that we should go Christmas caroling around the town by the cabin.

"Oh come on, Santana! It'll be fun!" Gabe looks at her through the rear view mirror.

"Yea! It's a great way to bond!" Anne looks lovingly at Gabe.

Santana rolls her eyes.

"It's almost Christmas, Santana! Get in the spirit!" Anne says perkily.

"Alice, hun, you want to go caroling with us right?" Gabe asks the six year old.

Alice shakes her head and yawns. "Don't wanna."

"Why not, sweetie? It's Christmas time! We need to be jolly!" Anne says and I swear Santana is ticking to her last seconds when I feel her grip my hand tightly.

"I'm tired of hearing you sing." Alice says flatly. Everyone goes silent, everyone but Santana that is. Santana is laughing her ass off. I should be angry with her but I just can't when she laughs like that. I love watching her laugh openly unashamed of what others think of her—it's one my favorite things about her.

"See? Even the little squirt is sick of all this singing." Santana looks down at Alice and holds out her hand for a high-five. "You're cool mini-Fabray." Alice blushes and smiles shyly. She high-fives Santana and sits back in her seat feeling proud.

Anne puffs her cheek out and slides into her seat in humiliation. Gabe holds her hand and soothes her.

"It's okay, Annie-bear. I love listening to you sing all day. I never get sick of it." Anne swoons and kisses Gabe's cheek sloppily.

Santana silently scoffs and leans her head on my shoulder. I on the other hand, found it actually sweet. I mean, yea her singing is way off and annoying...but Gabe still loves her regardless. Isn't that something we all want? Someone to love us because of the parts that we may feel insecure about?

We're about an hour away from the cabin when Tyler really had to pee. Santana didn't argue since she was dying to stretch her legs anyway. We pull up at a gas station and we all step out of the car stretching our sore limbs.

Gabe takes Tyler to the men's bathroom while Anne puts gas into the car. I look down at Alice who was still a little tired from taking a nap earlier.

"Alice, you want to go buy something to snack on?" I ask her sweetly.

"Can I?" I nod my head and she grins widely. I hold onto her little hand. "Santana you want come with?" I look over my shoulder to see Santana with a soft look in her eyes as she leaned against the car. "What?" I was curious as to the way she was looking at me.

She shakes her head and pushes herself off the car. Santana walks next to me and playfully bumps my hip. "Nothing." She then grabs my free hand into hers. I raise my eyebrow at the sudden initiation. It was usually I who made the first move. "Come on, Fabray, you need to buy me and mini-Fabray some sweets for the road."

"Did you guys buy the whole store?" Anne stares at us incredulously when we return with our arms full.

Tyler and Anne were munching on potato chips as they crawl back happily into the car. Gabe looks at them and then at me.

"You know Aunt Maud isn't going to like this one bit, right?" I roll my eyes at my cousin.

"Well she doesn't have to know right? They're kids, Gabe. Plus, it's Christmas." Gabe nods his head in understanding and gets back into the driver seat.

"After you." Santana holds the door for me.

"Why are you being so chivalrous?" I inquire.

"Because I want the window seat, duh." She states.

"Of course you do."

—

When we finally reached the cabin, Santana jumps out with glee and gapes in awe at the size of the cabin. It was a three story cabin on a large plot of land that has been in our family for a while.

"This place is huge!" Santana exclaims.

I chuckle. "Okay enough with the gawking. Help me with my luggage."

Santana looks over at me. "Why'd you bring so much stuff anyways?" She throws her duffel bag over her shoulder and sets her suitcase down to help me.

"Better to pack more than less." I reply.

"I guess. But it's a lot more shit to carry."

We enter the cabin and Santana and I climbed up the stairs (quickly as possible to avoid the adults) and enter the room near the balcony. Santana immediately drops our luggage and jumps onto the king sized bed.

"Yessss." She moans in contentment.

I pull off my scarf and coat and join her on the bed. I look at her and smile. "See not so bad, right?"

"We'll see Fabray. We'll see."

For the rest of the day we decided to just get settled in and unpack our things. All the women in the family were huddled in the kitchen cooking and gossiping while all the men were glued to the sofas watching football on the flat screen. The kids were by the fireplace roasting marshmallows and laughing. Gabe and Anne were sitting at the dining table drinking a cup of hot chocolate and whispering sweetly in each others ears. Santana and I were in our room...well I was trying to get Santana to leave.

"I don't wanna."

"Santana, the quicker we go the quicker we both can come back in here." I put my hands on my hips. Santana still hasn't moved from her spot on the bed that she has curled into. "You think I want to be conversing with them and talking about superficial things? No. But if we don't go now we'll be pestered even more later." Santana groans into the pillow and reluctantly rolls over.

She holds her arms up. "Pull me up."

I roll my eyes. "You big baby." I grab her arms and tug at her forcefully. Santana springs forward when I pull her with our faces inches apart. I breathe in sharply at our close proximity. Santana eyes widen a bit but she makes no sudden movements. We stay frozen, not daring to make the first move. My cheeks are warm and my heart is beating harshly against my chest.

"Quinn! Santana! Dinner!"

My mother's voice brings us back to reality and has us sprinting apart from each other swiftly. Santana chuckles awkwardly. "Uh...so I guess its show time huh?" I nod my head.

"Now before we eat, let's all join hands and thank the lord for this lovely meal." My father states. I'm used to this since I have to do it on a daily basis but I know Santana feels out of place. She stares at me and mouths 'really?' I give her an apologetic look but reach for hand anyways.

My father leads the prayer and we all have our eyes shut. I, momentarily, peek and look over at Santana who is squinting her eyes and fidgeting in her seat uncomfortably. *Adorable.*

"Amen." We all repeat in unison, Santana a second after. I have to bite my lip to keep myself from laughing and teasing her.

"So Santana why aren't you spending time with your family this holiday?" My father asks. I glare at him for asking such a thing.

Santana swallows her food before responding. "They're on a business trip. My dad is in Guatemala helping out a medical research lab. While my mom is somewhere in Europe." Santana plays with the peas on her plate.

"How unfortunate." My mother says pitifully.

"Are you a lesbian?" Tyler blurts out.

"Tyler!" I hiss at him. He looks down ashamed when I yell at him.

"This is no time to discuss such a thing." My Aunt Maud tells her son.

"What's a lesbian?" Alice peeps out confused.

Santana shifts in her seat uncomfortably.

"It's something disgusting." My father spats. *I fucking hate him.* I see Santana tense up and clench her jaw.

"DAD!" I yell at him. *Seriously! I told him before the trip to not start anything*

Santana slowly gets up. "Thanks for the meal but I'm leaving." She stomps away from the dining table and slammed the door to our room.

"That girl is in my prayers." My Aunt shakes her.

I slam my fist on the table. "What is wrong with you people?!" I seethe.

"Quinn!" My mother scolds.

"She's a *guest*! And this is how you treat her?"

"She's your guest. Not ours. We're not obligated to treat that thing as a guest." My father sips on his wine.

I scoff in disgust. "You know what? Spend Christmas without me. If this is how you're going to act I don't want to be around you guys." I push myself roughly away from the dining table and walk away.

"Quinn! Get back here this instant!" My father roars. But I continue to walk towards our room.

When I open the door and walk into the room, I see Santana stuffing her things angrily in her duffel bag. *She's leaving.*

"Santana..."

"Don't, Quinn." She spats. "Just fucking don't. I know when I'm not wanted and I don't plan on staying in a place where I'm not wanted."

"I want you here."

Santana pauses in her packing and doesn't move.

"I want you here with me. I want to spend my Christmas with *you*."

Santana drops her things and massages her temples in frustration. "Quinn, I can't stay here in this cabin with your homophobic family. I don't think I can even sleep in fear that they'll sneak in here and try to do something to me."

"But..."

"I know you want to spend Christmas with me Quinn...but I just can't stay here. I have to go." She sighs heavily.

"Take me with you then." My eyes locked on her and in a steady stance.

"What?" She looks at me bewildered.

"Let's get out of here and have a Christmas of our own."

Santana has a puzzled expression on her face. "What about your folks?"

"I don't care. I have no desire to spend another shitty Christmas with them when I could have an amazing one with you." I tell her without hesitation.

Santana tilts her head. "Really?"

I move close to her and wrap my arms around her waist. "Really." Santana smiles and her eyes shine.

"Okay then. Where do you want to go?" She whispers.

"Anywhere." I bite my lips. *Anywhere as long as you are there.*

"How about we just drive back down to old boring Lima but make stops at places we think are interesting?"

"I like that plan." I smile.

"Sweet! Whose car are we stealing?" Santana jumps in excitement.

"Why steal when you can just ask?" Santana and I turn around to see my cousin Gabe and Anne by the door frame.

"What are you talking about?" Santana questions.

"I'm saying let's get out of here."

"You want to go with us?" I say surprised.

"Yea! If you guys leave then there really is no point in staying." Anne tells us. "I mean, I love your cousin," She kisses him on the cheek. "but I don't think I can spend another minute with those bigots."

Oh, Gabe. You better keep this girl around.

"So...you don't care that I'm a lesbian?" Santana hesitates.

"Everyone deserves to be with the person they love no matter. Society is too hung up on labels." Gabe answers seriously.

"I never knew you thought this way, Gabe." I tell him honestly.

"Well if you called and visited me more often you would!" He jokes.

I laugh and apologize. *I really should hang out with him more.*

"So it's settled! We're all leaving and going on a road trip!" Anne exclaims.

I look to Santana. "Is that okay?"

She smiles. "Yea, I think I'd like that."

Anne claps her hand. "I have one condition though!" We all look at her in expectation. "You have to sing with us when a Christmas song comes on!"

Santana jaw drops. "No way!"

"You must or else we won't drive you!" Gabe rebuttals.

"Then we'll just steal the other car!" Santana says confidently.

"San...we can't do that. It would be better if we took Gabe's car.

"But..."

"Come on, S. It's better than enduring my folk's right?"

Her shoulders drop. "Yea." She pinches her nose. "Fine. We'll sing stupid Christmas songs with you guys." Anne and Gabe jump in excitement.

"Okay! We'll leave tomorrow morning!" Gabe exclaims.

"Wait why not now?" I ask.

"Look how dark it is outside." Gabe points to the window. "You seriously want to drive in the dark on an icy road?"

Santana and I stare outside and didn't say anything.

"Exactly." Gabe says triumphantly. "Now we'll leave at 7!"

"In the morning?!" Santana yells.

Saturday

"Coffee." Santana demands.

I hand her a mug of my coffee and she drinks it soundlessly. She mewls in satisfaction and leans her head on my shoulder blade.

"It's way too early. And I'm freezing."

"I told you to layer up." She mumbles against my shoulder.

Santana and I were waiting outside by the car for Gabe and Anne. All of our things were stuffed in the trunk of the car and we were just about ready to go.

"What's taking them so long?"

Santana lifts her head up from my shoulder. "Probably screwing each other." She states nonchalantly.

"Ewww gross, San." I elbow her.

Within seconds, Gabe and Anne rush out of the house with flushed faces.

"Sorry we took so long." Gabe flusters with Anne shyly following behind him.

Santana whispers in my ear. "Told you." She boasts.

I make a disgusted face and cringe. "Let's just go."

Santana opens the car door for me when two tiny feet and a lanky boy come running towards us.

"Wait for us!" Tyler runs toward us with his little sister.

"What are you guys doing?" I inquire.

"We want to go with you." He responds and brushes his sandy blonde hair out of his face.

"You'll get in trouble with your parents. You can't come." I tell them.

"Please, Quinn." Alice looks up at me with her green eyes. "I wanna go with you and Santana." She pouts her lips.

Damn it. That's my weakness. "But...uh...your parents will—"

"Let's just let the squirts come with us." Santana, to my surprise, interrupts.

"Seriously?" I turn to her with wide eyes.

"Yea, it'll be cool. It would suck if we left them for Christmas with those boring and narrow-minded pigs." Santana replies sincerely.

"Okay then! It's settled! In the car kiddos!" Gabe grins. Tyler and Alice both run inside the car with their little backpacks on. "I'll leave a message on your parents phone that you two are with us so they don't go crazy and call the cops." Gabe says as he puts his seat belt on.

I poke Santana on the side.

"What?" She shoves my hand away.

"The Grinch has a heart this Christmas." I joke. Santana rolls her eyes and pushes me toward the car.

"Shut up, Fabray."

We both get in the car and put our seat belts on.

"And off we go!" Gabe backs out of the driveway and starts driving down the road. Anne turns on the radio and I hear Santana sigh in relief when the song that was playing wasn't a Christmas song.

—

We decided to stop the car when we saw a beautiful scenery and decided to explore the trail to see where it leads. Gabe and Anne were up ahead the trail, swinging their intertwined hands while taking pictures of the scenery.

Alice and Tyler were not too far ahead of us and were kicking the snow and laughing happily, enjoying their time away from their stringent parents.

Santana had her hands shoved in her jacket. "Can we go back in the car?" Santana shivers.

"No. We need to all stay together. Plus, it's such a nice view S! We should enjoy it."

"Yea but I'm freezing. So I'll pass and wait for you in the car." She starts walking away.

Frustrated at her, I roll a snowball and swing it at her. The snowball hits the back of her head and I tread backwards trying to distance myself.

Santana turns around slowly with a deadly look.

I point my finger at Tyler. "Tyler did it!" Tyler looks up at me in surprise.

"No! Quinn did it!" He cries.

Santana huffs and turns around again to leave when I roll a snowball and hand it to Alice. "You want Santana to stay right?" I whisper. Alice nods her head in understanding. She throws the snowball at Santana. Santana nearly tumbles forward and slip on ice.

She turns around to glare at us.

"Quinn told me to do it!" Alice runs behind me and stifles her laughter on my sweater.

"Why you..." Santana starts charging after us.

"Oh no! She's coming after us! Run!" I lift Alice up in my arms and start running away from Santana with Tyler stumbling close behind us.

"Get back here!" We zoom past Gabe and Anne who stare at us like we're crazy.

Santana is throwing snowballs at us but her aim is horrible. Alice is laughing in my arms and I stick my tongue out at Santana. "You're aim sucks!" I yell.

Santana charges after us with a determined look. I would think she was about to murder us if it weren't for the splitting smile on her face.

"You can't get us, Santana!" Tyler sticks out his tongue and giggles. This fuels Santana more as she chases us. There's squeals and laughter emanating from all of us. Santana eventually catches up to Tyler and blocks him from running away.

"I got you now, buddy!" Tyler tries to run past Santana but fails.

Santana puts her hands on her hips. "Now, are you gonna help me get Quinn and your sister?"

"No!" The little boy giggles.

"Oh! Am I going to have to tickle it out of you?" She kneels down and starts tickling the 7 year old. Tyler falls backward onto the soft snow and laughs loudly with his face flushed.

I'm holding Alice in my arm and I stand in place watching how Santana's face lights up as she tickles Tyler.

"Q-quinnie! Help!" Tyler laughs out. "Alice!"

"Should we go help Ty?" Alice nods her head and jumps out of my arms.

Alice jumps on Santana's back, catching Santana's attention.

"Let Ty, go!" Alice squeaks.

"Oh! So you want a visit from the tickle monster then!"

Alice squeals with Tyler close behind her as Santana chases them. Tyler and Alice run towards me and hide behind me, giggling uncontrollably.

"Quinn, give me the children." Santana says dramatically.

"Never!" I yell while throwing a snowball at her face. I laugh freely when I see the expression on her stunned face.

Santana wipes the snow off her face. "Get over here, Fabray." I shake my head defiantly. "Fabray..." Santana inches towards us.

"Run!"

Tyler and Alice start running ahead of me towards Gabe and Anne. Santana was sprinting towards me and I'm slowly losing speed.

An arm suddenly wraps around my waist and pulls me down as I fall down onto the powdery snow.

She hovers above me with a smirk. "Got you." Santana whispers breathlessly with her eyes locked on mine.

"Finally." I say with intention. "Now get off me."

Santana then straddles on top of me and leans down. "Or what?" She taunts. Wiggling my arm from her grasp I push her off.

"Did you just push me, Fabray?" I stand up wiping the snow off my pants.

"Yea I did, Lopez. What you going to do about it? Tickle me too?" I glint shows in Santana's eyes. I see her slowly getting up and inch towards me with her arms slightly outstretched.

It takes me a few moments to register what was happening. "Wait...I was kidding. Wait!" Santana tackles me back onto the ground and starts tickling my sides—my weak spot.

Santana leans close. "Say you give, Fabray."

"Never!" I say between laughs.

I try to swat her hands away but she still manages to tickle me. "Just give!" We're both laughing hysterically and Santana eventually gets tired and leans her head on my shoulder.

She lifts her head and looks at me. I'm breathless—not just from the intense tickling but by the beauty of her. Her hair is down and disheveled. Her cheeks are red and her wide smile makes me swoon.

Santana looks at me softly. "Quinn, you're beautiful." My heart is caught in my throat and everything around us becomes non-existent. Santana caresses my cheek and runs her thumb on my lips. She leans down and—then a tiny figure tackles Santana off of me.

"Alice!" I sit upright.

Santana is chuckling when she sits up with Alice in her arms. "Jeez kid, you're a ball of energy aren't you?"

Alice laughs and wraps her arms around Santana's neck. "We need to run!"

"What? Why?" Alice points her finger in the opposite direction. From that direction, we see Tyler on Gabe's shoulders and Anne running toward us with snowballs in their hands.

"Let's go!" Alice squeals.

Santana and I scramble up with Alice on Santana's shoulder. We gasp when we're pelted with multiple snowballs at the same time.

"Oh it's on." I playfully glare at my older cousin.

"Bring it Quinnie!" He mocks me.

For the next hour or so, the six of us spent all our time chasing each other and throwing snowballs and laughing freely. I never felt lighter in my entire life.

—

With the sun setting, we called it a day and got back on the road. Gabe, not wanting to drive in the dark, decided to stay in a hotel for the night. The hotel was a four-star hotel so it was a pretty nice place, but it was expensive. Gabe paid for two rooms, despite Santana's and I protests.

"Consider this my Christmas gift to the both of you." He smiles warmly at us. Without hesitation, I hug him.

"Thank you. I owe you, Gabe."

"You can owe me by telling Santana you're in love with her." He whispers in my ear. I pull away quickly and stare at him in shock. *How did he...?*

"I see the way you look at her. I also see the way she looks at you." I turn around to see if Santana overheard anything but I see her preoccupied talking to Anne with Alice and Tyler sitting next to her.

"Don't waste time, Quinnie. You can't let something this great go." He pats my shoulder.

I gulp. "I can't." I drop my head. "She's too important to me. If we get in a relationship and end up breaking up..." My heart twitches painfully. "I can't afford to lose her, Gabe." I whisper brokenly.

"So what? You stand in the shadows and never try? Because you're *afraid*?" He bites. "Quinn, people like her don't come by easily. You have to stop thinking and just act." He kisses me on the side of my head and walks over to the others, leaving me behind to let his words settle in.

In our room, Santana and I are sitting on the floor watching Christmas re-runs with Tyler and Alice with us.

"Santana?" Tyler calls her name quietly and looks down at his lap.

"Yea?" She looks at the 7 year old in batman pajamas.

"I'm sorry." Santana looks confused.

"For what, Ty?"

"At dinner...I was just curious and I..."

Santana interrupts him. "It's okay, buddy." She reassures him with a smile.

"You don't hate me?" He lifts his head and stares at her with his big brown eyes.

"Nah, I like you. You're a really cool kid." Santana reaches over me to ruffle his hair. He giggles and his cheeks are pink.

Alice tugs on Santana's arm. "What about me? Do you like me?"

"I like you too, mini-Fabray." She smothers the little girl with kisses.

Anne walks in the room and leans against the door frame. "Okay, kiddo's, it's time to sleep." Tyler and Alice stand up about to leave when they turned to us.

They kissed both of our cheeks and hugged us tightly.

"Night, Quinnie." Alice kisses my cheek. "Night, Sannie." She kisses Santana on the cheek next. Tyler follows her actions and hugs onto Santana a bit longer.

"Night, 'tana." Tyler breathes.

Santana eyes water a bit and she smiles. "Night, buddy."

Tyler and Alice then follow Anne out the hotel door and into theirs across the hall. Santana then climbs up to the bed and lays on her side. In our hotel room there was only one bed, but it was a full size bed so it was enough room for the both of us. I follow closely behind Santana and turn to my side to meet her face to face.

"You're good with the kids." I tell her.

"They're cute, hard not to be." She smiles.

"I'm really glad you came." I tell her softly.

Santana flutters her eyes open and meets mine. "Me too. I think this was actually the best Christmas I've ever had." Santana and I walk arm in arm.

"Really?" I stare at.

"Yeah...well minus the road trip part. But all in all, I really liked it."

"I think this was actually the best Christmas for me too." I brush my hair behind my ear and gaze softly into brown eyes.

Santana slowly sits up and looks down at me. "Quinn, I think I know how you can repay me for forcing me to come with you."

I laugh. "Didn't you just say you're happy that you came and that this was the best Christmas you had?"

She shrugs her shoulders. "Yea but you said you'll make it up to me. Plus, the dinner part wasn't exactly the best..." I nod in agreement.

"Sorry about that."

"It's okay." She looks away for a moment and then back at me. "Now what I want is..."

I roll on my back and look up at her. "Oh? What is it? A year of being your servant? Buy you breadsticks for a lifetime?" I jest. Santana doesn't respond back and just stares at me seriously.

"I want you to kiss me."

My eyes widen a fraction at her proposition and my heart thuds rapidly. K-kiss? Santana must have seen the look of surprise on my face when she laughs awkwardly.

"Kidding!" She ducks her head. "Like I would want a kiss from you. I mean you don't even swing that way." She chuckles humorlessly.

'You have to stop thinking and just act.' Gabe's words repeat in my head.

"You know what a year supply of breadst—" I cut her off sharply and kiss her softly on the lips. The kiss lasts for only a few seconds but the fireworks in my head are going off like crazy.

Santana pulls away with a confused expression. "What was that?"

"A kiss." I reply.

Santana moves away from the bed and stands up. "Did you kiss me because you felt obligated to or because you wanted to?"

I stand up and stopped her pacing. "I wanted to. I always have."

"B-but you're straight! Aren't you? I mean..."

"Santana, shut up." I try to stop her rambling.

"...you didn't even ping my gaydar. And I have a fucking awesome gaydar and—"

I pull her by the arm and crash my lips against hers. The kiss is more passionate this time—it's conveying every single emotion that I've bottled inside me.

We pull apart minutes later to catch our breath.

"Whoa." Santana breathes out.

"Yeah." I blush.

"How long?"

"Since freshmen year." I confessed.

"Why didn't you ever tell me?"

I shrug. "You know how conservative my family is. I don't think they would like that their pristine perfect angel is actually a lesbian who has the hots for her best friend."

"You have the hots for me." Santana giggles.

"Seriously? That's what you're focusing on."

"But really Quinn, what's the real reason?"

I look down at the carpet. "I was afraid to lose you." I say quietly.

Santana's features soften and she pulls me close. "Idiot. You couldn't lose me no matter what." She kisses me softly and pulls away to stare at me lovingly.

"I've been crazy about you since freshmen year too." She confesses.

"Yea?"

She nods her head. "Especially after watching you change in the locker room." I shove her playfully.

"Don't ruin the mood Santana!" She laughs and pulls me in for another kiss.

"Merry Christmas Quinn." She breathes against my lips.

"Merry Christmas Santana." I pull her lips back to mine.

—

"Santana! Sing!" Anne exclaims.

We were all sitting in the car, only about an hour away from Lima, when a Christmas song came on.

"I don't want to!" She huffs. "I was so *close*."

"Come on, S you made a deal." I squeeze her hand.

"Sing! Sing!" Tyler and Alice chant.

Santana blushes and relents. She starts singing Jingle Bell Rock with her velvety voice resonating in the car. Soon the kids are clapping their hands and singing alongside with Santana. Within a few short seconds, we all join in and sing to the top of our lungs not even concerned with the looks from the cars in the lane next to us. We're all singing and laughing, enjoying the few moments in this tiny world we created for ourselves. In this moment, everything is perfect.

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The Ring, by 78Violetfan

For probably the hundredth time that night Santana was pacing. She shouldn't be nervous, really, she shouldn't be. They'd been living together for two years. They'd shared clothes, dinner, beds, beverages, a bedroom, vehicles (on occasion) and they share a freaking apartment! What's the big deal with asking her to share a life?

There's none.

But still, she's pacing. Because it's real this time. This time it's going to be completely, real.

She stopped with her pacing and turned to the picture frame. That stupid frame. Looking up at it is just making her more nervous. Why? Why does a simple frame that holds simple wrappers make her nerves jump?

They were just wrappers.

At least to everyone else they'd just be wrappers.

They've been asked many a times why they have two Ring Pop wrappers inside a frame, hanging on their wall above their mock fireplace. And the answer was pretty simple. Every time they'd say the same thing. They were the wrappers that held their wedding rings. And then they'd get a confused look, and people would glance at their left hands only to find there were no rings upon their fingers and the confusion would only add on.

So Quinn would tell them that they ate their wedding rings (because she did) and they'd get a laugh.

The truth was they weren't really married. And soon enough everyone knew the whole story. The story of Quinn and Santana's wedding when they were in the second grade. How everyone in the second grade was getting married and the two of them didn't want to marry any of the boys in their class so they opted to marry each other.

But that wasn't good enough for Santana anymore.

"Well, then I guess I'm just gonna have to get you one you can't eat."

She wanted the real deal.

Santana had never known that the little blonde girl she had met in the second grade was going to be her girlfriend in the years to come. After their marriage (much like every other couple in the second grade) they pretended to be together for a while. But they were only eight and eventually the game got boring and they moved from being wife and wife to just being Santana and Quinn, best friends. By that time everyone in the second grade had stopped playing with the marriages and started with superhero things, tag and hide and seek. Brittany even went far enough to claim that her and Mike had gotten a divorce.

Looking back on it now it was almost as if time had just jumped. Second grade soon became fourth and girls were going around confessing their crushes and no longer thinking that the boys had cooties. Fourth soon became Sixth and Finn had asked Quinn to go to the middle school dance with him and Santana herself was going with Puck, because at the time it just felt right.

That was the point when things got a little weird for Santana. Every time she glanced at Finn and Quinn dancing together it set her on edge. Soon thereafter Finn and Quinn had begun to hang out more often and it irked Santana for reasons she couldn't understand. Quinn would tell her and Brittany that she got these butterflies in her stomach around Finn and Brittany had shared the same only with Matt. When they'd asked Santana about the butterflies, she lied and said she hadn't felt them yet, she was too scared to tell them she felt butterflies every time she saw a certain pair of hazel eyes.

The end of eighth grade had Quinn asking her and Brittany to try out for the Cheerios with her. She had told them that her sister Frannie had never made the squad so she wanted to do something that her sister couldn't do. She wanted something that would make her parents notice her. So the three of them tried out for the squad and the coach Sue Sylvester said she saw promise in the three of them. By the time Freshman year started Santana regretted joining the squad. She wasn't aware they'd be wearing their uniform on a daily basis and Quinn Fabray wearing that skirt was almost more than she could handle. The feelings she was trying desperately to hide became unbearable so she slept with Puck.

Soon after Puck it was a whole line of other guys, until she broke down one day in Sophomore year confessing her feelings for Quinn to the wrong blonde. Brittany had told her she suspected something all along. She also promised she'd support Santana through everything. And just as Santana thought she had a chance to tell Quinn everything, because she'd had yet another fight with her then boyfriend Finn, she'd found out her love was pregnant.

The baby turned out to be Puck's, which Santana had punched him in the face for, after which he just stared at her dumbly. Quinn gave her baby up for adoption and Santana swore to herself that junior year was the year that she would confess.

And she did.

Quinn was shocked to say the least, but when Santana leaned in to kiss her, she did kiss back.

They were dating from then on out. And it's pretty much lasted until now. Sure they'd have fights, and they'd broken up a few times here and there, but you couldn't really blame them. Santana moved to New York and Quinn had ended up going to Yale, which had put some kind of chip in their relationship (Santana wanted Quinn in New York, but was too proud of the blonde to ask her to go to NYU instead) but they had made it through the distance.

They were twenty-four now. And had been living together for two years. They'd been dating for eight. And Santana was ready. She was ready for that next step.

"San?"

That voice brought her out of her trip down memory lane, "oh, crap." She shook her head looking at the shock of her girlfriend's face, "you're here."

"I'm sorry." Quinn shrugged, "I wasn't aware I wasn't supposed to be."

"No," Santana quickly stood up, "you are...I just-"

"Rose pedals." Quinn smiled, looking toward the floor.

Santana glanced at the floor as well before she looked behind the blonde, her eyes running down the trail of pedals that led to the front door. "I have candles." She said quickly, "I just, I need to light them."

"Santana..." Quinn trailed off as she watched her girlfriend move around to start lighting the candles, which she just noticed there were quite a few of them. "Santana, what are you doing?" She asked, "what's going on?"

Santana looked up from her current candle, "can you just...could you step back outside?"

"Outside?"

"Just for like a second." Santana nodded.

Quinn watched her a moment before she shrugged, "fine."

Santana watched her disappear before she continued her journey of lighting all the candles in the room. Once she finished she put the lighter down and took a deep breath. She felt around her body before clutching onto the little black box. She then gave the room a last glance around before she made her way toward the door.

Quinn was leaning against the frame, glancing at her phone. "Okay." Santana whispered.

Quinn quirked up before she joined Santana inside. "So...notice anything?" Santana wondered.

Quinn mocked a gasp, "Santana, rose pedals! No way!"

Santana rolled her eyes taking Quinn's jacket and hanging it up before grabbing her hand and leading her down the path of pedals before turned to her girlfriend. "I want to replace the wrappers." She said.

Quinn's brow furrowed, "the wrappers?"

Santana nodded, motioning to the Ring Pop wrappers hanging on their wall. "Those wrappers." She said, "I want to replace them."

Quinn still didn't understand, "you want to buy new Ring Pops to replace the sixteen-year-old wrappers there?"

"No." Santana shook her head, "I don't."

"I like the wrappers." Quinn shrugged, "I mean, do you remember how excited we were when we realized we both kept the wrappers?"

"I do-"

"So what's the point in replacing them? It's a good memory-"

"Quinn!" Santana shook her head, "please, just listen to me." When Quinn didn't say anything Santana nodded, "okay...so this isn't exactly how I wanted to do this." She explained, "I've messed up like twice already...So I'm just gonna come out with it." She watched Quinn's eyes for a moment as she could feel hers start to burn. She had to get through this before her crying made it impossible.

"You're beautiful...Quinn, incredible...and when we were eight and I didn't want to marry a disgusting boy I said I'd marry you. You remember standing under the tree on that hill?"

Quinn chuckled, "Rachel Berry married us, after stating there was nothing wrong with two girls wanting to be together."

"Azimio and David were just as bad then as they were in high school." Santana replied. She retrieved Quinn's hands in her own before she shrugged, "Quinn, when we were eight we were just playing a game with Ring Pops...we got married because everyone else was getting married. Like Brittany said, it was like a disease." She chuckled, "but I want that spot to be where we put our wedding picture...I don't want it to be just a game anymore." She smiled getting down on one knee.

"Oh, Santana!" Quinn gasped, shaking her head, hazel eyes shining.

"We're practically already married," Santana continued, "I mean, we've been through it before and we've been together for eight years and I just...I remember telling you that I'd have to get a ring you couldn't eat," she let go of Quinn's hand for a moment as she retrieved the box from her pocket, "I think this one speaks for itself." She smiled, opening the box and looking back up at her girlfriend, "will you marry me, Quinn Fabray?"

"Duh!...I mean yes!" Quinn laughed, "God, of course I'll marry you, Santana." She let the Latina slide the ring onto her finger before she pulled her up to stand before her, "you didn't have to do all this for me. You could've just asked during sex." She whispered with a smirk, raising a hand to wipe at Santana's cheek.

"I love you." Santana laughed.

"I love you, too." Quinn replied, leaning in to capture her lips. "So much."

Empty Handed, by Annjul414

Happy ever after. That's how everything was supposed to end. The end of glee club was the new beginning, new chapter of life. The last reunion in the choir room brought people together, resulting in some unexpected reconciliations. And unexpected decisions. Over five years passed since that day. What was to be a journey towards happiness, for some people turned out to be a journey in a completely different direction.

Santana and Brittany did not return to New York as planned. The blonde found a teaching position in some dance academy on West Coast, and Santana being a good girlfriend, followed her to the small town located at California beach, leaving behind everything connected with New York – work, career, friends. She took a job as a headhunter in an insignificant record label located an hour's drive away in San Diego. Using spare money, they rented a flat in the suburbs. Life was good during the first months. They walked in the mornings under the full sun, laughed splashing in the ocean's waters, and chased each other on the promenade. Santana quickly forgot about the world outside their little piece of heaven.

Quinn, with new hopes and dreams, graduated Yale while Puck was stationing around the country to finally get allocation in Virginia. They persistently maintained their long distance relationship and settled down near Norfolk, on the east, where he was employed. After months of fruitless wandering, Quinn got a job in the local newspaper publisher. With her parents' money, she found an apartment not far away from Puck's fort. It wasn't a bed of roses, yet they were reassuring themselves that it was all they needed. They were together and nothing else mattered.

The New York crew had the time of their lives. Blaine moved into Mercedes's place with Sam while Artie got his own dorm room. Rachel's Broadway career fired off like a missile after her Funny Girl debut and in no time she was offered several other stage roles. Kurt supported Blaine on his NYADA conquest, balancing between work for Vogue and college. Artie became engrossed in Film Academy and only Sam struggled to survive in the modeling industry that he wasn't prepared for.

Somewhere along the way, people grew apart. Santana and Brittany lived carefree on the west, Quinn was stuck with Puck in Virginia, and only New York group kept together, occasionally meeting with a couple of other high school friends. Nobody exactly knew what was happening in lives of those far away. Phone numbers and addresses changed and with every month the distance between them was increasing, until contact completely got lost.

Happiness didn't last forever.

After easy months Santana came to face financial problems when the record label was going bankrupt. Her practically non-existent career was hanging by a thread as she couldn't finalize any contract and musicians didn't turn a profit. Soon after, more dark clouds appeared on the horizon. Her mother was diagnosed with cancer, and a lion's share of what Santana was earning went back to Lima for her treatment. She began working her backside off in several places to make as much money as possible. To her, state of California ceased to be sunny. She was sinking

into despair as life was falling apart right in front of her. Even her relationship did not bring any comfort. Brittany did love her, yet love wasn't enough. All she could do was to stand aside and watch Santana fight for remaining afloat.

The fight lasted for over two years. Two years of sleepless nights, frightening calls, and heartbreaking visits. One spring day during her afternoon shift, the phone rang. Her mother lost the fight, and Santana lost herself. After the private funeral, she wasn't able to stay in her hometown. She returned to California, where she had left Brittany, to face of what was left of her life. When she told her girlfriend she was leaving again, never to return, the blonde accepted it with understanding. She knew that something came to an end.

Santana had no plans. There was no place for her in New York, and nothing good was waiting in Lima. Her finger was doing circles on the map to stop at state Washington. Seattle did not look welcoming, but what did she care. Having found some random place to live, she applied for any job just to kill time. She went numb for weeks, alcohol and cigarettes for companions. Storm had passed, but there no was no sunshine.

Quinn didn't have it any easier. Her work was tiring and unsatisfying, people around her boring, town unpleasant. The apartment started to feel like a cage which walls slowly suffocated her. Obligations and bills were multiplying. Puck's air of responsibility was evaporating as he disappeared for the whole evenings, drank beer with friends from military, and took no care of home duties. She grew tired of unanswered calls, dirty clothes on the floor, his apologies and promises. 'I love you' turned into an empty declaration, along with 'it will be okay babe', and 'don't worry'. His arm felt heavy around her shoulder while she caught him observing random girls every time they went out. His confidence started to be annoying, instead of comforting. And whenever she needed him, really needed him, he wasn't there.

They barely made ends meet. She took a second job, even more pitiful than the first, to maintain a certain standard of living. However, Puck was wasting all money away without informing her. As years went by, the situation was only getting worse.

She said enough. It broke her heart again, because he had promised way too many times, yet she had to say enough. He was persistent when she kicked him out of her apartment, at first regretfully sobbing, then angrily screaming. She stopped listening, she stopped believing his words. Everything had its limits. Quinn had told herself she would finally make it right. In the end, the joke was on her. Not anymore. She needed to breathe, to rise on her feet. The problem was, she had no idea how.

—

Maybe it was the sentiment that lured both of them back to McKinley for class reunion on the anniversary of their graduation. Maybe it was the subconscious need to be in the swim of things again. Maybe it was the curiosity of what happened to all people who were once close to their hearts. Regardless, they found themselves travelling back to the place where it all began.

Santana wasted no time to find a way through the dimmed gym hall to the bar. It seemed that it was a common anniversary for several classes, since there were too many people. She was

thankful for the crowds and music which helped her blending in. Uncertain about what she was really doing there, she decided to focus on avoiding people and drinking, two things she mastered during the past years. Some familiar faces flashed before her eyes, yet she had no desire to socialize. She could very vividly imagine their pathetic small talks about weddings, careers, pregnancies, and other stuff that she gave no damn about.

Quinn showed up a little late, still doubtful about the arrival, and bumped right into a group of her old friends. With awkward smile she listened to Rachel's stories about Broadway, Mercedes's excitement with another upcoming album, happy married life of Kurt and Blaine, Sam's Hugo Boss contract, and Artie's collaboration with Paramount Pictures. The only good thing about the situation was the fact that Puck was nowhere to be seen. When she was asked about her life, she excused herself to the bathroom with a plan to get the hell out.

Then, when she was almost at the exit, she spotted her.

At the bar, alone, with back turned at everything. If not for her characteristic hair and way of clothing, she would not have recognized her. Santana was thinner than ever, her sloppy make-up did not cover the dark circles around her dull eyes which were staring into space. The blonde couldn't walk away. Something about her old best friend pulled her in.

"Santana."

"Quinn."

She did not overrun her with questions. She didn't move or even glance at her. Her fingers absentmindedly played with edge of the glass which was not her first drink. Quinn lacked words, so she just sat down on the stool beside her. Santana was still not looking at her. She simply did not care about anything. She stopped caring long time ago.

After several minutes Quinn spoke first. Short, general sentences. She talked briefly about difficult college, routine work, friends or rather lack thereof, place of living. When she mentioned her relationship with Puck, Santana showed for the first time a little bit of interest.

"How you two doing?"

"Not good."

She didn't want to speak about it, not there. The brunette didn't press. They went silent for another minute and Santana turned her blank face to look at her fully. Quinn resembled very much her old, goody two-shoes self, the one she saw five years ago. Yet the brunette knew that it was an illusion. Behind her green exquisite eyes was hiding something else. Something that made them strangely similar.

"Have you talked with Rachel, Kurt, and the others?"

"No."

"If you do, prepare yourself for listening to the long reports on their perfect lives."

"I wasn't planning to. Screw them."

They were on the same page.
People started hanging around the small scene which indicated there would be a performance.
Upon seeing the commotion, Santana emptied her glass and heavily sighed.

"I need a smoke."

She stood up and left through emergency exit, Quinn right behind her. They went outside to stand by the gray walls of the building. The brunette lit up the cigarette and stared at the summer sky with disinterest.

"What about you? Where are you living?"

"Seattle."

"What are you doing there?"

"This and that. You get what they give."

"You live alone?"

"For now."

"Where's Brittany?"

"I don't know."

"What do you mean?"

"I haven't seen or talked with her for... two years, more or less."

Quinn went silent. Her life was not the only one wasted. Perhaps she would have been surprised hearing such news some time ago, yet she learnt that one couldn't take everything for granted. Santana threw away the cigarette end and turned towards her.

"I'm leaving. Coming here was a waste of time."

"Can I go with you?"

It's not like she had anything better to do. The brunette shrugged in reply and started walking towards the parking lot near the main entrance. Quinn caught up with her, expecting that Santana had a car somewhere, but she was going straight ahead without a second glance at anything.

"Hey, Quinn! Wait!" The blonde stopped paralyzed upon hearing familiar, rough voice while Santana lazily turned her head to look at Puck running in their direction. "I knew you'd come, I was looking everywhere for you. Babe, please... listen to me."

"I'm done listening to you, Noah. I told you to leave me alone, it's over!"

"Don't be like that, hear me out."

"You said enough, we have nothing to talk about."

"Give us another chance. After everything we've been through..."

"Get over yourself, Puck. I gave you hundreds of chances." She turned around to walk away and he grabbed her wrist.

"Hey, you kn—" He didn't finish because Santana took a huge swing and slapped him across his face so hard that the sound scared the birds off from the tree. He staggered, touching his cheek. "What the hell?"

"Watch your fucking hands. She told you to go away, you should listen."

"Stay out of this! That's between me and her!"

"You know that harassment is punishable? I swear to God, if you don't leave now, I will slap you again. I can go on like that all day."

She stood between two of them, her face emotionless, but serious. Puck looked at Quinn again.

"We're endgame, you know it. Think about it, hard. I'm gonna wait for you back at our place."

She was too tired to answer. With one last stern look, he went back into the building. Santana resumed walking.

"I could have handled that."

"Perhaps. I just wanted to punch him real bad."

"Why?"

"... No reason."

Quinn didn't ask why they were moving on foot and where. Her very quiet and grim companion was refreshing. This was always kind of their thing, communication without words. They weren't needed. After several minutes Santana turned right and they walked right under the cemetery arch.

They stood in front of the marble plaque which inscription still looked strange to Santana. Even though two years had passed, pain never went away. She could have done more, tried harder. She didn't forgive herself for not being there when she died. She didn't forgive herself for not saying goodbye, for not holding her hand in her last minutes. The last time she heard her voice was days before her death, while her mother asked her to stop tormenting herself with work and visit again. She didn't. There was no closure or farewell. And this was her greatest remorse on the long list.

Quinn stood behind and rested her hand on her shoulder. Santana resembled that marble monument she was staring at so much that it actually scared her a little. She had never seen her so defeated. She had never seen *anyone* so defeated.

"When I heard from my mother about this... I wanted to come. I couldn't, because of my job. I got here a day later, you were already gone. I'm really sorry."

Santana said nothing.

"I tried to contact you."

"I wanted to be alone for a while."

She understood that, yet it didn't make her feel any better. Quinn realized that friendships and high school memories weren't worth a dime if one couldn't be there for their friend in such situation. All of their glee club so-called friends... that was just a joke. In the end, there was nothing left of them apart from chitchats about careers and silly memories. Santana looked at her, a flicker of emotions flashed in her dark eyes. Her thoughts were similar. No one beside her family cared. And the rest of her friends didn't lift a finger to somehow reach her. She was alone.

They stood in silence until Quinn's phone rung. Her boss was calling and she angrily dismissed it. She had asked only for a few peaceful days to sort her stuff and that asshole was already reminding her of his existence.

"Do you want to grab something to eat?"

Quinn nodded, surprised a bit by the sudden suggestion, and they found a cheap diner right on the corner. They sat down in the secluded area to have a quick meal without useless storytelling. None of them felt like talking.

"When do you go back?"

"I planned tomorrow, but I can't stand being here for another day. Which means I'm probably leaving today. You?" Santana asked, playing with a bottle of beer.

"I took a couple of days off... I don't want to return yet. And I don't want to stay here either, but I have nowhere else to go."

The brunette sympathized with her. She knew very well the feeling of homelessness. Having thought about it for a couple of seconds, she came to conclusion that she actually did not mind Quinn's presence, in contrast to other people's.

"You can go with me."

They went to Seattle together.

—

Santana's district was gloomy. Blocks of flats were gloomy, people in the dark alleys were gloomy. The whole city made Quinn feel depressed. Santana, on the other hand, got used to it. She somehow fit – with her leather jacket, confident posture, stone face, and a cloud of smoke she left behind.

The stairs led them to the highest floor and Quinn got a strange feeling of déjà vu. The building reminded her of the Bushwick apartment in New York. It was funny that she remembered anything about it. It felt like it was a lifetime ago. Santana opened the door with difficulty and Quinn once more saw the similarity.

It was a very small flat, basically without rooms. All spaces were joined into one besides the separated bathroom. Kitchen was simply a set of furniture and home appliances, bedroom

consisted of a low bed and drawers, right out in the open. There was little besides that. No sofa, dining table or desk. Huge blinded windows indicated a balcony, but there was none. Everything was in complete mess. Bottles mixed with clothes and papers, random cosmetics scattered around, dishes. It looked like hardly anyone lived there, or left in hurry. That room assured Quinn that Santana was nowhere close to being fine. Although she didn't ask. She didn't have to.

The brunette walked to the windows and opened them wide, harsh city sounds filling the apartment. She threw her bag on the bed carelessly, looking around the place. She hadn't bothered cleaning anything up, it would have only returned to its previous state.

"Fridge is empty, gotta do some shopping later. How long are you staying for?"

"I don't know yet. Do I bother you?"

"If you did, I wouldn't have asked you to come. I will have to buy new sheets too."

Quinn used to be a neat freak. Yet somehow she wasn't concerned about the condition of Santana's place. She was more troubled about the fact that she lit another cigarette.

"Do you work today?"

"I have a night shift tomorrow."

"Where?"

"In a bar downtown."

"What do you do there?"

"Stuff. You'll see."

"How come?"

"You don't want to stay here alone."

Santana knew what she was talking about. Spending nights in that apartment was one of the worst things about living there. Her heart got heavier than usual, and her mind wandered into some very dark places. She could stay up until the sun appeared on the horizon.

After roaming around the city, they returned in the late evening with grocery bags. Santana took notice that her flat was not the best place for inviting guests.

"I should have told you how I'm living."

"I don't care."

She truly didn't. Being there was still better than her own crappy apartment in Virginia.

With poor light coming from the kitchen lamps, they started cleaning around and it was the first productive activity that Santana did for months. When the place looked more habitable, they went under the covers. Rain was drumming against the windows, lulling them to restless sleep.

They woke up around noon only to spend the next few hours in bed. Santana passed her some alcohol she pulled out from the nearest drawer. She noticed that Quinn was more distant than ever and somehow she found herself caring.

"I know you probably don't want to talk. I didn't, for a very long time. But also I had no one to talk to."

The blonde looked at her with comprehension. When things began to crash down she hadn't talked with anyone either, trying to fix things and think optimistically. She pretended with her mother, and little by little, she learnt to pretend with everyone. Unlike Santana who just stopped paying attention to keeping up appearances.

Quinn started telling her about the last years, this time sincerely. She spoke about her wretched job and stiff town. That everything went wrong. She talked about Puck, summing up how they lived practically separately, how he worsened through years. She spoke about her speculations, hinting about other women on his side. That he was harassing her for months to return to him via calls, letters, and sudden visits.

"He was repeating that he's a changed man. Every time. Only to screw up something again."

"People don't change. Not entirely... not like that."

Santana was angry with herself for not seeing through him. She should have known. Yet she got fooled like everyone else.

"We seemed like a good idea back then. It seemed a normal thing to do, maintain the relationship, settle down. We both wanted happiness and we were good together. At first. Then something went wrong... I don't know what happened. It was good until it wasn't."

What was the worst, she had believed him. She had stupidly fallen for his words so many times. She had trusted him for years because he smiled at her. Because he wanted her. The problem was, he also wanted many other things. And Quinn just once wished to be on the top of someone's list.

"That kind of stuff just happens. It's not your fault. If it's anyone's fault, it's his. You did everything right. You did your best."

"Maybe. What about you and Brittany?"

"Sometimes things don't work out and you don't know why."

"Do you miss her?"

"I... I used to miss what we had. We lived like queens of the entire universe. Like there was no tomorrow, no worries or responsibilities." She broke off, her eyes distant. "I don't think about it anymore. It's easier this way. And it doesn't matter now anyway."

"Now you don't? Miss it?"

"No, cause all of it was a lie. That life was a lie. You can't escape from reality."

Santana had wondered what it could be if things didn't go the way they did. If her mother didn't get sick, if she stayed, if her job was better. However, it was the past.

She got up, stating that it was time to get ready. There was no closet to change clothes so she started dressing in front of her, walking around half-naked to find any clean shirt. Even though she looked less healthy than she remembered her, Quinn noticed that she hadn't lost her curves. She was still exotically gorgeous.

They went downtown to a little, cameral pub with a stage in the corner and furniture by the walls. Santana took her to a private table near the scene and ordered a drink. Quinn watched her disappear behind the bar counter as she began taking orders.

Night was progressing slowly. The atmosphere of blues hung in the air, people sluggishly came and went. It was peaceful, but sleepy. The entire city seemed to be that way. After a few boring hours, a small jazz band took the scene and Santana joined them. They played some melancholic tunes and her low voice fit perfectly the mood.

Everything finished in the middle of the night. On their way back to the apartment they dropped by convenience store to buy breakfast.

"You didn't say that you still sing."

"That's just a couple of random night performances. Nothing big, yet it's all I have left. There were times that only those nights kept me alive."

"You always work that late?"

"Usually... depends. Sometimes I have earlier shifts, sometimes shorter. Not to mention my additional job in the diner. Once I had several workplaces."

"How do you cope with all of that?"

"The same way you do."

Quinn felt exhausted with work too, but she didn't admit it. Both of them learnt to deal with it, since there was no other choice.

They entered the darkened room and Santana once more opened the window, dropping her jacket on the bed. She looked out on the streets, inhaling the tobacco smoke. Quinn stood beside her and observed the night life which was so different from the day one. No noise, traffic jams or crowds. They got lost in the silence.

Both of them were bound to succeed. They were smart, gifted, beautiful. They had the world by the tail. Their future was supposed to be bright, everything was supposed to be alright as they finally got out of that small Ohio town. So why it wasn't?

Quinn started crying. Without explanation, without confession. And when Santana looked at her, *really* looked at her, she understood. Because she was broken just like her. Because in her lifeless, beautiful eyes she could see her own reflection.

The blonde was shaking and Santana felt her heart beating again. She embraced her, but Quinn didn't calm down. She was uncertain what to do. After isolating herself from people for so long, she forgot how that kind of things worked. So she decided to rely on instinct, the thing she had been doing for years.

She wiped off tears from her pale face and press her lips against hers. At first, Quinn was taken aback by the act. But she ignored the nicotine taste of her mouth and kissed her back.

They knew it wasn't smart. But they were lonely, hurt, and wishing to feel something again. So within seconds clothes hit the floor, limbs intertwined, lips sucked, and nails scratched. Quinn's unrestrained deep moans filled the room because no one was ever that passionate with her and it sounded like music to Santana's ears. There was no hesitation. No remorse. No apathy. They were whispering each other's names over and over again, forgetting about everything else except that moment. Fingers caressed skin as if they learnt that dance by heart. As if they did that thousands of times before. Breaths and heartbeats became one. Bed sheets were on fire. And in the release, they both felt awakened. Resurrected.

For the first time sleep came quickly and softly. Subconsciously, they hold on to each other throughout the rest of the night, since they had way too many cold ones spent alone.

Santana woke up around dawn to curse under her breath as she took in the sight of all clothes scattered around the bed and a very naked body next to her. She grabbed the first shirt she found and started making coffee. Having sat down at the kitchen table, she watched Quinn from a distance, waiting for her to wake up. Everything inside her was a mess. What a strange feeling in comparison to the emptiness that usually filled her.

The blonde stretched and looked around the place to lock eyes with her. Santana was the first to speak.

"I'm sorry."

"For what? Do... do you regret it?"

"I would never ever regret that. I didn't the first time, and I don't regret now."

"What is it then?"

"It wasn't appropriate of me."

"If I'd something against it, I'd have objected. I didn't."

"No, you didn't."

Santana passed her a cup of coffee. Quinn was sipping it for over ten minutes, trying to figure out why she indeed didn't.

Several more days passed in routine. They went from place to place, inseparable, helping each other around. No questions were asked, no demands were made. They still didn't talk much, but both of them took certain amount of comfort in each other's presence. Quinn felt at times

troubled with the idea that she was somehow an inconvenience, but Santana's gentle looks kept reassuring her that she didn't mind her company.

Evenings were spent lazily in the apartment with dimmed lights, blues radio station, and mild drinks.

"Your phone doesn't stop vibrating." Santana said, focused on some magazine when Quinn left the bathroom.

"It's my boss all the time. I told him I'm not ready to return yet." The brunette nodded shortly her head. "You have nothing to say?"

"You're a grown-up woman, Quinn. It's your life and your decisions. You don't answer to me."

The blonde stared at her, thinking over her words. They were so unfamiliar. She sat down next to Santana, looking at the parquet floor.

"I don't want to return there. I just don't... He will be there."

"Fuck him. You don't have to do anything. You can stay here."

They turned off the lights and settled comfortably in bed. Quinn laid her head on Santana's chest, feeling the embrace of the other girl's arms around her.

"I want to be okay again." She whispered tiredly and Santana held her closer.

She knew she would be. Quinn was the strongest person she had known.

The next day they left the diner early to walk down the main street. Having eaten fast lunch, they resumed cleaning the flat since it was still far from presentable. Santana thought it was pointless, but she followed Quinn's steps. The blonde found the activity very soothing. Organizing things was her kind of way to keep together. When she cleaned the last dishes, she caught sight of a calendar. Time was passing and she had to face it. Santana noticed her thoughtful expression and silently asked her about it.

"I don't know what to do. I need to go back eventually."

Quinn looked out the window, the sun warming her face. She couldn't run away forever. Yet the thought about going back to that town, to her miserable life, made her internally squirm. Santana approached her to stroke comfortingly her arm.

"And what do you want?"

"I don't know. What I know though, is that nothing good awaits me there."

"It doesn't have to be that way. You don't have to live like that."

"It's my life. It's all I have."

"Do you want to know my opinion? I think that you're better off without it. Without all of them." They looked at each other, Quinn's puzzled eyes and Santana's stern ones. "You deserve

so much more than a crappy job and unsupportive asshole of a boyfriend. You deserve the whole world and every little beautiful thing it has denied you so far."

Quinn mulled over her words for several quiet seconds to suddenly grab her face and crashed their lips together. Santana carefully pulled back with wary expression.

"Quinn... I –"

"Please. Please."

She whispered with desperation, caressing lovingly her face, keeping her close. Santana met her eyes and she had no strength to turn her down. They went slower, more carefully, with emotion rather than pure passion. And every kiss felt like a deep breath after long suffocation. They fell down on the pillows, feeling high more than ever before. Quinn took her hand in hers and nuzzled her arm with contentment. Santana rested her head against hers.

"This can't keep happening."

"You... don't want to...?"

"Of course I do. But this messes in our heads. In your head. You need to put yourself together, but not this way."

"I don't feel messed up with you. You... bring me clarity."

"I'm not the right person to fix you, Quinn. I wish I was. But I'm not and we can't use each other like that."

"I know."

They lay in silence, unaware of the order of things. It's the pieces that together made something whole. Santana didn't know she was helping Quinn. And Quinn didn't know she was helping Santana. They forgot the way to go, but together it was easier to be found again.

In the free morning they went to the largest department store to shop, something that they hadn't done in a while. Sitting in the cafeteria with a cup of ice cream, Quinn started recalling the best moments from the past years. Funny stories, stupid situations, weird people. She focused on the most positive memories and Santana actually smiled. It was fleeting and gentle, but she did. Quinn smiled too because she sensed hope.

They got back in the evening to freshen up before heading to the bar for the night. After quick showers and change of clothes, Quinn checked her phone to see a dozen of notifications on the screen. She went outside for a couple of seconds and Santana narrowed her eyes at her immediate return.

"Is everything alright?"

"It was my boss, as usual. I quit."

The brunette wordlessly embraced her and although Quinn was miles away from her home and her life, she felt that everything in the end would be alright.

After a very stressful day spent jumping between the diner and pub, Santana collapsed on the bed with intention to get drunk enough to pass out. She opened the vodka bottle and reached for the glass standing on the nightstand when the blonde seized it in the last second.

"Quinn? What are you doing?"

"What does it look like?"

"Give me please my shot back."

"No."

"I seriously need a drink."

"Enough is enough. If you keep drinking this crap, you will never feel fine."

"This crap is the only thing that makes me feel fine."

"I don't believe you."

"That's not my problem. Now give me the damn glass." Quinn pulled back further.

"No. You need to stop this once and for all."

"Maybe I don't want to stop!"

"Why can't you let it go?! You act like you don't care, but you're bound to what happened. You can't move on, you gave up. Most importantly, you live with guilt, blaming yourself for everything."

"I have my reasons."

"You told me that I did my best. But you don't believe that you did yours."

"Cause you sacrificed things, Quinn! For him. I... I just failed. I failed at every little thing. I failed everyone." Santana averted her eyes, her voice barely audible.

"No, you didn't. You sacrificed things for the people you loved too. Some things aren't meant to be, you said it yourself. It doesn't mean you can't start over."

"California was supposed to be my start over."

"You're wasting your life."

"So are you! Being here with me!"

"I was wasting my life. Not anymore." She replied firmly, sitting down next to her. "It's been so long. Don't you want to try again? Because... I do. I finally do."

They fell silent and Santana stubbornly stared at some point on the floor.

"My situation is different from yours. I don't have a college to back me up, or any respectful job. I have nothing and it was my choice."

"Was it? Perhaps you chose it, but did you really want it? Do you still want it? I don't think you do. You don't have to live that way anymore." She echoed her previous words and Santana felt a crack in her walls. "You don't have to be alone in this."

"I will let you down. You don't want to be around me. I'm no good, Quinn."

"I'm no good either. But we could be. We could get better."

"You don't belong here."

"You don't belong here either."

"You should let me go."

"I refuse to give up on you."

"Why?"

"Cause you didn't give up on me."

Santana looked into her eyes and she realized how exhausted she was with everything. How she was fed up with her life and everyday choices. How horrible it felt deep down inside her. She brushed aside her long dark strands and hid her face in her hands. She couldn't remember the last time she cried. Quinn held her close and it gave them a piece of long awaited serenity. They fell asleep with thoughts that perhaps not everything was lost.

Santana didn't feel like working and she took a couple of days off, ignoring her manager's angry mumbling. When she was sitting with Quinn at lunch, sudden words shook her out of deep consideration.

"I'm going back."

"...What do you mean you're going back?"

"To Virginia." Santana tried not to show it, but her expression turned somber at her words.

"I see."

"And you're going with me."

"What?"

"I need to get some of my things. I didn't bring here much."

"Are you certain this is what you want?"

"I do. I will sell the apartment in a few months, for now I just want to gather my stuff."

"What about Puckerman?"

"I won't hide from him anymore." Santana did a half-smile and returned to her salad. "Do you have any money left?"

"I'm always broke. Don't worry about that, though."

They travelled to a small village outside Norfolk, both of them observing the changing landscape. Quinn was anxious about the whole thing, but Santana held her hand and she found hidden levels of determination within herself. The taxicab brought them to a small block of flats in the residential area near the 'center' and they entered the studio apartment on the second floor. Unlike Santana's, it was more organized and less spacious. Furniture was simple but modern, calm wall colors fit carpets and sofa set, wide windows provided much light.

"It's not so bad."

"No, it's not. But neighbors, region... everything about this place feels wrong." Quinn took in the small common room linked to the kitchen and door leading to the bedroom. "Too many memories."

She sighed seeing some of Puck's belongings and her random daily objects. Santana stood in the middle, resting her hands on her hips.

"Let's get started then. The sooner we get this done, the sooner we leave."

They wrapped the place within one hour. Quinn took her most needed things, leaving behind the household items and other unnecessary stuff. She packed into three medium-sized suitcases which Santana placed in the hallway. They were fairly ready to leave as somebody knocked on the door. They exchanged knowing glances.

"Quinn! I know you're in there! I'm not leaving until you open the door!" Angry voice shouted on the other side and Santana grabbed her arm before she reached the handle.

"Listen, you don't have to talk with him. I can deal with this."

"Thank you, but there is no point in putting that off." The brunette nodded, and Quinn let Puck inside.

"Finally! Where the hell have you been all those days? And what is she doing here?" Santana was about to retort when the other girl faced her.

"Santana, will you please give us a moment?"

"I'll be waiting downstairs."

With one last sullen look sent to him, she took the bags and left. Puck turned towards Quinn with pleased expression, but she spoke first.

"I've listened to you so many times, now it's your turn to hear me out. When I said that we're done, I was serious. I'm done with you, I'm done with this town, and I'm done with everything here. I've wasted enough of my life. I'm leaving, this time for good, and nothing will change my mind, especially you. So say what you have to say and let's go our own way like civilized adults we are."

"You can't be serious about this! Where are gonna go? What are you gonna do? You can't just leave behind what we've built here!"

"Oh, I can. And I will. We've built nothing, although I've put enough effort for both of us."

"What about your job, what about us, about everything?!"

"These are exactly the reasons why I'm leaving."

"I've changed, Quinn! I've ended things with those girls, I don't drink that much anymore. I will even get a better job! I've changed, for you!"

"I bet you have."

"Look, I'm trying here, okay?!"

"I bet you are."

"What happened with sticking together in good times and bad times?"

"Well, this promise was kind of broken when one of the parties stopped fulfilling it, wasn't it?"

"That's it? After all of our history you decided to give up?"

"I'm not giving up. On the contrary, I'm starting over. I'm letting go of you, of this life. And you should let go too. There is nothing even to hold onto anymore." Puck seemed downbeat as he stared at her with complete resignation.

"Everything because of me?"

"No."

"Then... why?"

"I need to be good to myself again. And here... I'm just not."

He stood motionlessly in silence, with disarrayed hair and sloppy clothes. Quinn sighed and took the rest of her things. She placed the keys on the counter.

"You can live here until I sell the apartment. Maybe one day we will be friends once more, but for now I need time and space. Take care of yourself, Noah."

They looked at each other and Quinn passed him by. When she was closing the door on her way out, he was still standing in the same spot.

She walked out the building and saw Santana standing next to the cab. She immediately livened at her sight.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes. Let's go."

Having told the driver their destination, Quinn chuckled to herself.

"My mother will be so pleased."

"Why's that?"

"She never liked Puck, so to speak."

They looked at each other and laughed. The blonde snuggled up to lean against Santana, deep in thought. She observed through the window passing road signs.

"Have you been to Philadelphia?"

"No."

"I heard it's beautiful at this time of the year."

"Wanna check it out?"

Quinn couldn't believe her ears because it took her days to encourage Santana to go anywhere. She smiled so brightly that the brunette thought it was worth it.

It was a beautiful summer day for a trip. With savings they bought a room near the city center to left the luggage and go straight away sightseeing. Santana looked out the hotel window to see the cloudless blue sky. She could almost feel the soft breeze on her skin and fresh air in her lungs. She looked around the room and her eyes landed on Quinn who was arranging her things. The sun was illuminating her face and she looked beyond perfection. The brunette felt her heart melting at the sight. It had been so long since she felt something similar. She averted her eyes to look at the streets full of life and went for the door, putting on her light jacket. Quinn frowned.

"Where are you going?"

"We are going for a walk. I thought you wanted to see the city."

After a quick tour around the downtown, they ate lunch outdoors and went to the park. Having circled the lake, they sat down on the bench under oak to relax. Santana reached for the pack of cigarettes in her pocket and Quinn grabbed her hand.

"Don't." She looked at her warily. "I was there. Remember the skank Quinn? She wasn't very likeable. Don't make the same bad choices as I did... This won't make you feel better, despite your belief."

Santana's expression remained blank. When the blonde let go of her arm, she pulled the small package out. Having exchanged looks with Quinn, she stood up, and threw the pack away into the nearest trash bin.

"Do you wanna see some gallery? I believe there is a museum nearby." The blonde grinned and they embraced each other, walking down the path under the green trees. "You know... I liked skank Quinn. She was pretty hot."

"You don't say."

"Yeah. Just don't tell her I said that."

They returned two days later at night and immediately went to bed, feeling exhausted by travel. Quinn already had a habit of keeping a firm grip on Santana's arm whenever they slept and the brunette silently ignored that her muscles were sore in the mornings. Despite obvious tiredness, they both stayed awake for a long time. Their minds and hearts were sleepless.

"San? Are you awake?"

"My insomnia hasn't gone yet." Quinn cuddled up to her and sighed.

"What happens now?" Santana turned her face towards her.

"I don't know."

"I really liked that Philadelphia trip."

"So did I."

"We should do that again. I've always wanted to see the world. Just imagine... a tour around Europe..."

"I have a job. Two, actually."

"You should quit them."

"Then how am I going to pay for our travels, Fabray?" She actually joked and Quinn smiled, seeing a glimpse of her old humor back.

"You need to get another one, something on your level. You can do much better than this." Santana's face fell as she looked back at the ceiling.

"There was a time that I thought so."

"Don't let the events of the past eliminate your future." She paused, her quiet words loud and clear in the silent apartment. "I know you're scared. I'm scared too. And I have no idea where to start. But for the first time since years, I'm really looking forward to tomorrow. Because now I know that it's all up to me. That I can change something."

Santana met her eyes and Quinn's lips slightly curled up.

"You taught me that."

"I didn't teach you anything good. Maybe you haven't noticed, I'm not a walking role model. You are now jobless and living in a shithole around lowlives. I wouldn't call that a success."

"It's a step forward. I don't feel enslaved anymore, I don't feel stuck in the same place. And to set right some things – this is not a shithole and you are not a lowlife."

The brunette didn't answer.

"It will take time, but every day is an opportunity to have a better life. We could try together. I'm here and I'm not going anywhere."

They listened to each other's steady breaths and infrequent sounds coming from the streets. Santana took her time to observe every inch of her face, starting with her green eyes which tenderly stared back at her. She leant closer, and their foreheads touched. Quinn's body was pressed against her so she only had to lift a little her arm to embrace her. She felt warm and her delicate scent was calming. Their noses softly brushed and their lips met, hesitantly gliding over each other in a slow, delicate manner. The brunette very gently bit Quinn's lower lip, making her

breathe into her. She inhaled deeply the sweet, warm air and traced bitten spot with her tongue. The kiss smoothly deepened, but none of them made further moves. It was enough – feeling and tasting. Intimate, controlled, without lust. They pulled apart after what seemed to be centuries, keeping the minimal distance between their faces. Santana lazily opened her eyes to peek at Quinn's still closed ones. She brought her free hand to caress her cheek down to jawline and the blonde smiled. For the rest of the night she felt that smile on her lips.

Ultimately, Santana got induced to spend the last penny and go on a very extended holidays with Quinn around Europe. They visited royal places of London, took pictures with colorful tulips near Amsterdam, laid down on Elysian Fields in Paris, and walked down the fashion street in Milano to end up dancing under the full Barcelona sun. Sights made them forget about Virginia and Seattle, each other's presence kept their minds on the right tracks.

Quinn was so affected by this experience that they continued the tour back in United States. When they got to San Francisco, they fell in love with the city and never left. Santana ditched performing for the business side of music industry, and using her fierce communication skills started collaboration with the famous record producer in one of the best developing record labels on the west coast. Quinn's new discovered passion for travelling encouraged her to work for travel magazine, thus providing both of them free excursions around the globe.

It became a tradition that every two-three months they visited different city to slow down a bit with their lives. Memories of what they lost and what it took to finally make it right caused them to enjoy every little moment of happiness. And during the next three years spent in San Francisco there was quite a few of them.

One summer, their holidays led them to Los Angeles to taste a bit of Hollywood glamor. First several days they spent on sightseeing since early morning until late night. Santana politely agreed to follow Quinn who couldn't pass by any important attractions which were almost on every corner. When the blonde was satisfied enough, they decided to savor the sun and beach view, walking down the promenade.

"Is it weird that I feel kind of homesick now? It never happened before."

"No. I miss our quiet apartment back in San Francisco too. Crowds are everywhere."

They were buying iced tea in one of the stands when someone called their names. With a quick glance around they spotted Kurt and Mercedes sitting at the table nearby, looking extremely surprised and happy at the same time.

"Oh my God, it's really you guys! I can't believe it! What are you doing here?"

"Having some vacation."

"What a coincidence. It's been years... we haven't heard from you two, how are you?"

"We're... pretty good." Quinn replied, smiling at Santana.

"And what exactly happened that you disappeared off the face of the earth?"

"Well, you know how it is... stuff happens and before you realize, years go by."

"Come on, you need to tell us everything. What's your job, where do you live?"

"There is not much to say. We're both fairly happy with work and we have a nice apartment in San Francisco."

"That's cool! We had no idea that you live together."

"As I said, stuff happened."

"Time has been good to you. You look great, girls." They exchanged sideways glances.

"Thanks, so do you."

"Come, sit with us. We have so much to catch up on. Sam, Blaine, and Rachel will be joining us soon, they stopped over in some outlet. Later we're having lunch together, you should come!" Subliminally they reached for each other's hands.

"Sorry, but we really gotta go. We still have a few errands to run."

"Wait, we hardly talked. Can't you stay a little longer?"

"Maybe some other time."

"We need another reunion, in New York style. I could ring up rest of the people... that would be awesome. We should stay in touch, how can we reach you two?"

"Here, take my card. You can write me e-mail, the phone number is strictly a business one." Quinn gave Mercedes a small piece of paper.

"Alright. I'm already looking forward to it. Make sure you have a free week, we gonna have a wild party!"

"Sure, just inform us earlier."

"You certain you can't hang about? They should be here in a minute or two."

"It's our last day here, we really want to make the most of it."

"Okay then. Take care and hopefully we'll see each other in no time. It was great seeing you."

They said their goodbyes and resumed strolling, both deep in thought. It was a strange feeling, to be indifferent to people who once were important. However, high school was over, things changed, time passed, and life happened. They wordlessly came to conclusion that they had moved on and it didn't matter anymore. Past was better left buried.

Santana entwined their fingers and grinned all of a sudden.

"That reminded me... I hope you know that we're not leaving without proper shopping time."

"I'm quite aware of that." She sighed. "Why did I agree to marry you again?"

"I don't know. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that we love each other so much? Or you were simply tired of my constant pestering. Yeah. That's probably the reason."

Quinn laughed at the fairly fresh memory of Santana who had been asking her the same question over and over again for weeks. She stopped walking to kiss her lips and the brunette sent her a funny look, since extroverted behavior was usually not her style. Having smiled wider, she tugged at her hand to keep walking.

Moving forward.

The sun was high in the sky, almost blinding them. Yet after being to hell and back, its light was truly a sight for their sore eyes.

You had me at, by Brittanyismyunicorn

Sometimes I wonder if I made the right choices in life. All choices, big and small...I'm just curious. Your life choices lead you to where you end up in life and this is where mine has landed me. In a bar, alone on a Friday night because my friends had to get back to their families. I'm only twenty-eight but everyone I know is married, engaged, pregnant or at least has one kid with their fiancé, husband or wife and I'm just...here. I'm single, have been for a while and I have no kids. I know I'm still young but I'm getting closer to thirty, I thought I would be at least married or engaged by now.

This is why I question my life choices. Did I let the one slip right past me? Or is she still somewhere out there waiting for me? Is she younger? Is she older? Is she a girl I turned down or just never noticed? Or am I destined to be alone? Maybe I am one of those people who end up alone with an unnatural amount of animals...I don't want that to be my life but maybe it's just meant to be.

"Why the long face beautiful?" I hear from my right and I turn my head to see a red headed woman sitting next to me. She has light green eyes and a dimple in her right cheek. She's pretty tall with a skinny figure and she is pretty but I don't see her being my type. When I don't respond, she sends me a warm smile and extends her hand.

"Katie." She says. I take her hand and shake it softly.

"Quinn."

"That's a pretty name."

"Thank you." I say and she nods her head.

"Can I buy you a drink?" She asks. Why the hell not?

"Sure." I say and she calls the bartender over and orders me another Jack and Coke. The bartender goes to the other side of the bar to talk to a man with blonde hair, a full beard and glasses and Katie begins to talk again.

"So you never answered my question." She says.

"What question?" I ask as I put my glass up to my lips to take another sip. It's more than half empty which is why I let her buy my drink.

"Why the long face? You're way too beautiful to look so sad."

"I'm not sad. I was just thinking." I tell her.

"Penny for your thoughts?" I grip my glass with both hands and shrug my shoulders.

"Nothing much." I tell her.

"I don't feel like that's all. If you feel like venting to a stranger, I'm a great listener." She says as the bartender comes back and sits a glass down between us.

"That's sweet but I couldn't do that." I say and Katie shakes her head.

"It's fine, we all need to vent sometimes." She gives me that warm smile again and I feel my lips turning up against my will. Maybe she could be my type...maybe.

"How about we skip that and you tell me something about yourself." I say and her eyes seem to light up at my interest.

"Well... I-"

"You are probably one of the most boring people to have walked this earth." I hear from behind me. That voice is...to familiar. Before I turn my head I see a slim tan colored arm and hand move past me and grab the full glass. I watch as she picks up the glass and brings it to her lips then watch as her throat moves up and down as she swallows.

"Seriously Santana?" I say and she moves the glass from her lips.

"What? I was thirsty." She says with a shrug and sits the glass down.

"What are you doing here?" I ask out of genuine curiosity.

"It's a bar and I'm me." I roll my eyes and Santana looks at Katie then back to me.

"Let's make this exchange less awkward now that I'm here. You give Q your number and she'll call or text you sometime this week but right now, she's got some catching up to do with an old friend." Santana says to Katie. Katie smiles politely and nods then I give her my phone so that she can put her number in. She does so then says goodbye to us and walks away. Santana sits the seat previously occupied by Katie, with my drink and I take this opportunity to...examine her. She's casually dressed. A short, not too tight dress with a floral pattern, black heels with her hair down in curls.

"Seven years and you don't look any different." I tell her and she shrugs.

"That just means I'm still hot." I roll my eyes but chuckle softly.

"Same thing to you though. You look good." Santana says.

"Thanks."

"So you were seriously going to give that loser the time of day?" Santana asks as she sips her drink.

"She was nice." I say.

"She was lame. I watched her get up and go back to her table three times before coming over here then she comes over here and says 'why the long face beautiful?' come on, that's the best you could do?" She says and I roll my eyes.

"Why do you care if I talk to her or not?" She shrugs her shoulders.

"I don't but have some standards Q." I shake my head and laugh softly. Same old Santana.

"How do you not change in seven years?" I ask.

"A bitch can't change her colors. How have you gotten hotter in seven years?" She asks with a smirk on her lips.

"Still a flirt I see."

"I always flirt with purpose Q." She says before taking another sip of her drink.

"I'm glad you finally stopped being such a light weight."

"Blah blah." Santana chuckles and I shake my head.

I honestly don't know how Santana and I sat there for hours talking but...we did. I even gave her my number after I got out of the cab we shared. Santana stays fairly close. It's been so long since I've seen her. She virtually disappeared one day. After she and Brittany had broken up again, I heard she moved back to Lima but I didn't know what really happened. Santana told me that she did go home for a little then went to live with her grandmother in Colombia for a while before coming back to New York. Santana hasn't talked to anyone from school in years and I'm the first person she's run into.

I think I've given up on dating. I gave Katie a chance and there was nothing there. She was nice and sweet but I didn't feel a spark...I didn't feel anything. I'm coming to terms with being alone... I could always try to adopt or get a dog. I might even do invtro or something because I still want a kid. I don't really need someone else to do that. I turn the music up in my ears and continue my jog. Jogging has always been my favorite way to exercise because it's natural, running that is. I don't have a piece of equipment and I don't have to think. I can just run. As I turn a corner I see Santana jogging along with her ponytail swaying in the air. She's wearing black shorts and a black sports bra. I quicken my pace to catch up with her and when I do I tap her shoulder and she jumps slightly.

"Damn it Q!" She says as she pulls a headphone from her ear and I do the same.

"How else would I get your attention?" She rolls her eyes and we continue jogging.

"Are you stalking me now?" Now I roll my eyes.

"What would I gain from that?"

"Well if you would have stayed behind me you would have gotten to enjoy my ass."

"Whatever."

"How'd the date go with...whatever her name was?" Santana asks and I shrug.

"Nothing there." I say and she nods her head.

"Told you she was lame." Ugh she always has to say I told you so.

"I'm done with this conversation and dating." I say.

"Why dating?" She asks and I shrug.

"It's a lost cause, screw it." Santana shrugs and we continue our jog together. We jogged the way to my house and sat in my kitchen with some bottled water. I've been checking a few emails and but I keep feeling Santana's eyes on me.

"What are you looking at?" I ask.

"You." She responds and I raise my head to look at her.

"Why?" I ask her.

"Just thinking...It's a shame you're giving up on dating." She says and I furrow my eyebrows.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because now I don't know if I should ask you out or not." Ask me out?

"Like on a date?" I ask.

"What else is there? Yes a date."

"You want to date me?" I ask and Santana rolls her eyes.

"If you ask again I'll take it back." She says.

"Well...I did just give up dating." Santana raises an eyebrow.

"Are you turning me down?" She asks and I shrug.

"No, you're not doing that. I'll be back at seven, don't eat anything and look hot, like super hot." She says as she walks towards my door. She reaches for the knob then turns towards me.

"Oh and show some leg, I like that." She winks at me then walks out. What just happened?

That date went surprisingly well...like really really well and it lead to more dates that went really really well. Santana is...I can't believe I'm saying it but, she's amazing. I actually have feelings for her and I didn't see that coming. We aren't official yet... I don't think. We seem like a couple but we haven't talked about it. We're supposed to be getting coffee today so I'm going to ask her about it. I want to be with her and I hope this isn't just something casual. As I walk up to the coffee shop, I see Santana standing outside with some girl. They're really comfortable with each other though, like very affectionate. Is Santana dating someone other than me? The girl leaves as I walk up to Santana and tap her shoulder. She leans in to kiss me and I turn my head.

"What's wrong?" She asks and I shake my head.

"Let's get some coffee." I walk into the shop and go up to the counter to order. After we both have our stuff and sit down, Santana tries to hold my hand but I move it away.

"Okay, what's your deal?" She asks.

"Are you dating other people?" I ask. I don't want the answer but I have to know.

"You saw that girl didn't you?" She asks and I don't respond.

"Babe that was just a friend. I'm only with you."

"With me?" I ask and she nods her head.

"With you. Dating you, kissing you, fucking you. You're my girlfriend right?" I shrug.

"We haven't talked about being exclusive." Santana chuckles and takes my hand.

"I know. This is my way of asking you. So...you're my girlfriend right?" I shrug.

"I may need to think about it." Santana rolls her eyes but nods.

"Fine, I'll wait but we both know you're going to say yes."

"Why should I say yes?" I ask.

"Well, we're hot, I get you, I make you smile and laugh and I'm fun to be around. I want you and you want me and we both want this to happen...and I want a future with you...so say yes?" She asks and I give her a soft smile.

"You had me at we're hot." Santana kisses me and I cup her cheek in my hand as I kiss her back. Maybe this was finally the right choice.

The Vacations, by buffy46143

It started on Quinn's 20th birthday. She was in New York visiting for the weekend so we could all go out and celebrate. It had been a rough couple of weeks for her since the break up. Puck had ended things over the phone after almost a year of dating. His reason was that he felt like he still wasn't good enough for her. She was doing well at Yale and had been selected for some kind of important internship. Puck wasn't doing nearly as well in the military. He was having some issues obeying orders when he felt the orders shouldn't apply to him. He'd lost his leave privileges several times and those were all times he was supposed to spend with Quinn. I could tell it was getting harder for the two of them recently and I could relate since I too had ended my relationship with Brittany a few months before.

I will always love that girl, but I felt like I needed some time to discover myself without her. After we got back together, she moved in immediately and then we found a place of our own. That didn't last long though. It was different when we were living with Rachel and Kurt. When it was just the two of us, it got harder and then we thought we just needed to live separately for a while and then I just told her that if it was meant to be for us, we'd find our way back because I could tell we were both unhappy. I honestly thought we'd break up for a while, but that we'd find each other again. Now though, I'm not so sure.

"I just feel like I need to get away for a while." Quinn told me before taking a drink of the wine I just poured her. The party we'd had for her had just ended and she was dangling her feet over the edge of the fire escape. I sat down next to her and took a drink directly from the bottle.

"Trust me, I'm right there with you."

"Have you talked to her since you ended it?"

"A few times, but it was more like small talk. She left a sweater at my place. That kind of thing."

"It sucks, huh?"

"I feel like we're back where we started, Q. Love is for saps. Remember?"

"Valentine's Day? Kind of memorable for me so yeah. And then we fell for it again."

"Thought we could have what everyone else talks about."

"And now we're alone." She stated the obvious.

"Well, we're still got each other." I took another long drink and then looked at her. "I do still have you, right? We're in the on phase of our friendship instead of the off, aren't we? I haven't slapped you in like over a year."

She laughed and finished her wine in one gulp. She set the glass down and leaned back on her hands.

"We've hardly seen each other since then so I wouldn't think of that as some big accomplishment, San, but yeah. We're good."

I passed her the bottle so she could take a drink if she wanted, but she shook her head no so I sat it down next to me.

"So, let's do it."

"Do what?"

"Let's get away for a while." I paused. "Well, for like a week maybe. I do have to work and you have school, but you have a break coming up and I have money from my mom."

"I have money from my parents too."

"Let's just go somewhere. Take a vacation. You get away from New Haven and your failed relationship with Puckerman and I get away from the city and my failed relationship with Brittany."

"Just you and me?"

"Why not?" I squinted my eyes at her thinking she was maybe worried I'd try something with her. "I know you're not on team gay, Fabray. We'll get a room with two beds if that's what you're worried about."

She laughed that husky laugh of hers.

"No, I just meant that we've never really done stuff alone." I lifted my eyebrows at that. "Besides that, I mean." She reached over me and grabbed the wine bottle and set it in her lap. "We were the Unholy Trinity, not the Unholy Duo and whenever I'm in New York, we're always with the group. Rachel, Kurt, Blaine, Sam and everyone."

"Well, I don't want to go on a vacation with everyone. In fact, if everyone were there, it wouldn't be much of a vacation, would it?"

"No, I'd end up killing Rachel."

"I'd murder Kurt."

"Then, Blaine would try to murder you for murdering Kurt."

"He'd try, but there's no way he'd be successful. I'd smell that Aqua Velva from a mile away." I laughed at myself.

"Blaine does not wear Aqua Velva!" She laughed and took a long drink from the bottle before passing it back to me so I could take a drink too. "Besides, I wouldn't let him kill you anyway."

"Not that I would need your help, but thanks." I looked down at the hustle and bustle of the city below. This city once held so much promise for me. It was where my dreams were going to come true. Two years in and I was starting to worry that maybe this place wasn't the answer I thought it would be as a small town girl with big city dreams.

"Alright, let's do it!" She announced and kicked her feet out.

"Yeah?"

"Why not? Where should we go?"

"Somewhere that's not here or New Haven."

"Okay. Rules."

"Are you drunk or having a stroke because you're not speaking in complete sentences?" I questioned.

"We need rules. We both have to agree on the place."

"Obviously."

"You make a suggestion and then I'll make a suggestion until we agree."

"That's fair."

"And we can each have vetoes."

"How many?" I looked over at her.

"I don't know. One?"

"Two."

"Fine." She put her hand out for me to shake, which I did. "You go."

"Miami."

"Veto." She replied immediately.

"What? Why?"

"I don't have to have a reason. Just veto."

"Fine. Your turn."

"Hawaii."

"Veto." I told her with conviction.

"Oh yeah, sorry."

I had gone to Hawaii with Brittany and wasn't really ready to make a return.

"Minnesota."

"What? Why do you want to go to Minnesota?" She asked me.

"Mall of America, Quinn. Imagine the shopping possibilities."

"Veto."

"Fine, but you're all out now." I called her on her own rule.

"Chicago."

I thought about that for a second. I liked Chicago. We'd both been once before with the New Directions, but we didn't really get a chance to explore the place with all the last minute rehearsals since Mr. Schuester preferred giving us weekly lessons about disco and funk instead of actually preparing a set in advance for our competitions. It was a big enough city that we could find excitement, but it wasn't New York and there were beaches.

"I can get down with Chicago."

"Really?" She asked me.

"Yeah, let's do it."

She poured part of the remnants from the bottle into her glass and gave me the bottle.

"Chicago or bust?" She held up her glass.

"Chicago or bust." I repeated and we clanged the bottle and glass together.

And thus began our annual tradition. Chicago was first and when we didn't end up killing each other, we thought it might be cool to do it again the next year. By that time, we were both 21 and could ditch those fake IDs we'd been holding onto for years. We changed the rules on choosing the destination for the second trip. I visited Quinn's New Haven apartment and we pulled out an old map she'd borrowed from a professor.

"Tell me you didn't sleep with this one too." I joked with her bringing up her affair from before.

"Professor Cahill is a woman." She told me.

"So am I and I remember you being all about this for a couple of hours one night and I didn't have a map you needed."

"She's in her 60s, Santana. Gross."

She unrolled the map. It was her idea to make a whole show of it. I said we could easily do this on a computer, but she wanted it this way.

"Who goes first?"

"You can. I picked last year."

The plan was that we'd go to the first place we pointed to no matter where it was. We'd had such a good time last year that we'd decided to plan 3 years in advance. This year was Quinn's last year in school and I don't know. I guess I just worried that she'd move on after she graduated and leave me behind. If we planned for the next few years, I thought it would be more likely to happen.

I closed my eyes and my finger hovered over the map. I moved it around for a few seconds before putting it down on the map and opening my eyes.

"Um... veto." Quinn stated.

My finger had landed on Nigeria.

"Why'd you get a world map?"

"Just point again, Santana."

"Fine, but that's one of your vetoes, Fabray."

"So, if I don't veto, you want our next trip to be in Nigeria?"

I laughed and closed my eyes again. This girl had gotten good at calling my bluff.

"Boston? Not exactly far away."

I opened my eyes and my finger had indeed landed on Boston.

"We never said we had to go far away. We just said away. Are you using your last veto, Q?" I took my finger and wagged it in her face.

"No. Boston it is this year." She pushed me out of the way. "My turn for next year." She quickly closed her eyes and put her finger on the map.

"That's the Pacific Ocean, Quinn. Where are we staying? Atlantis?"

She rolled her eyes at me and stood upright.

"What about a cruise?"

"A cruise?"

"Yeah, we could do like a four-day thing to Mexico."

"Well, I do speak Spanish." I considered her idea. "Tourist trap towns only and you're not allowed to leave my side. Your dad does not have the skills to go all Liam Neeson Taken style on anyone if you get kidnapped and sold into white slavery and I just don't have the time to look all over Mexico for your ass."

She laughed and I took my place in front of the map for my turn.

"I remember one time when you specifically loved looking at my ass." She raised her eyebrows at me.

"Oh, I've always loved looking at your ass, Fabray. I just only told you one time and there's a difference between looking at and looking for. Doesn't that school you pay all that money to teach you prepositions?"

"I can't remember. Is it "I'm going to slap you on your face or in the face?" She smiled and I pointed.

"Seattle."

"Veto."

"What? Because of the rain?" I asked her.

"Because Puck and I went there once when he was stationed-"

"Enough said and you can still have both of your vetoes." I closed my eyes and pointed once more. "The Pacific coast is calling our name, Q. What do you think?"

"San Diego? I can do San Diego."

"Me too, but San Diego the year after Mexico?"

"Using your veto?" She asked.

San Diego was beautiful from the pictures I'd seen and I worried that I might land on Podunk, Middle America next and then I'd be out of vetoes and who knows where I'd end up having to go.

"No, San Diego or bust."

"Not tonight though. Tonight, we sleep." She said and began rolling up the map to put it back in the tube it came in. It was nearing 2am and we'd been out at the Yale bars all night. We were both exhausted, but wanted to make our trip plans before turning in.

We shared her bed because I hated the futon in her living room and before I fell asleep, I rolled over to see if she was still awake.

"Hey Q, you still up?"

"No Santana, clearly I am asleep."

"God, you get even more difficult to deal with right before bed. Good to know."

She rolled over to face me.

"What do you want, San?"

"What happens if you change your mind or more likely, what happens if I get sick of you and change *my* mind about these trips?"

She rolled to be on her back and stared at her ceiling.

"Then, say you don't want to go. It doesn't have to be that complicated."

I slid so I was a little closer to her.

"Quinn, I'm serious."

She turned only her head and the light that she always left on in the bathroom hit her eyes and I could see the green through the darkness.

"Why don't you say what you really mean then?"

"I just want to make sure we go. This is our thing and I just want to make sure we do it. Pretty much everyone else I know is doing their own thing. Planning weddings or starring in Broadway shows or teaching dance classes. You're going to graduate from here and I don't know what you'll do after, but I just don't want to lose you too."

"When did you get so sentimental?" She asked and smiled.

"Forget it." I rolled away from her mocking.

"Okay. I'm sorry. Roll back over." She told me and I rolled my eyes before slowly rolling back to face her. "You're not going to lose me, Santana. It took us a long time to get here, but you're my best friend. As long as you don't do anything to screw it up, I don't see that changing anytime soon." She smirked at me.

"No promises, Fabray. Sometimes, you just bring it out in me."

"Bring what out?"

"The desire to argue about inane, asinine and frivolous things."

She laughed a shallow laugh.

"What?"

"Your word of the day calendar is by your desk, loser." I had taken a look at it earlier and felt now a little humor would lighten up the situation.

"Go to sleep, Santana."

I rolled onto my side and closed my eyes, content in the fact that Quinn and I had plans for the next three years.

Our trip to Boston was fun, but mostly for Quinn. She wanted to check out the history of the city. I wanted to check out the bars. She wanted to see a show in the theatre district. I got enough of that in New York with Broadway Berry so I wanted to take the short drive down to Cape Cod and relax on a beach. We compromised and spent 3 days in the city and two days along the coast. One of Quinn's friends from school had a beach house they weren't using so we were able to stay there for free. They had a grill outside so we decided to cook out and make an evening of it.

"How does it feel?" I asked her while turning over a chicken breast on the grill. Quinn was setting the table out on the deck overlooking the backdrop of the sun setting over the ocean.

"How does what feel?"

"Being a Yale graduate. I haven't asked you yet and you really haven't talked about it. We postponed our trip this year so you could focus on finishing school and now you've finished school, it's summertime and you've got nothing tying you to New Haven. So, I guess I'm curious. How does it feel to be done with college and have your whole perfect, cookie cutter life now in the foreseeable future?"

"I don't know. It feels good. It feels like I accomplished something."

I turned the other piece of chicken over and then took a drink of the wine coolers we had picked out at the grocery store earlier. It tasted like a carbonated pina colada.

"That's it? Four years of your life and it just feels good? I think you should ask them for your money back, Q."

"It's hard to explain. Maybe it will feel different when I actually see the diploma. I should have that in a few weeks."

"And then what?"

"Then, I frame it and hang it on the wall, I guess." She sat at the table and watched me finish up with the chicken.

"Where are you hanging it? Are you staying in New Haven? You've been kind of non-specific about your future plans, Quinn. It was always about Yale and graduating. Now what?"

"You sound like my mom."

I turned and pointed the barbeque fork at her.

"Never compare me with that woman."

She smiled at me and walked over to the grill to stand next to me while I pulled the chicken off. She held the plate so I could place them on it.

"Why are you so curious all the sudden?"

"Because I'd kind of like to know where you'll be living and what you'll be doing with yourself."

I turned off the grill and closed the lid before grabbing my wine cooler and sitting across from her at the table. Quinn had made the sides in the kitchen so we started putting things on our plate while listening to the sounds of the waves crashing behind us.

"What if I said I was thinking about New York?"

I smiled, but only on the inside. I didn't want her to know that I loved the idea of us living in the same city.

"The Big Apple, huh? Any particular reason?"

"I feel like I've been living there part-time for the past few years and I like it. Plus, and don't get a big head about this, but you're there."

"Just admit it. It's all about me, Fabray."

"I had an interview last week. It was a phone interview, but their office is in Brooklyn. If it works out, I could be moving there in a few weeks."

"Quinn Fabray, living in Brooklyn. I did not see that coming."

"What about you?" She took a bite of her salad.

"What about me?"

"Are you just going to keep waiting tables and bartending or are you going to do something with your life?"

"Wow! Damn, Quinn. What are you even doing hanging out with me? I'm just a lowly bartender wasting her life? Maybe you should call that Biff guy back and see if he'll start helping you plan the perfect New England wedding."

"You're too talented to do what you're doing forever, San. You love music. I just think you should start doing something with it other than singing at the diner night after night."

I finished my wine cooler, wishing I'd gone for the hard liquor at the store earlier since this thing wasn't going to get me drunk and I hadn't been prepared for tough questions on our last night of vacation.

"If you get this job in Brooklyn, we should just get a place together. I'd say you could just move into my place, but it's a one bedroom."

"And I don't really want to see you with all those girls you claim to bring home." She took a bite of her chicken and I watched her reaction to see if she liked it. She took another bite immediately so I considered my cooking a success.

"Auntie Snix doesn't make false claims, Fabray. What about you? You haven't had a new man in a while."

"You haven't had a new girl in a while." She paused and looked at me. "I'm not counting one-night stands. I mean a real girlfriend."

"No one's struck my fancy. You gotta be all that to get up in all this."

She laughed and I watched her sit back in her chair and look past me out to the water. Her eyes flicked in my direction.

"What?" She questioned when she realized I was staring.

"Nothing."

"You never hold back what you're thinking. Spill." She ordered.

"You won't like it."

She leaned forward, resting her elbows on the table and reaching one hand to her water glass. She began toying with the napkin she'd placed beneath it earlier.

"I don't like half the things you say so just say it."

I leaned forward to match her posture and watched her fingers continue to play with the napkin.

"Sometimes I forget how amazing you are." I confessed. Her eyes met mine.

"Why would I hate that?"

"Two reasons that I can think of. One, you are terrible with compliments." I paused and took a breath.

"And two?"

"Because it's me saying it."

She stopped playing with the napkin and looked back out toward the water as if trying to avoid my glance.

"Why does that make a difference?" She asked, already knowing the answer.

"Because I don't give compliments often, especially to you. So, you know that I mean it and that I'm right. You are amazing, Quinn."

Her eyes told me that she knew where I was going with this and that it was making her feel weird.

"Is this... I mean, are you..."

"Hitting on you? Please! Been there and done that, Fabray. Got the T-shirt even." I lied. Not about the shirt. I did technically borrow her shirt the morning after since I'd stayed the night in her room and only had my dress, but I lied about hitting on her. If I actually thought she was interested, I'd be all over Quinn Fabray, but she's not and that's probably a good thing. The last time I was with a best friend, we broke up and now we barely speak. I don't want that to happen with Quinn. I want annual vacations and nights like this.

"I want that shirt back, by the way. You've had it for years."

"You can't wear it anymore. I've stretched it out with my much larger breasts." I smiled at her.

"Well, at least mine didn't come from a plastic surgeon."

"Says Lucy Caboosey over there."

She rolled her eyes and started eating again. I just listened to the water behind me and hoped I wasn't falling for my best friend.

"Santana Lopez, you may think you're hot shit, but they're not going to hold the damn boat for you!" Quinn yelled at me from the living room of our shared apartment in Brooklyn.

"We're going on a cruise to Mexico, Quinn. I kind of need my passport and if you wouldn't have been moving my crap around last night, I would have found it by now." I told her from my bedroom as I searched through another drawer trying to find it.

"I didn't touch your passport, Santana." She was standing in the doorway of my room. "Maybe that girl you had over last night stole it."

I stood up and glared at her.

"Why the hell would she steal my passport?"

"I don't know, but you did invite her to come along with us last night."

"I was drunk. It slipped out. She knew I was kidding. She left, remember? I don't even remember her name."

"She slept with her, but you don't know her name? Classy, San."

"You know what? Maybe we just need to cancel our trip. You've had a bug up your ass all week, Fabray." I slammed the last drawer in my dresser closed. "And for the record, we met at the bar and yes, I was drunk, but we didn't hook up. She brought me back here where we ran into your stuck-up, prudish ass and then she put me in my bed. She left after that. We barely even made out."

"Oh."

I looked at her as she crossed her arms over her chest.

"Do you even want to go, Quinn? You've been on my case 24/7 lately. Maybe us living together and taking trips together isn't such a good idea."

"We already bought the tickets, Santana. They're non-refundable." She told me.

"Well, that is damn convincing. It's obvious you want to spend the next 5 days trapped out at sea with me." I replied sarcastically.

She sighed deeply and walked into the room.

"I'll help you find it and then we'll go."

I watched her as she walked over to my closet where I had some shelves to check to see if it was there. Something had been off with her lately and I couldn't diagnose it. Her job was going well. We'd been pretty successful as roommates so far and were about to re-sign our lease. I'd done a pretty good job at hiding the fact that I wanted her and not just as a friend and roommate. We'd both dated a few different people since moving in together, but nothing had panned out. I had been looking forward to our vacation until she apparently flipped her bitch switch on me.

"Found it." She emerged from the closet. "It was in the pocket of your red coat."

"Oh right, I put it in there because I was going to wear that one to the airport."

I took the passport from her and she walked toward the door.

"I already put your black one in my carry-on along with that hoodie you wanted to bring." She didn't even turn around. She just walked toward the luggage in the living room. "Let's go. Flight is in 2 hours and if we miss it, we miss the ship."

We arrived to the door of our cabin and I used the key to enter. I motioned for Quinn to go in first hoping that maybe this act of kindness would get her to start talking to me about whatever was going on with her.

"Are you sure this is our room?" She asked after she took a look around.

"Yeah, why?" I asked as I set the key and my purse on the table nearest the door.

"It's huge, Santana. We just booked a standard room."

It was true. The room was actually a suite. It had a full living room balcony and bedroom.

"I wanted to surprise you. My parents are frequent flyers or frequent cruisers I guess. They've been platinum level world travelers since I moved out at 18 and they let me use some of their points to upgrade." I slid her suitcase over against the wall while she walked into the bedroom.

"There's only one bed."

"Yeah, a king. They didn't have a suite with two available. Honestly Quinn, I was kind of hoping for a different reaction here. Like one of gratitude for example."

I followed her into the room and took a look around. I made a mental note to thank my parents later and then stared at Quinn who was looking out at the water and the city by the dock we would soon be leaving behind.

"I'm sorry." She paused and then looked at me. "Thank you. This is great. I just wasn't expecting it."

"You got a promotion. I thought this could be my way of saying congratulations."

"It really is great, Santana. Thank you." She was saying the words, but I could tell by her tone that she didn't mean them or she did mean them, but there was something else going on in her mind.

I sat on the edge of the bed and stared at her as she went to get her bag to begin unpacking.

"Quinn, will you tell me what's going on?" I was genuinely concerned and trying not to appear annoyed with her strange attitude.

"What do you mean?" She lifted her bag onto the luggage rack next to the bed.

"Fabray, stop it. I know something's up with you. You've been acting weird all week and it's really starting to piss me off. I did this nice thing for us and you don't even seem to care."

She stopped messing with her bag and turned to look at me.

"Now's not the time. We're basically trapped together on this boat and if we end up- Look, let's just enjoy our vacation. I'll lose the attitude and we'll talk when we get back."

I stood and walked toward her.

"You can't just say something like that and expect me to wait a week to talk about it, Quinn."

There was a knock on the door to the suite.

"Who's that?" She asked.

"I'll get it. Just start unpacking." I told her in an exasperated tone and left the room to walk to the front door. I opened it. "Yeah?"

"Miss Lopez?" The guy dressed like he worked on the ship greeted.

"That's me."

"My name is Steve and I am your steward for your trip. I wanted to bring you this complimentary bottle of champagne to welcome you on board and let you know that we'll begin

the emergency evacuation drill in about 10 minutes. Your life jackets are located in that cabinet." He motioned with the bottle and walked in at the same time.

"Come on in." I offered after the fact.

"You'll want to bring those with you and you're at muster station 13 for the duration of your trip. There are signs posted to direct you and the captain will make an announcement in a few minutes, but if you'd like an escort-"

Quinn had emerged from the bedroom to listen to Steve talk.

"Nah, we're good. This one went to Yale so she's Ivy League smart and I've been on a cruise before so I know my way around a ship. Thanks though, Steve."

"Of course. Would you like me to open this for you?" He asked, referring to the bottle that he sat on the coffee table inside the ice bucket.

I looked over at Quinn and she just turned to walk back into the bedroom.

"Why don't you leave it there? I don't think we're in a mood to celebrate right now." I had a \$5 in my pocket and handed it to him. He thanked me and left. I walked back into the room and saw her sitting on the edge of the bed. I sat next to her and we both stared at the TV that was turned on to the info station and listed the channels and movies available. "Well, at least we have good porn options." I joked, trying to lighten the mood.

She laughed and looked over at me.

"I'm moving out, San." Her eyes returned to the floor.

"You're what?" I wasn't angry. I was confused. We were re-signing our lease when we got back from the trip.

"My promotion came with a raise. I can afford to live on my own now and I'm working in Manhattan now so it just makes sense for me to live there instead of commuting."

"When did you decide this?"

"When they told me I got the job, but definitively I guess about a week ago." She paused and looked at me. "I was going to tell you then, but I didn't want to ruin our trip and then you kept pestering about what was going on with me so that's what's going on."

"Well, mission unfuckingaccomplished Fabray. You've ruined the trip." I stood and walked toward the balcony door, which I opened. I suddenly felt like I needed some fresh sea air. I stood on the balcony and stared out at the water. I could hear her as she followed me and then stood next to me also looking at the water. "Take a damn hint, Quinn. I came out here to get away from you."

"I need to be on my own, Santana. I've never really been on my own before. At Yale, I had my own place, but it was just off campus and my parents were footing the bill. I just need to know that I can live on my own and take care of myself." She paused and looked at me. "You should really take this as a compliment, Santana."

I looked over at her with wrinkled eyebrows.

"You ditching me? I should take that as a compliment?"

"You've done such a good job taking care of me." She admitted and then looked back at the water, unable to meet my eye. I took in a deep breath to try to calm myself because the anger I was beginning to feel had faded with those words. "You basically taught me how to live in this city. You showed me around. Places to go, places to avoid. Stores to buy food and stores to never buy food at if I wanted to live." I laughed and she continued. "You hooked up the cable. You even taught me the subway lines and escorted me to work that first day just to make sure I didn't end up getting lost."

"You can't get lost in this city, Quinn. These people smell weakness and attack."

"I just need to hook up my own cable and pick out my own furniture and find my own way. Can you get that?"

I thought about it and she was right. I did that when I first arrived. Berry and Hummel weren't here that long before I moved into the loft so the three of us had to figure out the city together and on our own at the same time. I guess in my desire to get Quinn to love this place, I deprived her of that same experience.

"I get it, but Quinn you're not exactly giving me much notice here."

"I know and I'm sorry. I've been going back and forth about it and I don't want to put you in this position, but I know I don't want to sign another one year lease there either."

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we will now begin our emergency evacuation drill. Please refer to the card located..." The message drowned on and on until it was finally over. Quinn and I just stared silently at one another until the captain was finished.

"I'll figure something out. Maybe I'll find another roommate, but if they try to boil my rabbit or dye their hair like mine and start wearing my clothes, you have to tell my parents why I was murdered." I walked off the balcony trying to hide my disappointment that Quinn and I would no longer be roommates. I understood what she needed and I didn't want to hold her back, but it would be tough. I'd grown accustomed to having her around and even though it hurt sometimes when she brought a guy home, it was still better than not having her around at all. As we made our way to the deck, it dawned on me that we would undoubtedly grow apart with her not living in the apartment. It just happens. We plan to see each other once a week and then once a week becomes once a month and once a month becomes when there are special occasions. It's already happened with everyone else and I tried to hold back my tears at the thought of it happening with Quinn.

Quinn's P.O.V

It was the last day of our cruise and things had gotten harder and harder. Santana had taken to hitting on any girl she thought was hot. There was one night she just didn't even return to our

cabin. I got a message saying not to worry about her and she showed up the following morning in time to shower and change so we could go get breakfast. We'd had fun and had gone on an excursion or two, but seeing her with another girl at the bar or on the beach killed me every time. I was telling the truth about why I wanted to move out, but I wasn't telling the whole truth.

The whole truth was something I wasn't prepared to deal with yet so I needed my space to figure things out and Santana was pretty much always in my space at home. The promotion gave me the excuse I needed to move out on my own. We had packed all our stuff and we were sitting on the small sofa in the living room waiting for the ship to dock.

"So, this is kind of it, huh?" She asked.

"Yeah, vacation over."

"No, I mean with us." She looked at me and then turned to face me. "You're moving out and it just won't be the same."

"Maybe not the same, but I'm not moving far. I'm still closer than I was when I was in school."

"Not really."

"I'm a lot closer than I was--"

"Physically maybe, but not in the ways that really matter, Quinn. You're like a million years ahead of me in life. You always have been. At least when you were in school, I knew you'd be staying put for a few years. Now, you'll move on and probably be like a VP of whatever within a year and then start traveling the world performing hostile takeovers or something and have lovers on every continent except for maybe Antarctica because I know how you hate the cold."

I laughed at the thought of the hostile takeovers.

"Santana, what is it exactly that you think I do?"

"We're going to lose it, Quinn." There were very few people in the world Santana talked to like this and I was one of them. It wasn't all the time, but when it happened, I liked it. I liked that I was someone she could trust enough to be honest with.

"We're not going to lose anything, San. We'll still be us. We just won't be roommates. We still have our vacations to plan."

"Vacation."

"What?"

"We only have one left."

"One left that we've planned, but we can pull out the map again anytime and plan another one or three more."

"You'd be up for that?"

I need a break first is what I wanted to say. I needed to try to not have feelings for her and then we can pull out a map and go somewhere.

"Yeah."

"Okay. Let's do that. You get settled wherever and don't even think about asking me to help you move. You're making the big money now. You can afford the help. Once you're good and I'm good, we'll talk about it."

"You're totally helping me move. It's not like I got that big of a raise and then, yes. We can talk about it."

She looked at the TV that was still on that info channel.

"We never did watch a porn. You in?" She shrugged her shoulders and I laughed. I knew we'd be okay.

It had been six months since our cruise and Santana and I were still trying to get the schedule down. You know you're an adult when you find yourself scheduling your friendships around work. I liked my new apartment that I was able to sublet from someone while they were away for a year. We tried to see each other once a week. I'd stop by the bar when she was working or she'd try to grab me for a lunch break. She worked most weekends so it was challenging to find a long stretch of time where we could actually just sit and talk without interruption. I hadn't seen her in about a month when I get a text at work that said she needed to talk to me in person. It was urgent. I could tell. I was supposed to go to a work dinner that night, but I canceled because she needed me.

The separation had been a good thing for me. I was able to get some perspective on my life. It took me a while, but I got my feelings for her in check and I even started dating a guy I met at my coffee shop. Well, we've been on two dates. I haven't even told Santana about him yet. He's sweet and he's got a great job. I don't know if it's going anywhere yet, but I like him.

I showed up to Santana's apartment. It had been our apartment, but she shared it with someone she met at work who also needed a place at the time I was moving out. They hardly saw each other because they worked different shifts. Santana said she liked that because it was basically like living alone, but having someone to share the cleaning and the expenses.

"Hey, long time." I greeted when she opened the door.

"You think I have time for small talk, Fabray? Get your ass in here." She pulled me through the door and closed it behind me. I looked at the coffee table.

"Did you get us Chinese from-"

"Of course I did. I figured you hadn't had it in a while."

"Since I moved out." I walked quickly over to the sofa and sat down, making myself comfortable and grabbing the first carton I saw. We used to do this every Thursday night. She had that night off work and we'd order in and just watch movies and talk. It was actually during one of those nights that I realized I might be falling for her. I had gone to the store earlier that

day and bought a nice bottle of wine and there was this cheese that I knew she liked so I got that. I set it all up and there were candles and when she got back from wherever she was, she noticed it looked a little different than our normal setup. She said it looked like we were on a date. I shrugged it off at the time, but later that night as we were sharing Chinese and she was telling me about her day, I realized that she was right. I'd set this place up like a date. I'd gotten used to her coming home and us talking all night. I'd also gotten used to making breakfast with her some mornings and watching her attempt to flip pancakes in the pan without spatulas and laughing when she inevitably failed. I had basically stopped dating seriously and the reason was because I was already in a relationship.

The physical part of a relationship was missing obviously and every day, I was thinking about how much I wanted to kiss her. The feeling grew until I wasn't just thinking about kissing her. I'd see her leave for work in a short, revealing dress and I'd got to sleep thinking about tearing it off her like I'd done years prior.

"Something's been going on and I wanted to talk to you about it." She told me and I came out of my daydream to listen and grab the chop sticks.

"Okay. What's up?"

"Brittany kind of said she wanted us to get back together."

I almost choked on my chicken.

"What?!" As far as I knew, Brittany had moved to LA a year or so ago for work. They'd talked here and there and were still friends, but I had no idea they were talking about getting back together.

"She's been back for about a month. She called when she moved back. She's staying with someone from the tour she was on and we started talking and hanging out and she came over last night."

"Did you guys-" The chicken was still caught in my throat.

"No! Just because we've done it a million times before doesn't mean I'm just going to jump back into bed with her, Quinn."

"Okay. I don't need a visual."

"We just talked. She tried to kiss me, but I pulled away. Then, we talked some more. She said she's willing to move here or that if I wanted to, I could move to LA."

"You're moving to LA!?" I was probably yelling, but this whole conversation came out of nowhere.

"Quinn, relax. I don't know what I'm doing. That's why I asked you to come over. We used to talk about this stuff all the time and we just haven't talked in a while." She paused and toyed with the rice in her carton. "I just need you to tell me what to do."

"Santana, I can't just tell you what to do. It doesn't work like that and it's not like you listen to anything I say anyway."

"I will this time." She set her carton down and took mine from my hands and my chop sticks just kind of hung in the air before I set them down on the table too. "Quinn, you know Brit and me better than anyone. You know us together and apart. I need your advice here."

"Honestly?"

"Yes, honestly. Just tell me, Quinn. Yes or no."

"I can't answer that one for you, Santana. It's your decision. Do you love her?"

"A part of me will always love her."

"That's not what I mean." I paused and turned toward her. "Do you love her because she was your first love so she'll always have a place in your heart like Puck will for me or do you think about sharing a life with her? Do you think about her when you wake up in the morning or when you fall asleep? When she told you she wanted to be with you, did you just run into her arms and thank God that she came back to you?"

She seemed to be considering everything I'd said and I was considering my own feelings about this. Whatever I was feeling about Santana was still there. It had gone dormant, but now sitting in front of her looking at her in her adorable off the shoulder Flashdance style shirt and short shorts was making feelings become less dormant. None of that mattered though if she still wanted her. Maybe they were just this couple that was always going to get back together. Maybe they just needed to break up a couple of times and now they'll finally make it work.

"No."

"No what?" I asked.

"She's not that person anymore."

Is it wrong that I'm happy at her revelation?

"She's not?"

"No. I do love her, but I don't think about her everyday like I used to."

Maybe now is my chance.

"San, I was thinking-"

"Maybe I'm not supposed to though." She interjected.

"Not supposed to what?"

"I mean, we've been a part for a long time. She's different now and so am I. Maybe we owe it to each other to try again. One more time, ya know? Maybe we should go out on a date. Like a new first date. All over again and see what happens." She was smiling.

"Maybe." I stated without emotion.

"You don't think so?"

"I just want you to be happy, Santana. If you think you should try again because that will make you happy, then go for it."

"What if it doesn't work out this time too?"

"Then I guess you'll have your answer." I told her. I had my answer too.

After dinner, I went home and took a very long shower. I realized I'd let her back in and it's not her fault that I feel this way, but it's not easy to be around her either. Before going to bed, I sent a text to Justin, the guy I'd been on a couple of dates with to see if he'd want to go on another one. It was time I moved on if she was moving on too.

"Quinn, this is like the 5th message I've left. Call me back. I'm not above dropping by your fancy job unannounced."

It was Santana's voice and I deleted the message like I'd deleted the others. She'd sent texts too. I kept those, but other than just replying with short answers that I'm busy or I'm tired, I hadn't really responded at all. It had been a couple of months since I'd seen her. I knew she was worried and that she was serious. She would show up at my office and make a scene just because she was Santana. I really was busy though. I was working 60 hours a week to get big projects done and Justin and I were officially a couple now so we had dates and he wanted me to meet his friends so we were spending our weekends making the rounds. I was exhausted and I knew if something was really going on, she'd let me know. I was happy with Justin though and I guess I was partly worried that even though I was able to get over Santana a little faster knowing she was with Brittany and against her, I didn't stand a chance, if I saw her, I might have the same reaction I did last time.

"That's it, Fabray. Friendship over." I looked up from my desk and saw Santana standing there. "I just watched you screen my call, listen to my message and then delete it. If you don't want to talk to me, you could at least do me the fucking courtesy of telling me in a text message or you know, to my face like an adult."

"Santana, keep your voice down." I jumped up and closed the door behind her. "It's not like that. I've just been busy. I was going to call you later."

She sat in the chair opposite my desk.

"Yeah, like you've said every other damn time." She was upset and I could tell it was a mix of anger and disappointment. "Quinn, just tell me what's up."

"San, I've got like 3 major projects going on. I practically never leave this place unless it's to go to Justin's or home to sleep." Oops.

"Justin? Who's Justin?" She sat up in the chair.

"He's my boyfriend. I'm sorry I haven't told you about him. I really have been busy." And I don't really want to see you and Brittany all in love and happy right now.

"Boyfriend? For how long?"

"A couple of months. We started dating before you and I talked that night and make it official later."

She hung her head.

"You know why I've been calling you, right?"

"No, I just thought it was normal stuff. What's going on?"

"Our vacation. We're supposed to be going to San Diego in like 4 months."

"Crap."

"You forgot? Nice, Quinn. The one thing we still do and you spaced"

"It's not that I forgot. Well, I sort of did. I only have two weeks of vacation and I already spent one visiting back home and Justin asked me to take a trip with him next month. We've already booked it."

"Two months in. That boy moves fast."

"What if he came with us? He and I could just change our tickets-"

She stood and stared me down.

"You want your boyfriend to come on our vacation?"

"You can bring Brittany too. It can be a couples thing. It was bound to happen eventually San. You find someone and I find someone and-"

"I'm not with Brit, Quinn. If you would have returned my phone calls, you'd know that."

I stood and walked around my desk to stand next to her as she leaned against the chair.

"What? What happened?"

"After you left that night, I thought about what you said and you were right. I called her the next day and told her it was over. We both needed to move on."

"Why? I thought you-"

"You haven't been there, Quinn. You said you'd always be there, but you're not and now you're with this guy and you're planning vacations with him. So, just go wherever you want with him and forget about it. I'm over trying to schedule time with you or find time to plan a trip you promised we'd take."

"Santana, it's..."

She walked toward the door with a defeated look and turned to look at me.

"It's what? Over?"

"Santana, we'll never be over. You're my best friend. We-"

"You know, there was a time when I thought it would be you and me."

Gulp.

"What?"

"I tried to tell you when we were in Boston, but I couldn't get it out. Then, we moved in together and I told myself it couldn't happen because we were roommates and if I screwed it up... I thought that maybe the cruise was a good time to bring it up. We were away and about to re-sign the lease. I thought we could re-sign it as a couple. Pretty stupid of me, huh? You made it clear that night it was just that night and then we went our separate ways and I loved Brit and you loved Puck, but then we were back. Quinn and Santana. We were taking trips together and I was helping you with job searches and I wasn't bored. I've never gotten bored with you, Fabray."

Another gulp.

"San-"

"I get it. You and I are friends and you're with this new guy." She paused. "He doesn't deserve you. I don't care how nice he is. No one does." She opened the door. "I hope he makes you happy, Quinn."

She walked out and I didn't stop her. I didn't know what to say.

"Quinn, are you paying attention?" Justin asked me as I sat in the window seat next to him on our flight back to New York.

"What? Oh, yeah. Sorry." I replied with a fake smile. We had spent a few days in Charleston. His family owned property down there. It was beautiful. It was peaceful and out of the way. I turned my cell phone off and stopped checking my e-mail and just enjoyed relaxing for the first time in a long time. It only took me about a day to get bored. Justin was great, but he was dull and just wanted to watch golf on the big screen TV the entire time telling me it was some big tournament. Golf is not something you watch on TV. I made dinner and we ate so silently that I could actually hear him chewing. I hadn't spoken to Santana since her confession. The truth was that I'd always been a coward when it came to love. I chose the wrong guy over and over again and then I thought Puck was the right one, but that was wrong and I lost my chance to be with the one person that has never bored me, always keeps me on my toes, makes me smile and laugh and think about things I'd never think of on my own.

The reason Justin was asking if I was paying attention is because I wasn't. I was thinking about that night in the hotel. I was thinking about what it felt like to kiss her and how it wasn't awkward after at all even when I told her I knew it was only one night. We just understood each other.

"On the way back to your place, I was thinking we could stop and get some Chinese. I'm starving." He suggested.

I smiled as I looked out the window. I thought of my nights with Santana snacking on Chinese and my legs over her lap. The wheels of the plane touched the ground. I turned to look at him.

"I think we should break up."

"I'm coming. Hold on." She opened the door. "Quinn?"

"Hey."

"What are you doing here?" She was dressed as if she was about to go out. A black dress with red heels and her hair was perfect.

"Are you going out?"

"Um... yeah. I'm running late actually."

"Are you going out with someone?"

"Just a group of girls from work. What are you doing here?" She repeated. "I haven't talked to you since-"

"I got you something." I held out an envelope.

"This isn't creepy at all." She gave me an inquisitive look and took it from me before opening it. "Tickets to San Diego?"

"For our trip."

"Quinn-"

"No, just listen for a second."

"Okay." She motioned for me to walk in. I did and she closed the door. When she turned around, I was standing there. I put out my hand for her to take.

"I have two vacation days left and two floating holidays. The tickets are for the week of Labor Day, which means we can leave Friday night and I don't have to go back to work that week. We'd basically have 9 days."

"It doesn't work that way, Quinn. We can't just go on a trip together after what I told you. I still can't believe I just blurted that out. I claim temporary insanity. I don't know what I was thinking. It was like word vomit I couldn't hold back after all that time."

"I've been holding out my hand for a while now. You gonna take it or what?"

"We can't just go back to how it was, Quinn."

"I don't want to go back, Santana. I want to go forward. Do you remember how I was acting when we got on the ship?"

"Like a total bitch? Yeah, I remember?"

"Take my hand and I'll tell you the real reason why."

She looked suspicious, but finally put her hand in mine and I pulled her toward me quickly before she could pull away.

"Quinn, what-"

"I love you."

I looked into her eyes as I gulped audibly.

"You what?"

"I had to move out because I wanted to be with you and you didn't want to be with me and then I thought you wanted to be with Brittany. I thought you two were back together so I had to move on and then I met Justin."

"Quinn, I don't need our history spelled out to me. I lived it. I just need you to say what you said again." She smiled at me and moved her arms around my waist. "Oh, I guess I do need to know about that Justin guy. Is he-"

"Gone."

"So you're-"

"Single."

"And you-"

"Love you."

"And you want-"

"Us to be together."

She smiled again and I put my arms around her neck.

"You know when we were in Boston and I was staring at you across that table, all I could think about was how perfect you were for me. You're such a pain in my ass, but in the right way and you don't put up with my bullshit like others seem to do."

"Jesus, Santana! Just say it. It's been years since I've kissed you. I'd like to get this show on the road already."

She laughed and rested her head against my shoulder temporarily before raising it again to look at me.

"I love you and I have for a long ass time, so you need to get some damn patience, Fabray."

"Looks like we'll be taking a couples vacation this year after all."

"There's still time for you to mess it up." She smiled and crinkled her nose.

I took in her brown eyes and swept her hair behind her neck.

"I'm not messing this up."

She leaned in and kissed me. It felt even better than the last time we'd kissed when it was rushed. I put my hands on her face to try to pull her even closer. Our tongues met and the kissing sped up. She started backing me up until I was leaning back against the sofa. She sat me up on the back of it and spread my legs so she could stand between them. Her lips moved to my neck and then her tongue licked up my jaw and she reconnected our lips. I'm sure there are people that would say we should wait. We've been friends and roommates, but things change when you start dating. We should probably wait until we're both ready to take this step.

"Santana, bedroom." Yeah, I didn't want to wait. I'd wanted her for years and now I could actually have her.

"Yes, dear." She replied in jest, but pulled me off the sofa and reconnected our lips as we stumbled backwards toward her room.

"You look so hot in that dress, San."

"I look even hotter without it."

I reached to the side and pulled down the zipper. I had flashes of the last time I'd taken a dress off her. I pulled at the straps until they were off her shoulder and she slid it the rest of the way down her body and kicked it off along with her heels. She wasn't wearing a bra.

"Jesus!"

She practically leapt at me and we were kissing passionately again as I laid her on the bed and then stood to pull off my shirt. She sat up to unbutton my jeans and attached her mouth to my stomach as she tried to pull them down. I stepped out of them and tore my bra off before sliding on top of her.

"You're so damn beautiful, Quinn."

I leaned down and kissed her again and we did the dance of sliding all the way up the bed until we were at the headboard.

"I think I've messed up your going out look, San." I joked, referring to her now messy hair and the dress that probably already had wrinkles in it on the floor.

She looked up at me and slid her fingers from my neck to between my breasts to down my stomach and kept going until she stopped at the waistband of my underwear.

"I'm not going anywhere tonight."

"It's been a while since I've done this." I confessed, feeling nervous that she was the only girl I'd been with and that was years ago.

She rolled us over so that she was on top. I again moved her hair behind her neck so I could see her entire face. She leaned down to kiss me briefly.

"Why don't we take it slow tonight?"

"I don't want slow." I objected while wrapping my arms around her body and trying to pull her closer. "I want you."

She smiled and moved her lips to my neck. She reached down and started pulling my underwear down. I lifted up off the mattress so she could get them off and I kicked them somewhere on the bed while she shifted up to remove hers. She slid back on top of me and moved her hips down onto mine. I gasped.

"I know that. When I said slow, I didn't mean we'd stop. It took me this long to get you naked again. I'm not wasting an opportunity. I just mean that we should take the whole night slow. The only time we've done this was fast and kind of a blur." I lifted my eyebrow. "A good blur." She corrected herself. "I want to take my time tonight."

I smiled at her and pulled her in for another kiss.

"So, where do you want to go next year?" I asked her after pulling back. She rested her forehead against mine. "I'd suggest D.C. because I've never been and would like to check it out, but you'd just use one of your vetoes." I smiled and pecked her lips.

She pulled her head up to meet our eyes. She gave me a look that at first seemed like she was annoyed that I wanted to talk about this right now, but then I realized it was more of a "you're being ridiculous" look.

"Yeah, I don't need those anymore. I'd go anywhere with you."

Knew You Once, Now Getting To Know You Again, by comfortablyobsessed (CorvusCorvidae)

Speed dating had not been Santana's idea. It was something she had been roped into by her co-workers who saw just how many hours Santana spent in the office, when, according to them, she should have been out in the world enjoying herself.

By signing up, Santana was content in knowing that it would keep them off her back about where she might find her next girlfriend, or if she was going to start getting cats from the animal shelters. Her typical sass and snark no longer worked on them, as they were almost friends, so she felt she had to do something about it.

And as the night had gone by so far, she couldn't wait to tell them that it had been a total bust. Yes, there were a lot of hot and available women out there, but Santana was past the quick fuck and move on stage. She was getting to that point where she actually wanted it to be more than lust.

So all fourteen 'dates' so far had been useless in her quest. Yeah, there were probably a few that she could take home after it and have a good night with, but other than that, she was coming up empty.

Or she was, until table sixteen.

"Well, this is a surprise," Santana smirked, taking in the familiar face before her.

"Santana...wow...hi," Quinn stumbled out, the shock knocking her brain sideways a bit, and making it hard to process her words and thoughts. She certainly had never anticipated running into Santana Lopez here, of all places, let alone in the city.

"I thought I saw you at the bar, but was sure I must have been mistake. Apparently not." Santana smiled and sat down opposite Quinn, running her fingers up her glass as she did so. "I always knew you were a little gay, but same-sex speed dating, that's a whole lot of acceptance I didn't think you were capable of."

"Yes, well, times have changed, and as have I," Quinn said, still bewildered at having Santana right there before her.

"I can see that," Santana hummed, licking her lips as her eyes took in Quinn's appearance, getting a laugh out of Quinn.

"You're just as shameless as ever," she said, rolling her eyes. It was nice to know some things hadn't changed.

"Nothing wrong with appreciating a good view," Santana replied, smiling back at Quinn.

No, there wasn't, especially when Santana's unabashed appreciative look had made her feel sexier and more turned on than all of the previous 'dates' that evening had combined. Clearing her throat, and her mind of that thought, Quinn was quick to change the subject.

"What are you doing here? I mean, last I heard you went to Louisville," she enquired.

"And last I heard you were off to Yale, so how come New York?" Santana asked right back.

"Don't you have to answer my question first?" It felt like they were teenagers again.

"Fine," Santana said, rolling her eyes, and that was definitely different from the girl Quinn said goodbye to at graduation. "Louisville was good, helped me get a degree, become an adult. New York is for the new me, the adult version of me," Santana shrugged, her details being so vague Quinn felt like she hadn't learnt anything other than the fact Santana had graduated from Louisville. "Now, what about you?"

"I moved here after graduating. My ex and I moved here, rather. It didn't work out, but I kinda fell in love with the place and can't bring myself to leave it."

"I'd say I'm sorry about the break up but that would be a complete lie, so congratulations instead." Quinn chuckled and shook her head, fighting the urge to roll her eyes.

"And what about you, the great Santana Lopez, at a speed dating event?" Quinn asked, wondering how someone like her needed to be there.

"Please, I'm still great, I just need a bigger pond to fish in." Santana might have done her fair share of sampling what the world had to offer, so to speak, but she was a huge fan of monogamous relationships, and preferred them over one-night stands; Quinn knew that. So her words were obviously for effect.

"You're awful."

"I'm a genius," she shot back, unfazed, and it was almost charming how she could make Quinn feel so relaxed and at ease.

"You're certainly something..." Quinn muttered, smiling when Santana narrowed her eyes.

"I believe the words you're looking for are 'fucking attractive'," she supplied, grinning.

"You're that too, I guess." That and so much more.

"You guess?! Have you seen my rack?" Santana asked, waving her hands in front of her aforementioned chest. Quinn shook her head and bit her lip, trying hard not to laugh.

"I have, trust me, I have." That answer seemed to satisfy Santana, and she eased up her the waving at her boobs, thank god.

Just as Quinn was about to ask another question, she was cut off.

"Time, ladies!" the hostess called, and the hustle and bustle began as half of the room got ready to move to the next table and to the next 'date'.

It felt like the two of them were just getting somewhere, where their new personalities merged with the images they had of the other's old ones. Quinn wanted to keep talking, to learn more, to just catch up. That four minute 'date' was the best of the night, so far, and the fact it was with Santana was all the more meaningful.

"Better get going, the redhead behind me looks like she's ready to piss on your leg to get me to move on." Wrinkling her nose in disgust, Quinn shook her head and watched as Santana got up. "Good seeing you again, Q, and I mean that," she winked, and then was off, heading to the next table.

And just like that, it felt like Quinn had maybe missed her chance at something more, at reconnecting as friends, at staying in touch, at something.

Trying to ensure that tonight wasn't going to be the last time Quinn saw Santana, she took a few extra moments looking round the bar once the official 'date' part of the evening was over. Thankfully, Santana hadn't dashed for the door immediately, and Quinn was able to spot her.

It also looked like Santana might have been looking for her, too. She was in the midst of looking around the groups of people, and when her eyes caught Quinn's, she smirked that infuriating smirk that was making Quinn weak at the knees.

Once Quinn was saddled up next to her, much to Santana's amusement, she forwent pleasantries and cut straight to the chase.

"Am I going to hear from you again after tonight? See you again, even?" she asked, needing to know.

"Why don't you tick my box on your little scorecard there and see for yourself tomorrow?" Santana replied, still freaking smirking, and not giving anything away.

"Or...we could walk three blocks to my empty apartment and continue our evening there." Quinn was hoping for more of a reaction, but Santana just taking a sip of her drink. Refusing to be defeated, she leant in to whisper in Santana's ear, missing how Santana's eyes darkened with the loss of distance between them. "I think I might need a little help getting out of this dress, and the garter belt I'm wearing can always be tricky to do by myself. So why don't you come back to mine and help me?"

The moan was too loud and too obvious, to cover or try and mask, causing Quinn to smirk in satisfaction at hearing it. Just the thought...fuck...yeah, Santana wanted to pull Quinn out of the bar and march her back to her apartment.

"It's not just acceptance you've acquired over the years, I see." The Quinn of old, the one Santana knew so well, would never have been so bold.

"Please, I always had it in me, and I've always known how to turn you on." Didn't Santana know it.

"True, but you never followed through."

"I'm willing to now," Quinn finished lightly, raising her eyebrow, and yeah, that was all Santana needed to know.

Quinn didn't even have time to put the lights on before Santana was on her. The walk had been excruciating, with more teasing, more flirting, and as they stood, trying to open the door, all Santana could think about was Quinn in a garter belt.

It was fucking hot, and she needed to see the sight for herself.

Her teenage self would have sold her soul for such a sight, so to find her adult self being not only allowed to see but allowed to touch, it was turning out to be the best night ever.

"Ughn, Santana, please," Quinn moaned, feeling lips on her neck, teeth scraping against her skin, and hands trying to get her jacket off. "Hold on, just one second," she whimpered, finally pulling Santana's attention back to her.

"This better be worth it," Santana panted, swallowing the lump of lust in her throat, wanting to hold back the urge to just jump Quinn right there and then.

Quinn laughed at Santana's almost pathetic pant and took her hand, walking them through the darkness of the apartment and towards the bedroom. Quinn felt like they were classier than the dishevelled dance to the bedroom, where clothes went everywhere and landed on everything, as if they were two horny teenagers with the house finally to themselves.

Santana felt like she was a horny teenager, however, and each step was agonisingly painful. She just wanted to get naked, to get Quinn naked, and to have her lips on her. What was so hard about that? Why did they need to play it cool, like this wasn't just about sex?

Then again, it was Quinn Fabray she was about to fuck, so Santana shouldn't have been surprised.

Once in the bedroom, Quinn hit the lights, dimming them somewhat so it wasn't so harsh, and Santana stood awkwardly by the bed. She knew where she wanted this to go, she just didn't know how to get from A to B. Quinn had slowed them down, so she wasn't going to speed them up until being given her get go.

Ignoring Santana for a brief moment, Quinn reached for the zipper on the side of her dress and unzipped it. Then, she reached down and pulled the dress over her head, holding it in her arms in front of her body. She was going to put it on the chair in the room, when Santana's voice reminded her that yes, she was still there.

"Looks like you didn't need my help with the dress after all," Santana murmured, poorly hiding the pout on her lips at not getting to undress Quinn herself.

"Yeah, I seemed to have managed all by myself," Quinn replied, hiding her smirk at Santana's gutted look. Walking over to her, Quinn chucked the dress in the direction of the chair, and came to stand before Santana. "But...I think I might need your help with these." Taking her hand

again, Quinn ran it down her waist, over the garter straps, down to the top of the stockings, and then back up the inside of her thigh until Santana's fingers brushed the side of her underwear.

"Holy fuck," Santana groaned, standing deadly still, feeling her whole body come alive with lust.

"I don't know if it'll be holy, but it'll certainly be a good one," Quinn teased, and it was just one-step too far. Santana couldn't keep this slow burn going. The need in her body was overwhelming, and it was only getting worse with Quinn standing there looking like a sex goddess.

The kiss was hard, with lust in the driving seat and want in the passenger seat, making it a determined combination. Santana's lips might have been soft, but the way her teeth were nipping at Quinn's bottom lip, the way her tongue was filthily teasing Quinn's, the way Santana's whole kiss felt like sex, was enough to forget that fact.

What neither could forget was how many clothes the other was wearing. The first to hit the floor was Quinn's bra, which was followed by Santana's swooping lips capturing her nipple and sucking, causing Quinn to drop her head back. The next to hit the floor was Santana dress, after struggling to get it off while still kissing. Then it was their heels, both kicking them off at once, the height difference making it hard to keep their lips together, but they managed.

With them both standing in their underwear, Quinn broke the kiss to just take Santana in. She wasn't one to reflect on her high school days as she hated thinking about all the stupid mistakes she'd made, but there was one regret she always had, and that was never getting to kiss the goddess before her.

She might have seen Santana in states of undress over the years, at Cheerio camp, at Brittany's house, in the locker room, but none of that prepared her for the sight she now had in front of her. Santana's body was pure sin. From the glow of her skin, to her breasts, to her flat abdomen, and down to those stunning legs that she'd had far too many fantasies about.

"You're staring," Santana husked, leaning up to kiss Quinn once, twice, three times, and then her arms were round her neck.

"I can't help it, this feels like a dream." Santana smirked at those words, which set alarm bells off, before a hand came down and smacked her ass cheek, causing her to gasp sharply.

"Guess you're not dreaming, huh?" Santana teased, her smirk even worse, and Quinn wanted to murder her, or fuck her. "And we are so going to discuss how you totally enjoyed me spanking you-"

"Shut up," Quinn grunted, tired of the talking, as she pushed Santana onto the bed, and moved to sit astride her.

It was there she could grind down into Santana. It was there she could work Santana's bra off and kiss and lick at her chest, leaving marks as she did so. It was there that she could watch as

Santana's eyes rolled into the back of her head when Quinn bucked a particular way. And it was there where Santana unhooked the garter belt and began to push to get it off Quinn.

Rolling off Santana, Quinn pushed everything off, including her underwear, and was relieved to see Santana doing the same. Completely naked, neither of them waited long before reaching out, kissing the other, and then trying to establish who would top. It was not an easy decision, and in the end, Santana gave in, letting Quinn climb back on top of her.

Except, Santana did have her own plan, and with the mouth-watering sight that was Quinn naked, Santana put her plan into action.

Sliding her hands up Quinn's thighs, she gripped her waist and began pulling her upwards. Quinn moved until she was leaning over Santana's chest, but she was still being pulled forward. It finally made sense why Santana wanted her on top.

That thought alone had her moaning, and without her permission, her body betrayed her by moving completely until she was leaning over Santana's face.

Looking down, Quinn caught Santana's heady gaze, and couldn't help but pant. She was desperate for something, for anything, that could ease the throbbing between her legs, and with Santana's mouth so close, all Quinn wanted to was just sit down.

The hands on the back of her thighs now told Quinn that wasn't an option yet, and it was almost as if Santana was getting pleasure out of building Quinn up to breaking point. From the way Santana licked her lips, the way she inhaled Quinn's scent, followed by the moan of appreciation, Quinn knew this was all part of it.

Her teenage self would never have caved, not wanting to lose face, but her adult self happily caved, knowing that sitting on Santana's face was absolutely the better option. And she was not wrong.

Santana's hearty moan combined instantly with Quinn's when she repositioned herself and sat down, letting Santana's mouth finally meet Quinn. It was better than she ever imagined it would be, with Santana's tongue working her up, then kissing her, slowing them down, before sucking her clit in her mouth, speeding them up, and fuck, Quinn was practically riding her face at this point.

The noises Quinn was making felt obscene, but they only added to the satisfaction Santana was getting from eating her out. From her taste to her smell, to the way she moved on top of her, and the sight of Quinn's breasts bouncing slightly with each grind of her hips, it was enough to push Santana close the edge, despite her hips jerking to meet nothing.

"Santana, please," Quinn whined, needing more, needing that final push, needing release. "Please," she whined again, the frustrated whimpers in her throat causing Santana to groan.

Knowing that she was so close to making Quinn come, to have Quinn begging her to make her come, it was intoxicating, and enough encouragement to switch from teasing and toying to tongue fucking Quinn properly.

Santana's rhythm was frantic, her tongue sweeping up to Quinn's clit, before sucking it in her mouth, all the while using her tongue to flick over it. The complete focus of her ministrations were enough to have Quinn's low moans get higher, for her breath to catch each time, to have her back straightening, her hips trying to buck, and then, then, then, the crying out and back arching, as she came, causing Santana to moan, too.

It only took a moment before Quinn was slouching forward, her head almost colliding with the headboard. After some careful shuffling, Santana had her sprawled out on the bed, admiring her handiwork as Quinn's chest rose and fell quickly, with her still trying to catch her breath, and with her hair all in complete disarray on the pillow.

It truly was a gorgeous sight to behold.

But then she saw the droop in Quinn's eyelids and hell no.

"I'm not done with you yet," Santana purred, kissing her way up Quinn's neck, before tucking some of her blonde hair behind her ear.

"I don't think...I'm not sure I..." Quinn babbled, attempting to shake her head.

"You have it in you, trust me." If Santana's gaze hadn't been so sultry, Quinn would have disagreed with her, but no, she was desperate to know what look meant exactly. In doing so, she turned her body over to Santana once again, and was certainly not disappointed.

Santana, on the other hand, felt like all her birthdays and Christmases were coming early. A pliant and begging Quinn Fabray was something fantasies were made of.

Well, now all Santana's fantasies were becoming reality and she couldn't fight the smirk from her lips as she leant in to kiss Quinn again.

—

The only name on Santana's card that had been ticked was Quinn, and likewise, the only name on Quinn's card was Santana. This became obvious when both phones vibrated and buzzed, leading to naked scrambling and stretching to pull them into bed with the pair the following morning.

They had exactly the same email, followed by contact numbers, and the suggestion to make the call and start something special.

Quinn laughed and shook her head. "I think we already had that something special," she said, crawling back out of bed, unashamed by her nakedness as she grabbed a shirt off the chair and put it on. It went to mid-thigh, leaving Quinn covered and comfortable. "I'll go put this on the charger and make us some coffee."

Santana watched her leave, heard her fumbling about in the kitchen, before the phone began to ring.

"Hello?" Quinn answered, sounding surprised.

"I think this is actually the beginning of something special, not the end, so when you're done with the coffee, come back to bed and we'll talk details. I'm not one to put out on the first date, so I think that means we need to have our official first date already," Santana said, crossing her legs under the sheets and waiting for Quinn to come back into the bedroom.

She wasn't disappointed, she walked through a few seconds later, a bemused look on her face and phone in hand.

"Official first date, huh? Last night didn't count?"

"Last night was a few drinks and dirty sex. You need to wine and dine me," Santana declared, waving her hand as she spoke.

"I need to? How'd you figure that?" Quinn asked, fighting a smile on her lips.

"Your apartment is a lot fancier than mine. You can do the wine and dining part better than me."

"And what will your part be then?" It had to be fair, after all.

"The dirty sex, of course," she teased, causing Quinn to laugh.

And okay, Quinn wasn't expecting Santana to want something more. She assumed last night would have washed Quinn out of Santana's system, but if she was willing for more, for this to be more than a night of sex, Quinn definitely wasn't going to say no.

So yes, this might just be the beginning of something special, indeed.

*Don't go, come close (and wake up with me), by
emilystark21barelylegal (breakingatthecracks)*

(Madison is one. Santana and Quinn are five.)

You stand by the door watching Quinn tuck Maddie to bed. The girl just smiles contentedly and you still wonder up until this day how Quinn manages to calm that hyperactive kid down. Where Maddie is silly with you, she's obedient with Quinn.

"Good night, Maddie. Mom and Mommy love you, okay?" Quinn whispers. Maddie nods and smiles as Quinn kisses her forehead.

You love Maddie's smile. She's got Quinn's smile.

She also has Quinn's hair and eyes.

When Maddie falls asleep, Quinn walks to you and links your arms together as she leads you to the living room. The house isn't as big as that of Rachel and Brody's but it's homey and it's yours and it's got Quinn's touch everywhere.

You've been together five years and it still overwhelms you how Quinn just fits in your life perfectly.

"How was work?" Quinn asks you, like she always does.

"A bitch," you say because being a music producer sucks when you're in a commercial label.

"When is it not?"

You laugh, "Yeah, so it's pretty much just another day at the office... or studio. Whatever. How about yours?"

Quinn smiles gently and you always admire how her profession suits her. She doesn't get old, teaching pre-school makes her look younger by the day.

"It was pretty chill. The kids used all day to draw something for their parents."

"Chill? When did you learn to use that word?" you chuckle.

"When I started dating you obviously," she says smilingly, as she lays down on the couch, resting her head on your lap.

By habit, you stroke her hair.

You've always loved how soft it is.

"Tana," she calls out with that sweet tone of her, telling you that she's about to ask you some kind of a ridiculous favor.

"Fabray," you say firmly but with a knowing smirk.

She pouts, because she knows you can't resist it, "Tomorrow is PTA day."

"And?"

"The parents wanna meet you."

Ugh.

This is one aspect of her job you hate.

"Quinn, I can't be around people who, like, smile all the time. I saw them when I dropped you off for the field trip, I nearly cried on the way home."

Quinn laughs, "Please?"

You roll your eyes, "Do I have a choice?"

She laughs as she stands up and kisses you, "Nope."

She then heads to your bedroom skipping.

You close your eyes and smile.

Today is the fifth anniversary of the day she said *yes* to that movie with you. Quinn doesn't know it, you don't think she does.

But you've celebrated it every year since.

—

(Madison is two. Santana and Quinn are six.)

"Do you really need to go?" Quinn asks you, again pulling off that pout. You know she's against this trip but the label requires you to meet the new solo artist in LA.

"Rachel will be staying with you for a few days, Q. She'll help you with Maddie as long as you help her with her pregnancy."

She chuckles, "But I really don't want you to go."

"I don't want to go, Quinn. I don't wanna miss Maddie's first day in ballet," you roll your eyes at it, good-natured sarcasm dripping in your tone. You didn't want Maddie to attend ballet and neither did Quinn. But it was Rachel who insisted.

With her hormones, neither of you really didn't have much choice.

"If you come home and Maddie's gone deaf with all the singing, don't blame me," Quinn says as she grabs some more of your shirts and takes over packing your things—knowing very well you suck at it.

You stand behind her and wrap your arms around her waist as she continues to pack. She relaxes in your touch immediately. Up until this day, you still can't believe you got the girl.

"I'll miss you," you say because that's the truth. Heck, you miss her everyday.

"Don't get soft on me right now," she says playfully but she turns around and kisses you anyway.

"Too late for that now, Q," you tell her.

She snakes her arms around your neck as you pull her closer by the waist.

"Do you wish sometimes that we've done things differently?" you ask her.

It has been your thing—to ask random questions when this life with Quinn overwhelms you in a good way.

Somehow, this was never how you imagined your future to be. And yet, you couldn't imagine it not being like this.

She looks away for a moment, giving it a thought. She then nods, "Maybe."

"What would you change?"

"I would've said yes sooner."

Tears well in your eyes and God, you hate how much of a sap you are now.

"You would have been this soft earlier in your life," she says laughingly and then kisses your cheek. "Now go get your daughter because Aunt Rachel and her giant belly is arriving soon. You don't want to be alone in the room when that happens."

You laugh because you remember exactly how Maddie's eyes went wide when she saw Rachel's baby bump. The girl is seven months pregnant with twins so naturally, it is a *giant belly*. You've seen this—Maddie having your sass and life skills.

You tease Quinn everyday for it.

"I'll finish this up," she tells you and you only stare at her. Up until this day, it still amazes you how you got Quinn Fabray to pack your stuff. "Quit staring."

"I couldn't even if I tried," you say and then you kiss her cheek. "Make it fast, Fabray. You don't wanna miss Maddie's reaction when she sees Berry. It's the most hilarious thing I've seen in my life."

"Our daughter got that from you."

You shrug proudly and she only glares at you.

You make your way to Maddie's room and you smile to yourself.

Today is the sixth anniversary of the day she said yes to that movie with you. Quinn doesn't know it, you don't think she does.

But you've celebrated it every year since.

—

(Madison is three. Santana and Quinn are seven.)

"Seven years, Santana! Seven years and we're still fighting about Brittany!" she yells, tears falling down her cheeks.

Maddie is crying in her room, shocked to see her moms yelling at each other. You've fought before. In fact, you fight a lot.

But it was never this intense.

It was never this serious.

None of those fights ever sent Quinn packing—like what she's doing right now.

"She needed me, Quinn. Her life with Aaron is falling apart and—"

Quinn chuckles bitterly, "—and of course, Santana saves the day."

"Q, it wasn't like that. I went to Lima to—"

"—to what? To make her feel better? She's not your responsibility anymore, Santana. You have a child! With me, if I may add!" she's really angry, you know it. Her cheeks are turning red.

"Q," you plead silently. You're scared because she's packed Maddie's things and she's packing hers. "Please, let's talk."

She's putting in those bags everything you have in your life.

"Well, you didn't think about talking to me first when you went to Lima so you don't have the right to ask for something you never gave me."

"Q," you plead again. This time, you grab her by her elbow to spin her around so she's facing you. You meet her eyes, "Quinn, Brittany and I, we're just friends now, okay? We're done, over. A long time ago."

Quinn looks back at you, just as intense, "Are you really?"

It takes you aback—the way her voice sounded so cold. You haven't seen *this* Quinn in a while and it scares you a bit.

You stare at each other for a moment before she pulls her hand back. She zips the luggage and takes the other bags she has packed. She walks toward the bedroom door. Before she steps out, she says, "We'll be staying at Rachel and Brody's for a while. Figure this out, Santana. I'm so fucking tired of coming in second to Brittany. At least have the decency to not put Madison in this kind of torture. I was forced to take that crap in high school, S. I'm not about eat the same shit again."

She walks out.

And she takes Maddie with her.

Today, the skeletons in your closet haunt you.

Today is the seventh anniversary of the day she said *yes* to that movie with you. Quinn doesn't know it, you don't think she does.

You've celebrated it every year since but today, the demons under your bed are celebrating it with you.

(Madison is four. Santana and Quinn are eight.)

Today, you think you're ready.

You think it's time for Quinn to come home.

You think you've figured it out, not that there was anything to figure out. It's always been her and Maddie. It's always going to be them.

But Quinn was right when she said she needed you to be really in it—to be really in this marriage. To be really in this moment. She asked you to grow up.

She got a lease at the apartment next to Rachel's and she let you see Maddie anytime you wanted.

But it's been a year and you miss her so much.

You're standing outside her door when you realized how much you need her in your life—or how much your life isn't your *life* unless she's in it.

She opens the door and looks at you as if she'd been expecting you.

"Come home, Quinn," you say and you swallow, hard.

You cannot take a *no*. You cannot take a rejection.

She only stares at you and you think this is the perfect time. You pull a ring out of your pocket and you show it to her, "Marry me again. This time, we'll do it right."

Tears well in her eyes.

"I need you, Quinn. The house is so lonely without you there and Maddie misses the days when all of us would go to Rockefeller to skate. I need you and Maddie to come home. I need us to be a family again. I know I've made mistakes but Quinn, since you left home I tried so hard to become the right person you'd come home to every night," you state your case, your voice shaking.

Maddie emerges from inside the apartment, holding a teddy bear. She beams when she sees you, "Mommy!"

Maddie runs to your arms and you kneel to scoop her up.

You could tell, by the way Quinn is looking at the two of you, that she misses it too.

"Are you coming home, Mommy?" Maddie asks, and you're surprised for a moment because Maddie just asked you a full question without stuttering. She's growing up fast and she's looking more like Quinn with each passing day.

You smile sadly, "Maddie, the question is, are *you* coming home?"

Maddie turns to Quinn and smiles, as if trying to convince her mother, "Mom?"

You turn to Quinn again, "Quinn, come home with me."

For a moment there, you almost thought she'd say no but she opens the door wider and steps aside to make way for you. "Okay," she says.

Tears fall from your eyes immediately, "Okay?"

"We're coming home, San."

You smile despite your watery eyes as you watch her make her way inside. She turns to you before she disappears into the kitchen, "But first, lunch?"

You nod and you thank God for Quinn Fabray because *lunch* to Quinn is synonymous to a second chance.

"Mommy, why are you crying?" Maddie asks you as she wipes your tears.

"Mommy is just really happy," you say as you close the door behind you and walk to the living room.

You sit Maddie on your lap as you take a spot in the couch.

"Ma, can we take Sandy with us? Sandy is my best friend."

You shake your head gently and then smiles, "No, baby. Auntie Rachel will be sad if we take Sandy."

"But we will visit her?"

"Of course," you say, trying your best not to roll your eyes at your daughter because never in a million years did you think that your daughter will be best friends with Rachel Berry's daughter—who is, of course, predictably named after the Grease character.

You sometimes like to think the girl is named after the typhoon because *seriously*, that kid has her mother's everything except, thank God, for her nose.

Sandy's twin is named Serena and she's named after the *Fame* character.

You smile to yourself as you think about the life you just got back. Quinn is coming home and you know the lease is over in a week anyway. Somehow, you know that Quinn always knew that one year will be enough for you to pull your shit together. It relieves you that Quinn never lost her faith in you.

Rachel will finally stop calling you to lecture you about everything you're missing in Maddie's life—which is just basically the things Maddie does with her twins like recitals and voice lessons. She can finally stop alternating her Friday Dinner with Friends between you and Quinn. And though you will never admit it, you missed having Friday night dinners with Rachel and Brody.

You're married to Quinn. You have a wonderful daughter named after Emma Roberts' character in American Horror Story. You're still friends with Rachel Berry—who gave her hooker

boyfriend a second chance and for once actually did the right call. You and Brody are practically bros. Madison, Sandy, and Serena are bestfriends.

This is your life now.

Today is the eighth anniversary of the day she said yes to that movie with you. Quinn doesn't know it, you don't think she does.

But you've celebrated it every year since.

You'll celebrate it every damn year because Quinn said *yes*. She doesn't say *yes* very often but she's made you an exception to all her rules.

To you, that's enough.

Yes.

It's funny how that one word changed your life forever.

The One Where They Live Together, by empresskris

Santana leans against the wall in the hallway, staring at the key in her hand to her apartment. *Their* apartment.

Before Quinn, when she came home she'd drop her bags, take a quick shower and have a drink with Puck. Sometimes Artie and Kitty would join them. Or, if she was really beaten up or exhausted, she'd come home, open a beer and then fall into bed.

Since Quinn, she's been in the routine of coming home, grabbing a quick shower and heading directly to Quinn's, anxious to see her. But she still had time to make herself presentable. She could cover her wounds, and bypass unpacking her work items in front of her girlfriend. She just had to show up with an overnight bag and that was that.

But this time she was coming home directly to someone. Now it was, open the door and there she is, "my trip was fine" while trying to cover the bruises long enough to get to the bathroom and clean up. It was her first time coming home directly to Quinn since she moved in a little under a month ago and she wasn't exactly sure how it was going to go.

"I should just tell her," Santana mumbles to herself. Nine months in, a dog, and living together was as pretty standard as it went as far as serious relationships went. And the longer she waits the worse it's going to be. She knows this.

But as she slips her key into the deadbolt and turns and steps inside, she decides it can wait another day.

The apartment smells amazing. She drops her bags by the door and closes it behind her, turning the deadbolt firmly in place. Rufus lets out a loud bark and rushes towards the door, his expression changing when he realizes who it is.

"Hey boy!" Santana says patting her chest for the dog to jump. "Were you a good boy while I was gone? Did you protect the house?" She laughs when he licks her face.

"You're early!" Quinn says happily as she emerges from the kitchen, her hair pulled back and a spoon in her hand. "I was hoping dinner would be ready by the time you got here."

"Sorry, there wasn't much traffic. Guess everyone knows it's going to snow," she offers as a way of explanation.

Quinn leans in and kisses her, wrapping her free arm around Santana's neck. "How was your trip?"

"Long," Santana says with a heavy sigh. "And I need a shower." Even though she was only gone for a week, the mission had taken a lot out of her. She was exhausted and sore. At least the only bruises she came away with were on her ribs and not her face. "It smells fantastic in here. What are you making?"

"Chicken," Quinn says with a smile. Santana shakes her head and slips off her jacket and scarf as Quinn makes her way back to the kitchen. "I'll tell you what, why don't you shower while I finish up dinner?"

"Great idea," Santana agrees as she picks up her suitcase, wincing at the sudden movement. Her eyes flick up to see if Quinn noticed.

She didn't.

"Then you can tell me all about the Ukraine and I can show you how much I missed you," Quinn purrs from within the kitchen.

Normally Santana would forgo the shower and make Quinn prove it right then and there, dinner be damned. But the constant throbbing in her ribcage reminds her that it's better to stay away from physical activities such as those for awhile. "Great," she says forcing a smile.

It wasn't the first time she had to cover up cuts and bruises from Quinn. But how the hell was she going to keep Quinn from seeing the bruising on her chest?

—

She turns on the water as hot as it can go and slowly begins to undress. First her shoes and socks, then her jeans, then her sweatshirt and finally her t-shirt, until she is left standing in the middle of the bathroom in nothing but her underwear.

Carefully, Santana picks up her dirty clothes and tosses them in the hamper, kicking her shoes out of the way. She takes a deep breath and winces, bringing her hand to her side, she presses her palm flat against her ribs.

After a moment of collecting herself, she gently unwinds the bandage wrapped all the way around her chest. Once she's free of the bandage she tosses it in the linen closet on top of her first aid kit and looks at herself in the mirror. Her chest and side look bad. The bruising is fresh and still a gross-looking yellow. She winces at the sight of it.

Steam starts to seep out from behind the shower curtain and with another sigh, she grabs a bottle of pain killers from the medicine cabinet and swallows them dry. After snatching a towel and tossing it over the shower rod, she steps into the tub, turning the knob to cool off the scorching water.

Santana leans forward pressing her forearms against the cool tile and bows her head, closing her eyes.

She's so incredibly stupid. Why hasn't she just told her?

Schuester's wife knows. Why can't Quinn?

Santana groans. She should've told her before they started living together. She should've told her months ago. And now she's stuck in a situation where lying and keeping things from Quinn have gone from necessary to downright impossible.

It used to be easy, brushing aside simple questions...

"How did you get that black eye?"

"Breaking up a bar fight. It was stupid."

She would listen to Quinn lecture her about how dangerous inserting herself in drunken brawls could be and Santana would shrug as if it was no big deal. It was easy to brush aside the truth.

Now, however, Quinn's worried gaze and gentle touch to her work related injuries has left Santana almost speechless.

"How did dislocate your shoulder?"

"I fell," would spill from her lips.

But images of a North Korean militant flipping her to the ground awkwardly would flash behind her eyes.

And when Quinn sees her broken ribs...

"Shit," Santana whispers. She has to tell her. She has to tell her before it's too late. Even if she already knows deep down that it just might *be* too late.

"Hey San, do you want wine with dinner or something else?"

Quinn's voice startles her and she stands straight up, grabbing the shower curtain and poking her head with a smile. "Wine is fine."

Quinn looks around the bathroom floor, her eyes falling to the hamper. "You picked up your clothes!" She says excitedly.

"Well you've been nagging me about how terrible I am about it so I thought I'd avoid a lecture," Santana smirks.

"See? You're learning," Quinn says closing the distance to the shower.

"Yes, dear," Santana teases.

Quinn reaches out to grab Santana's face. "You're such a smartass," she laughs as she leans in for another kiss.

Santana closes her eyes and sighs.

"Are you okay?" Quinn asks worriedly.

When Santana opens her eyes she's met with a concerned gaze. Doing her best to flash a smile, she nods. "Yeah, I'm just really tired."

Quinn's expression softens and she runs her hands down the sides of Santana's face. "How about after dinner we curl up on the couch and watch a movie," she suggests.

"Sounds perfect." Quinn smiles and turns to leave Santana to shower. As she does, a rush of urgency courses through Santana at her retreating form and she calls out to stop her before she loses her nerve. "Hey, Quinn?" The girl stops and turns around. Santana looks her in the eyes,

gathering the courage to tell her everything. She grips the shower curtain tightly, ready to push it back and show Quinn her bruised ribs, the truth about who she is heavy within her throat. Now is the time. She needs to tell her now.

But, "I'm glad you're here," is all that she can manage to say.

Quinn smiles softly. "Me too."

—

Santana gently settles down on the couch, her stomach full and her eyes heavy. Her chest hurts, but she's wrapped it tight and popped more pain killers than she probably should have. Her body feels heavy as she carefully lies down, stretching her legs out across the upholstery.

Quinn pulls the blanket over her as Santana rests her head in Quinn's lap. She winces as she settles deeper into the couch cushions but sighs as her entire body relaxes when Quinn's fingers drag through her still damp hair. "I'm going to get your pants wet," she murmurs as she runs her hand along Quinn's leg.

"I will just let that one go," Quinn says with a trace of a smile on her lips. Santana groans, knowing how her comment could've been taken and nuzzles her face against her girlfriend's thigh. "Just relax," Quinn says as she reaches over to turn off the table lamp. "I can tell you're exhausted."

"Mmm," Santana hums in agreement.

The volume of the TV is low and the room now dark except for the flickering of the old black and white movie flashing on the screen. Santana's eyes start to slip closed as Quinn gently massages her head.

Somewhere in the back of her mind Santana feels a tug, a constant nagging that she should be doing something, saying something important. But whatever it was becomes lost as she falls asleep.

Future, by headcannonwip (headcannon)

"What is it with you and weddings?" There was a playful lilt in Santana's sleepy voice that made Quinn grin into her pillow.

Contemplating the question, Quinn closed her eyes, rolled onto her side and pulled their shared covers tightly over her shoulder. The movement caused the other woman to press against her back, the warmth of her body seeping into Quinn's skin, and she curled her arm comfortably over Quinn's side.

Santana had a point. What began with the failed joining in matrimony of their former teacher and their former school counselor began a trend – a coping mechanism the two friends used to survive five wedding ceremonies and four (and a half) receptions.

The first time, they'd written it off as a one-time thing. For Santana, it was a good time and she was getting to experience something she wouldn't dare admit to as a fantasy. It was Quinn, after all.

She'd seen the other woman flirt with men – boys – before. But she'd never been on the receiving end of her half-lidded gaze or coy smile – and Santana didn't even know how to describe Quinn's sudden and constant need to touch. If she wasn't adjusting Santana's necklace very near her plunging neckline, then she was trailing her fingers along the other woman's forearm as she admired her bracelet.

Quinn, of course, wrote it off as college experimentation. It was easier than figuring out a way to rationalize her actions. It wasn't very becoming of a future-Yale graduate to explain her motives with "I dunno – I just wanted to?"

It was impulsive and that wasn't something Quinn often allowed herself to be. Quinn and impulsive were a dangerous combination. Unlike her attempt to seduce Puck, she hadn't come up with a plan to get Santana in bed. She hadn't considered Santana an option before that night and Quinn couldn't come up with a good reason to explain why that changed.

It wasn't the way Santana's dressed hugged her curves – Quinn was used to seeing Santana in outfits that flattered her figure. It wasn't the alcohol – she and her friend drank together plenty of times. It wasn't even banding together over the catastrophe that was the non-wedding – the pair of friends had endured many catastrophic events together and not once had they landed in bed together.

With no other reasons, Quinn felt the need to chalk it up to an experiment. It was something she wanted to try and she did. The end.

Or it would have been if she didn't find herself feeling a sense of déjà vu following Shue's *real* wedding to Ms. Pillsbury – now Mrs. Schuester.

They celebrated with their friends, sang songs for their mentor and, in the morning, found themselves trying to reason why they were waking up beside each other.

Santana shrugged it off, happy for the opportunity of a repeat performance. It sure as hell beat sleeping alone or, even worse, sharing a hotel room with Mercedes. She loved the girl but she'd quickly grown tired of listening to her friend debate with herself the topic of chastity. Do it or don't. Santana didn't care – she just wanted the girl to make up her mind. It's not like it was her business who Mercedes slept with (or didn't, as the case may be).

That was the sentiment she shared with Quinn as she watched the other woman hurriedly shimmy into her dress from the evening before. It was none of anyone's business with whom Santana slept or did anything else. Though she wasn't sure why it was important, Santana promised their secret was safe with her.

Not that it mattered. Santana would have had to rent a billboard in Times Square for Quinn to find out if she told anyone. In the months between the Schuester wedding and the Chang-squared wedding, Quinn all but disappeared. Under the pretense of being "too busy," her trips to the city for opening nights and semi-impromptu reunions were no longer *infrequent*. They were *nonexistent*.

As they helped Tina get ready for her big day – doing her make-up, helping her with her dress and reminding her to breathe every so often - Santana and Quinn flitted around each other without actually acknowledging the other's presence. But they were in each other's orbits and, come the morning, they found themselves in a very familiar situation.

It took Kurt calling her out for Santana to question the trend. Three cosmos and two male strippers into his bachelor party, he threw his arm over her shoulder and asked, "How long can I count on you to stick around at the reception?"

"Depends," she answered. "If it's non-stop Village People, I'll be outta there before *In the Navy* starts. Why?"

Tightening his arm and shaking his friend closer to him, he grinned. "I don't want you sneaking off with Quinn before the champagne waterfall. It's going to be glorious."

Santana tried to pull out of his half-cuddle but he held tightly. She twisted her head and squinted at him, unsure if he was drunk or crazier than she'd originally allowed herself to believe. (She could only do so much crazy in one apartment and she'd already credited the majority to Rachel).

"I want everyone's eyes on me. So you're not allowed to dance with Quinn because it's not your wedding," he continued. He poked his finger into her shoulder and winked much too much like some big-headed cartoon character. "Yet."

At the way Santana's eyes widened and her mouth fell open in surprise, her friend squealed out a giggle. "It's not like it's a secret. Blaine and I were talking about it this morning. I think you should make it official but he seems to think secret rendezvous are romantic ... "

"You're delusional. Sleep it off Hummel," was all she could manage to say before leaving him in the wake of her speedy exit.

Out of spite, she made sure to occupy the space on the dance floor next to Kurt and his new husband. She held Quinn closely during the slow songs and didn't let go of her hands for the fast songs – which made dancing to *TMCA* more than a little difficult.

And the champagne fountain? Santana was pretty sure Quinn was divested of her dress before the tuxedoed server poured the first drop. That'd teach Kurt to shoot his mouth off about things beyond his minute comprehension.

It wasn't quite morning when Santana, her head pillowed comfortably on Quinn's arm, informed the other woman of the discussion. The last thing she wanted was for Quinn to think she'd reneged on her promise to keep their activities private.

Quinn pressed her lips together, her eyes narrowing as she considered Santana's story, and eventually said, "Okay."

Santana had no idea what the one word reply meant but judging by the kiss Quinn pressed to the side of her head and the way her arm tightened around her as she closed her eyes, that was the end of the conversation.

Brittany's wedding to the vet tech responsible for saving Lord Tubbington's life - apparently the cat confused a roll of pennies for a hot dog – was the last that season. All of their friends in committed relationships had gotten married and those who weren't had no reason to believe they'd be writing their vows any time in the near future.

It was an outdoor affair and unlike any of the celebrations they'd shared together.

The bridesmaids wore sundresses and sandals instead of cocktail dresses and heels. They spent the evening before braiding each other's hair instead of shoving dollar bills in a dancer's g-string. And, with prompting – also known as *badgering* - from Kurt and Rachel, Santana requested that Quinn arrive to the venue with her instead of consciously bumping into her there.

At the reception, Brittany handed each of her two closest friends flowers from her bouquet, and both women rolled their eyes and vehemently shook their heads. The crowd, made up of a mix of some of their oldest friends and a bunch of strangers, cheered as Santana bit her lip and Quinn hid her reddening face in the other woman's neck. The display made the party-goers continue their applause with zeal.

Even later that evening in the hotel room was different. The marathon - that wild grasp for something that would almost definitely not be available again – was replaced with something not quite as tenuous. When they moved slowly together, it wasn't to tease or to torture to a breaking point, but to be attentive and to savor the experience. For once it was something more than the fear of missing check-out that spurred the frantic motions that left them breathless.

It wasn't the dawn that nudged them to get just a few hours of sleep in the comfort of each other's arms. Curling against each other was their reward for navigating as far as they had. When they chose to close their eyes, their arms wrapped around each other, it was a settling in – an acknowledgment that the physical was just part of what they shared.

It would be nearly two years before everyone reunited for another wedding. For those who hadn't seen their relationship grow, Santana took great joy in embarrassing Quinn by suggesting to their friends that the evening of Brittany's wedding, behind closed hotel room doors, was when they officially began. Perhaps on principal or perhaps because she rarely agreed with the other woman, Quinn insisted it was before that – when Santana called and made a case for them attending *together*.

Brittany, of course, adamantly argued that it was because she gave them flowers from her wedding bouquet.

As they snuck away from the reception and took an all-too familiar path, they decided it didn't matter how they started. That was the past and they were content to keep their eyes forward, keenly focused on their future.

With Santana's arm snugly around her, Quinn shifted just enough to push her hand out of the covers to trace her fingers light over the ring on the other woman's finger.

She knew Santana's question was rhetorical – teasing, even – but, once she'd pulled herself out of the memories of celebrating everyone else's wedding nights, she couldn't help but answer, "Maybe I just like happy endings."

Parallel Love (4), by ive-gotta-gay-go-go-ive-gotta-go

(FabrayQS)

December 29th, 2018

Quinn's POV

A bright light paints my face, inducing me to change positions in my bed. I smiled, covering my exposed shoulder with the sheets. My face felt warm and comfortable, as it was pressed on delicate cushions.

Santana was so perfect last night, that if I could have seen her close to me, I am sure I would have not contained myself. She is perfect, she knows the right words to say, she is beautiful, kind and so sexy. I raise my head a little, the tip of my nose slid on warm skin and a strong peach scent filled my lungs.

I stayed still while I tried to understand what was going on. Santana has her arms wrapped round me. I opened my eyes to find tan skin and dark hair. My heart was racing and I was sure our closeness was causing her to know how nervous I was. I lower my gaze briefly to see her cleavage inside her tank. Now breathing was a problem. I did not know if I should move my legs, or just stay still.

I'd be lying if I did not love this. Her tender skin against mine, her scent intoxicating me, her toned arms holding me securely. I've never actually felt like this before.

"Are you awake?" She asked, her voice sounding profound over our proximity. "You must be. Your heart is racing." I shut my eyes, memorizing this moment, how I feel and how she makes me feel. Her hand pulled me closer to her gently, closing any distant left in between us. "Listen." She whispered. I did not know what she was up to, until I dissipate the white noise of the room and the city outside to focus on her.

Her heart was beating as fast as mine was.

I slipped my hand over her back and squeezed her. "Thank you for my necklace." I said and she hums in response, pressing a chaste kiss over my head. "Good morning."

"Good morning, beautiful." She says yawning slowly. "It's always around midnight that the energy dissipates, cutting communication with each other." I smiled in her chest. There was nothing more beneficial than listening to her voice, clear and loud. "Someone here merged around three thirty."

"So we've slept together since then?"

She murmured something I couldn't catch, before nodding. "Yes. Oh, and you talk in your sleep. It's cute."

"No, I don't."

"Yes, you do."

"You are lying."

"I will prove this, one day." I close my eyes; just thinking about a future with her makes me feel complete.

I felt like a fistful of courage has been lodged in the palm of my hand. I untangled myself from her embrace, pushing all my weight on my right shoulder. She smiled at me warmly, one of her eyes close, another one adjusting to the bright room.

"Hi." She whispers. Her hand slowly pushed back a few strands of hair falling on my forehead. Her fingers felt like a feather flying on my skin. My heart was pounding and I felt hot for a second. "It looks beautiful on you." She said gripping the charm on my necklace.

"Do you think your Mom will get mad at you for passing the family necklace?"

She furrows her brows a bit. "If my mother is going to get mad at somebody, it will be you." My face covered in confusion. "Don't give me that look. You were the one who assured my mother and I quote: *I am certain we can set up something*," She said mocking my voice. "When she asked you about coming over for New Year's Eve."

I laughed. "What was I supposed to say?" I poke at her. "And I don't speak like that."

"Right, my voice doesn't even do justice." She winked at me. "Then you said you were looking forward to meeting her. I will be honest with you, if you promise something to Mama Lopez, you better make it happen."

"Oh, really. I am in trouble."

"You have no idea. She said something about flying from Ohio to spend New Year's with me. I'm hoping is a lie." She shrugs. "Do you think I will be able to see you that day?" I stared at her face for a few seconds; I could see doubt in her face and if I wasn't wrong, fear. "What I'm trying to say is, sometimes we'll be in the same room," She moved her hand in between us. "Sometimes I barely hear your voice. Is there any system to increase the energy to a higher level?"

I furrow my brows, thinking. I could spread out a condenser and reverse the power until it passes the stage when we can merge all the time. Still, I don't know the secondary effects that will make. "I can try. I can't be sure of what will go on, until now our merging is created spontaneously."

"Don't force it then. What if something goes wrong, cutting all communication?"

"That won't happen." She reclined herself on her left elbow. Her shoulder length hair cascade over the side, revealing her skin. She always looks so beautiful. "I –I can always find the fusion in the loft. Restoring the previous energy."

"Will you do that?" Her eyes were fixed in mine. The white noise of the room rose. Her scent tripled, I can sense a million ants running along my spine. Her eyes flipped between my lips and then again to my eyes.

"Why not?" I whispered. She licked her lips moving toward me. She moved cautiously, like a child learning to walk. Every motion was calculated, as if she could read my expression. I knew exactly what she was after. She was asking for permission. She wants this as much as I do. A deep feeling overcomes my heart. I want her; I want her in her past or in my present. I want to wake up like this every day. My hands were sweating. "I can get used to you." I whispered.

She smiles, willing to close the space between us. I didn't know what to do first. Suddenly, my phone rang, breaking the staring. She rolls her eyes falling on the bed. I blushed and looked over Santana, something caught my attention, her clock on her end table reads – Nine thirteen, and my eyes widened.

"Fuck." My telephone rang for the fifth time and I promptly answer. "Hello?"

"Where the hell are you?" My sister whispered.

"I'm sorry, I overslept." I said looking at Santana.

"The meeting started at eight, we took a break, and you better be here by nine thirty. Our boss is pissed."

"I –I, yes. I'll be there." I threw the phone somewhere in the bed and looked at Santana.

"I'm sorry, it was my mistake. I didn't know you had to wake up early."

"No, it's fine. It's my fault." I smiled at her and she sat on the bed. "I forgot about the meeting. That's all." I became misplaced in her cleavage for a second. "I –I'm going to leave the bed." I said pointing to the back. "I'll see you this afternoon, okay?"

"Of course, beautiful." Her lopsided grin killed me. There's nothing more that I want to do than spend the whole day in this bed with her. I smiled at her and she got hold of a pillow and thrust it at me. "Go, you are going to be late." She shakes her head and I jump out of bed.

To my luck, I could still see her there. I head to the bathroom to brush my teeth. I couldn't find the toothpaste. My toothbrush was next to a pink one and I smiled. "S? Is this your toothbrush?" I yelled.

"What's wrong with that color, Q?" I laughed.

"Nothing." I finished brushing my teeth and walked to the closet. I looked back at her; she was seated on the bed with her toned legs crossed and her elbows resting on a pillow. "Quit staring."

"Nope." She says, smiling. I look over what I am wearing, I have a big shirt and a just my underwear. My cheeks were warm. I ran roughly to a completely new closet in front of me. Santana's clothes are mixed with mine. I caught a short blue dress, and Santana laughed. "That's mine, apparently. Although, you'll look cute, cold, but cute."

"I guess you moved in with *me*." I said smiling at her.

"Or you moved *with* me."

I enter the closet smiling like a dork. I cannot seem to understand these crazy feelings, feelings she is causing with simple words. I found my clothes in between her dresses and got ready. I have to admit that I love the idea of both of our things in the same closet.

On my way backwards, I took hold of a black scarf that sure wasn't mine. "I am borrowing this." I said as I walked out.

"Okay." I looked over her and she beamed at me. "See you later? I can prepare dinner."

I stood in front of the dresser grabbing my cross body purse. "Are you inviting me for a date?" I said over my shoulder.

"I can't take you out, so yes?" She shrugs. "So... it's that a yes?"

"Yes." I said, putting a strand of hair behind my ear and looking her over the mirror.

"See you later then." I nodded, walking over to the exit, but the silver rounds on the floor stopped me. The only part that was merging was my room, as soon I walk over to the kitchen or the living room, she will disappear.

"Hey Q." She calls and I turned my body, facing her. She is standing with her knees on the mattress and my phone in her hands. "Forgot something." I scratch my nape walking over her.

"Thanks." I stretch my hand to keep the phone and she holds onto my hand, pulling me towards her and embracing me. She pecks my cheek tenderly twice and then pushed me out of her embrace.

"Go, because if you don't leave now, you'll be very late." I smiled. "See you in a few hours." I nodded and exited the room with a huge smile adorning my face.

—

I looked over my watch. Nine forty one. I quickly made my way over the conference room and open the door. Everyone turned on me with a steadfast face. I moved my hand in the air and walked over the round table to sit on the only chair available. My sister looks at me across the table and she smiles shaking her head.

I quickly open the folders and my phone beeps in my pants pockets. I quickly grabbed my phone reading the text.

-What were you doing?

I ignored her, focusing in the projector in front of me. A few minutes afterward, my phone buzzed once more.

-I know, Santana.

I shook my head and she wiggled her brows.

The meeting went on for two hours. We discuss the energy and we present all the anomalies over the past month. It was a long and boring meeting. As soon as it was over, I walked back to my office. There were a few new cases we needed to work.

"Hey." Frannie said, entering my office. She stops for a second in her tracks and pointed to my necklace. Her expression was amused and I could not see why. "What is that?" She walked over me smiling wide. "Oh, it's so beautiful."

"Santana gave it to me last night."

"She did?"

"It's been in her family for years."

"Now it's yours." She said crossing her arms. "Quinn. What are you going to do with her? Do not get me mistaken. I am ecstatic. I love seeing you this happy."

"But?" I stated.

"But are you making it official? What will you do?" I shrugged. "Ask her about where is she in this time. Go meet her."

"Really? That is your idea. What will I say? Hello, I ran into your past self. I want you to be with me?" I close my eyes, taking a deep breath when I realize what I said aloud.

"No. Go and accidentally bump into her. I am sure you will catch her attention."

"It's not that easy, Frann."

"What if it is?"

I shook my head. "Okay, I can go to California; she says she will be there. That's why she sold the loft."

"Go on." My sister started pacing through my office. "What else?"

"I don't know. I –I really do not want to start over. I'll do it if I have to." My sister stops moving in my office. She looked at me right in my eyes. I knew she saw how concerned I was about this situation. I know she can understand my concern.

"But, I really want her. How she is now. I want what we have. I want her to remember the first time we saw each other's in our kitchen. We have a stupid game with rules. I don't want her to forget our first drunken awkward kiss." Her eyes widen and her hand covers her mouth. "I don't want her to forget how she met you; I don't want her to forget my birthday and what she did on the mirror. Or how this morning I awakened up in her arms." I watch how a tear escapes my sisters' eye. "I want her to think of how she took me for our first date." I called for a deep breath, I could not understand why saying all of this made me feel hollow. "I won't suffer any of this if I wait for her in this time. I will have a new person. I want her how she is now." My eyes watered and I quickly collect my tears. "I kinda hate you now for making me realize all of this."

She smiles walking over me. "We'll figure something out." She said hugging me. "I promise."

"Thanks."

I was ready to go home. Frannie and I finished our folders in a few hours. She got home, now I was terminating the process today. We place the condensers in a charging room. I remove the blue flask with the liquid energy we gathered and started labeling them. At the conclusion, we put the full flask in a small decompression box, which condenses the energy, preventing it from any kind of elaboration.

I am still reminiscing about the chat Frannie and I had about Santana and I cannot think of anything else but her. At first, I thought this was going to be a new experience. I thought at the end of it, when the portal was shut, I could present a detailed explanation of it. I thought this was different.

Maybe Frannie was right. Maybe I just need to meet her at this time. Memories will always be memories. I look at the flask in my hand. It is awesome how some liquid can change my life. A few days ago, I was working on a case, now I was falling for a girl, who would not recognize me in my time.

I rotate the flask in my fingers. High expansions of energy caused the merge in the first place. This liquid causes everything. My hand remains on top of the decompression box. I took a deep breath for a moment.

This liquid it is what why I met her in the first place. What if this liquid can show me something more? What if this liquid can show me the future? We talk about the past, but why have we never tried the future. I quickly close the decompression box and walked over the shelves on the side. I skimmed over the folders, finding the one of my house, three days ago. Frannie filed this; her signature was at the bottom of the page. I seek for the flask number and went back to open the decompression box. I examined every flask, looking for the correct one, until I found it. I hold the small flask in my hand and placed it inside my pocket.

Certainly, the energy gathers at my loft was not enough, Santana appeared anyway. Nevertheless, if I can mix the energy from that day, I sure can add more energy to the main source creating a merge in the future. Perhaps I will be able to understand us, together. I took two more flasks and hid them inside my pocket.

What was I doing?

What if don't want to see the future?

I hold on my necklace and looked over the sand watch, studying the words on it.

Time is always enough

She is all I need.

"Santana?" I called over the living room. My watch didn't make any sound as soon as I slid the door. There were no silver circles adorning the floor. "Are you here?" I yelled in the empty area.

I took the three flasks out of my pocket. Perhaps it was the best that she wasn't here. I called for a deep breath, opening the first flask. My heart speeds up its pace. I closed my left hand, several times. I was shaking uncontrollably. I took out the second flask and pour all the contents in one pipe, then went to the third step.

"All right, Quinn... you can do this." I throw the flask on the wooden base. The impact breaking it instantaneously and exposing the liquid on the floor. I saw how the liquid disappeared. Then I waited.

Abruptly, the living room was colored. I quickly inspected the place. It looks different. I stood still for a second, dumbfounded.

I did it. I was in the future.

I chuckled and quickly covered my mouth. No one can't see me, especially myself.

I paced in the loft. I couldn't hear anything, it was empty. The kitchen was dreary, and I know I would've tripped with something if I didn't know the place like the palm of my hand. Once I got into the room, the bathroom light was on. I could check the room with the dim light the bathroom was providing. There were clothes on the bed, stacks of them all the same on the hangers.

I walked over the closet and slid the curtain, turning on the light. I brought a hand to cover my mouth, there were no clothes inside, but three walls covered in photos. There was no space left uncovered. I couldn't see the wall. Every corner was covered with a photo. Pictures of Santana and me.

I didn't know which one to look at first. Santana and I were smiling hard in every photo. It was us in the park, walking on the beach, she kissing my cheek. A photo of her and a dog caught my attention. She was resting on the couch and the puppy was sleeping on her stomach while she kisses my lips. There were pictures of us doing everything. She looks so beautiful, we look so *happy*.

This is all I needed. Tears were pooling in my eyes. Proof that we will be together. I slid my hand through the pictures on the wall. I don't need to worry anymore. I will live all these pictures with her. I moved around to the other wall, inspecting the photographs. Ahead of me was a photograph of my hand, showing an engagement ring. I laughed cleaning my tears and then turned over the opposite side. My breath was caught in my throat.

I got hold of a few steps forward and bore upon the image. I almost couldn't believe what I was seeing. Santana was standing next to me in a classroom wearing a cheerleader uniform. I walked closer to the photos. Santana was in all of them. I furrow my brows; there was a photo of me pregnant. *Was I pregnant?* There was another photo with pink hair; definitely, there was evidence that I spent my teenagers' years around her. I turned to the side finding myself in a

wheelchair, a group of people singing in a stage, graduation. In a wedding reception, then another one followed by us lying in bed with bed sheet covering our torso, smiling at the camera. I took a step back.

"What is all of this? What year am I in?"

Another picture caught my attention. Santana is standing next to my parents. My mother's arm was around Santana's shoulders while my dad raises a glass of champagne in the air. Santana's nose was scrunched, of laughter. Mom's was smiling warmly as my dad was just standing there.

Did we save my parents in the past somehow?

I heard the door sliding open and I quickly removed as many photos I could from the wall and held them upon my chest. I could hear steps walking over to me. I quickly turned off the light and clicked my watch. I shut my eyes and the sound increased. The energy dropped and suddenly the closet was full of clothes.

I stood, sliding the clothes over to the side, verifying I was in my time. There was an empty wall and no photos.

I was back.

A delicious smell invades the air, causing me walk out of the dark closet. I look at the pictures in my hand, will I even find an explanation? Santana can't see this, not until I find why. I seek for a hiding place, one good enough that if the merge happens, she couldn't find them. I opened and closed a few drawers, "Q?" She calls. I quickly raise the mattress and placed the pictures underneath.

I made my way to the kitchen; Santana was standing in front of the stove. I stopped on my heels. How come I haven't met her in this time? What happened in between us? Frannie and I must have save our parents. Nevertheless, I am glad that somewhere in the future I am spending my days with her.

"Hey." I said leaning on the wall, my heart was racing.

She turns smiling. "Hi, how was your day?" She walks toward me and pecks my cheek. I smile, enjoying the butterflies in my stomach.

"I missed you." I said and she hugs me tight.

"No more than me."

I smiled, pushing all my doubts and insecurities away. For now, I'm enjoying her company. Tomorrow, I will figure out all of this.

Kallie, Stop!, by KatieMacLove

"KALLIE! STOP THIS FUCKING CAR!" Mom yells at my sister. I struggle not to laugh at Kallie looking like she's about to burst into tears with her knuckles white as she grips the steering wheel. Mom looks like she's about to faint or explode with rage she hangs on to the handle at the top of the car so hard her knuckles turn white.

"Mom! I'm trying! Stop yelling at me!" Kallie hiccups as she makes another turn onto the curb.

"Well I'm trying to live! Stop trying to kill us!" Mom fumes as her face turns pale while Kallie slams onto the brakes as the light turns yellow.

"Santana, stop yelling and Kallie, please, *please*, be careful!" Mama says as she sits here in the backseat with me, praying and clinging onto her seat belt with her face flushed beet red.

I fail to keep my laughter in check as I see a lone tear trek down Kallie's face. Mom turns around and glares at me. "You think this is funny, Alex? Huh?" I try to stifle my laughter but it's not working.

"So you're just going to sit there laughing while this demon child I pushed out for fourteen hours is trying to kill us?!" At this, I hear Mama snicker. "Oh? You too, Quinn?"

"I'm so sorry, I di-"

"I don't want to hear it, Quinn! You know what?" Mom gets out the car in the middle of the street while we sit here at the light and walks around to Mama's side of the car and yanks the door open. "Get the fuck out!" She points her finger from Mama to the road.

"*What?!*" Mama looks around the street as horns start honking for us to go.

"You heard me, Quinn! Get out the car! Since you think this is so funny, sit in the front seat and watch your life flash in front of you while I fucking *laugh* at it!" Mom looks positively furious and Mama is smiling behind her confusion but goes upfront to sit beside a silently crying Kallie without any further questions.

Kallie doesn't start by taking her foot off the brake first, she presses on the gas and flies off before Mom has the chance to put her seat belt on. I'm dying with laughter as Mom lets out a ridiculously sharp and girly scream and starts cursing us out in Spanish.

"What the hell?! Kallie?!" Mama yells as she checks on us in the back. "David Alexander Fabray-Lopez, stop laughing! Santana, get out of fetal position." She turns back towards the front only to yell in surprise. "STOP! THAT'S A DOG!"

At this point, Mom and Kallie are sobbing. My sister pulls the minivan over and we end up on top of half the side walk. She puts her face in her hands, Mom is babbling about seeing the lights flashing before her eyes as they both sob while Mama runs to check on the dog.

We stay like this for five minutes and my laughter comes out in wheezes and tears are streaming down my face. I'll need my inhaler soon.

Mom comes back into the car and gives out instructions. "Kallie, sit in the back with your mother and wipe your face. Alex, you drive because none of us are in the condition to do so right now. As a matter of fact, drive us to my office so I can get the heart monitor. I think my chest is palpitating and your mother is in shock."

I help Kallie to where I was sitting and get in the car and ease us off the curb once I make sure Mom is sitting up straight with her seat belt on.

"Kallie?" I call.

"What, Alex? Are you going to brag about how you got your license?" She glares at me with puffy red eyes.

"No," I laugh. "I just wanted to tell you that you have a line of snot running down your face." I laugh at her horrified face and continue.

"Also, never drive with Aunt Rachel in the car again. She's passed out."

Slave to the Games (4), by lacksubstance

In my slumber, I hear—birds and the wind bustling trees nearby. I feel my ears are deceiving me that I find myself reaching next to me in search for Quinn, only to find the space beside me vacant. I open my eyes and she is nowhere to be seen; however, something is truly misleading. My cell—it is different and it holds more than just a small room, but another.

I sit up in the bed, moving my feet to the floor. I retrieve my robe that stand among several then take my leave out the door. There is neither a single guard nor walls blocking me inside. There is no sand on the ground, but green grass and moss litter beneath. I kneel before it placing my hands among the floor to revel in its texture. I have been surrounded by sand that I forgotten what grass feels like. It's rough to the touch, but cool and long welcomed.

Trees engulf my surroundings nearby as birds fly overhead freely. My mind is plagued of how I have come to such wonder when the last place I recall myself in was bed in the Ludus Maxius beside my love. My eyes close as the wind picks up slowly, brushing delicately across my face. It's a much needed peace that I have longed for many years.

"Well it is nice to see *someone* grace us with their presence," I open my eyes to the silky smooth tone that gets my heart racing immediately. She stands before me as stunning as ever; however, she is draped in the same robe as I and it makes me question what has occurred during my sleep.

"We?" I question curiously as she smiles lovingly towards me. She walks closer and engulfs me in her arms from behind. In the distance I see many others walking amongst themselves. Children are playing with wooden swords, but only one stands out to me. He is of tan complexion with a lighter brown head of hair than I and as he runs closer to us, I see green for his eyes.

"Mama! Did you see me sparring with Marius? I made note to do everything you have taught me," he stands before me with a large smile that mirrors Quinn's. I turn to her and she too holds that matching grin.

"I did boy—you've fought well, but bear in mind that a true warrior's nature isn't to win, but to fight with purpose and cause," I instill into him and he nods immediately, hindering my praise before running off to Marius once again.

"He bears the name Alazne," she whispers to me, kissing the side of my neck as she holds me close. "You said to me that it meant miracle taking note that he is the epitome of one," I turn to her and meet her searching green eyes, leaning in to kiss her soft lips.

"How did this come to be?" I ask the question that plagues my thoughts in honest truth. I am not certain how we are living so happily with our son when she was a Roman noble not too long ago.

She chuckles softly. "You won your freedom my love and I came to you when word arose of such news. I came to your side and spilled even more news that I was with child. I left with you

not soon after," she expresses passionately so, running her hand down the side of my neck as a sign of adoration.

"And what of your father?" He is the General of Rome and of such high status that I do not doubt for a moment he would allow his daughter be with a newly freed slave of the sands.

Before she can even answer, screams and the sound of horses invade the village. Soldiers with swords strike down any in their path and the happiness I once felt has been removed from my body. The sun that once peeked beyond the horizon is covered by darkness as rain begins to make it's decent to the ground.

"Alazne!" I scream over the rain to him as he runs up the hill towards us with his wooden sword in hand. He continues to quickly make his way to our side when I take notice of a soldier on his horse approaching behind him. I watch in horror as I see my son running for life and I know not he will not make it to us in time.

I leave Quinn by our home and grab a sword laying next to the walls, then quickly sprint towards him, but it feels like I am not getting any closer. I hear my son's screams for me and the hand accessorized by a steel sword strike him down.

I stop suddenly as if my eyes deceive me yet again. I know I could have gotten to his side—he was not far from us. Rage and vengeance courses through my veins at the soldier who took his life as he barrels closer to me ready to allow me to suffer the same fate, but I will not have it as I charge at him with my blade held out, using my entire body to pull him off his horse.

We are thrown down to the floor and I'm left to hit his head against the other side of his helmet so I can retrieve my sword again. I don't give him much of a chance to recover before I imbed the blade through his throat, twisting it so the blood drains from his body quickly.

I turn back to the scene before me and all the people of my village are dead, then I turn back to Alazne. His lifeless body lays in a pool of his own blood and I kneel before him with utter despair. My tears escape me as I begin to sob uncontrollably into his chest. I have failed him. I have failed Quinn. I should have kept him safe. That is my duty as the provider of my family and I have failed.

I hear a blade dispersed from its holster behind me, then feel its tip against my back. "You will rise," he commands me, his voice laced of venom. I place Alazne's body back gently to the ground as requested, then rise from the floor. I turn around to the soldier and take note that it's the General—*Quinn's father*. He holds his blade out in front of me, the gentle pin just at my throat, to make sure I surrender to his will.

"I will be removing my daughter from your side and eradicating her of the filth that lies in her belly. It is horrid as is that she gave life to one already," it is in that very moment that I realize that the two soldiers that have a hold on Quinn, making her visually noticeable that she is with child.

"You have already taken one of my children from me today. I will not let you take another! They bleed your blood as well!" I scream in his face as he throws his fist into my face. The force of his actions is enough to have me drawing blood from my mouth as I land to the earth.

"You will hold your tongue," he seethes. "What of my child?" He asks as he points to Quinn. Her tears are making their way down her cheeks as she tries to will herself of the soldiers grasps.

"She loves me as I do her," I whisper to him. "She chose this life. She chose to come to my bed. She chose to seek refuge in my arms," I tell him as he looks upon me with wickedness.

"If my daughter's feelings are to be true, then it is my duty to see that it changes," he places his sword back in his holster, then commands two more soldier's to lift me from the ground and I'm left being separated from my love.

"Santana!" She screams for me and I cannot do anything, but hang my head low as unwelcomed tears are being shed. "Santana!"

The screams are deafening and they continue to echo in the villa as I stand tied between two poles. I awaken to the scream of my name and I know it to belong to Quinn. My eyes focus on many people in front of me as I stand before them with my robe removed. I see Quinn being handled by two Roman soldiers as she tries to break free of them and all I want to do is kill them all.

"You are aware you were better off behind the walls of the ludus," the General speaks as he plays with the tip of a dagger, before looking upon me. "Had I known you were going to cause so much trouble I would have struck you where you stood when you were barely ten years of age," he states and then my rage that was once acknowledged in direction of Alazne's death, is only taken to a greater altitude when I realized he's the man that killed my family all those years ago.

"Ah so you do recall the moment I spared your life?" He taunts me as he takes a step towards me using the tip of the blade to glide along my abdomen. I look over at Quinn and she's still trying to get out of the grasps of the Romans. "I am welcomed by silence!" He chants. "Now that will not be fit," he places pressure on the blade and starts gliding it down my skin as it leaves a trail of blood in its wake. I scream in pain and Quinn begins to sob desperately for me. I can only imagine what they will do to her and our unborn child.

"I should have you killed; however, I know my daughter would rather see your heart still beat. I will not kill my own fleshing blood then slaughter you later only to have you two bonded in the afterlife," he states, but I remain silent. I would rather breathe my last breath if it meant I am to never be with the woman I love ever again. "The only suitable conclusion is to torture you till you agree to never even think a single thought of Quintina ever again," he says, but I remain my eyes upon her. If I am to be tortured in front of her, my eyes will remain towards her. No matter what he wills at my body, he will never compel me to stop loving her.

He notices my eyes remaining fixated on her that it brings a snarl upon his face. It isn't until I feel the blade pierce my skin that I start hissing; it's a welcomed pain. I look towards him and

stare at him with determination. "No matter what you will, she will always be in my thoughts," I say, spitting at him. He flushes with aggression at my words, making motion to someone behind me. It isn't till I hear Quinn scream and feel the lashes slicing through my back that I know truly that I can endure pain.

"Father stop please!" She begs her father. "I beg for forgiveness, please! I will do as you ask of me!" She manages to break free as another lash hits my back. I groan at the burning pain coursing through my veins and it isn't till I see him hand her his dagger and hold his hand up for the lashing to seize.

"My daughter seems to come to her senses," he begins as I breathe heavily through the discomfort I feel. "In return for your life spared, she will kill the unborn filth in her belly," my eyes meet hers and I see the utter hopelessness laced within them. I will not allow her to save me but kill the life we created out of love.

"No," I cough shaking my head to stop her. She walks towards me and kneels down to meet my faint vision. She wraps her hands around my neck, gently caressing it like she frequently does. "Please do not do this," I breathe out, trying with all my strength to reach for her, but I cannot through my restraints.

"Our love will never keep us parted. Fear not my champion, in this life or the next we will be together without bounds or restraint," she whispers to me, placing her lips upon mine for the briefest of moments. She stands and walks in front of us as tears begin to cascade down her cheeks as she holds the blade up in front of her stomach.

Tears begin to fall from my eyes and when the steel meets flesh, I begin to sob at the loss. I see red drawing from her abdomen as she continues to stand. She pulls the blade out and she begins to bleed out, even while holding hand to her wound.

"Save her please!" I yell, but nobody dares move as she slowly kneels. Everything slows around me and I am left watching my lover die before my eyes.

I jolt up from my sleep shaky, coated in sweat from head to toe. I am back in the ludus—back in my cell and I am no longer restrained. I let out deep breaths to calm my racing heart and mind, when I feel warm arms engulf me in. "You are trembling, are you coming down with fever?" She asks concerned, holding her cool hand to my head, coaxing it down my neck.

"Not so—just a dream," I say, taking her hands into mine and bringing them to my lips. I bring my hand up to her cheek and the warmth of her welcomes my senses. Having her in my presences is both gratifying and desired. I lay her down with me and kiss down her chest, caressing every inch of her body that holds skin. I spend most of my attention on her abdomen, loving the feel of being so intimate and close to her. I will not allow anyone to rip me of my happiness with her, not even if it is the General himself.

Looking Back, What Should Have Been, by LazyWriterGirl

The night of Mr. Schue's failed wedding, Quinn Fabray realized something that could only be described as pivotal to the direction in which she was taking her life; she may not have been a lesbian in the strictest sense but she definitely had it bad for none other than Santana Lopez. It was a terrifying thought and she knew that there was no future there for the pair of them. They were too much alike, and besides, there was barely any context for them to establish a relationship in; the New Directions and the New New Directions alike were essentially all convinced that they would sooner slit each other's throats than be forced to sit at the same table for longer than two hours or so.

They were wrong, of course, as Quinn and Santana had been best friends for even longer than they'd known Brittany for, but it wasn't as if anybody else but them could really understand the dynamic they had. It was something that Quinn couldn't stand to lose, their friendship, so the next morning she slipped out while Santana was still asleep. As much as she didn't want to, she forced herself to leave a note explaining why she'd gone; Santana deserved that much, at least.

Quinn didn't have anything to do with Santana for a while, even going out on a few dates, some with other young women. By the time it dawned on Quinn that she was, in fact, attracted to both men and women, she had little time to celebrate her newfound sense of self. All of a sudden she was getting a call from a distressed Kurt; Finn, her first love, the love of her dear friend Rachel's life, was gone. The news was devastating and as soon as Kurt hung up after one last choked sigh, Quinn broke down. She excused herself from her classes, citing a personal problem. All of her professors signed off on the idea that she wasn't going to be present for a few days. It was probably not the norm, but Quinn was a strong student, and her distress was plain to see. She packed frantically, not sure what to take, but guilty for even wasting so much energy on something so simple.

She stopped just as suddenly as she'd started. Santana. Since their last encounter, the blonde had ignored any and all attempts at communication from the brunette. The last text she could remember seeing said something along the lines of "Fuck you too Fabray" and while it hurt her that she'd probably alienated her best friend – and crushed any chance of a romance between them – she felt a wave of relief; perhaps now that she no longer spoke to Santana she could forget her ridiculous feelings. Quinn collapsed on her bed, unsure of what to do. She couldn't bear the thought of seeing Santana now, but she also couldn't disappoint her Glee family. She grappled with the pros and cons of both possible scenarios.

Eventually the battle in favour of going home to Lima lost, and Quinn began to cry as she returned her clothes to their original places. Over the next few days she lay in bed and ignored the whole world; her phone had died a while back but she couldn't summon up the energy to care. She was simply not ready to face Santana, and now, because she was a fucking coward,

everybody thought that she couldn't care less about Finn. They were wrong, of course, but she hadn't the energy to explain why it would be even worse for her to be there mourning with them all.

Quinn saw Santana one more time during her undergraduate program; the reunion and disbandment of the Glee club. They performed Toxic and of course Biff was indifferent; Quinn was glad when Puck managed to scare the stuck-up fucker off, and slightly less glad when Puck said all of those things about their being soul mates. All that she could see as he painted his pretty words for her was Santana. Still, Santana was planning on doing a Lesbos Island-Hawaii vacation with Brittany, and Quinn had lost her chance. She agreed to date Puck, and they all went their separate ways. Things with Puck were nice, particularly because they were constantly separated by hundreds of miles; it wasn't that Quinn didn't want Puck to touch her, but that she was frightened that somebody else would take of her what she had given to Santana on that sad Valentine's Day. Still, Puck was remarkably good at keeping their long-distance relationship alive, and in the end, when he proposed, she said yes without looking back.

During their engagement, which was a slightly long one due to Puck's duties in the Air Force, Quinn discovered her talent for writing, and with a great amount of failures under her belt she finally found a publisher who was willing to take a chance on her manuscript. Even more luckily, the book picked up right away, and soon Quinn was enjoying quite a bit of celebrity in the world of YA fiction. Puck was so very proud of her, and soon she was getting calls from the other New Directions, all of whom had overflowing praise and love to share; all except for Santana. When Puck finally came back for their wedding, she had amassed a small fortune off her first book, and was working on a deal for a trilogy of sorts. With money no longer being a problem, Quinn felt as though her life was finally starting to fall into place. Santana was invited to the wedding, but she sent back a "Can't attend" and Quinn clung to those two words. It was her fault that they'd come to this, she thought, but there wasn't anything that she could do to change things now.

On the night of her wedding, Quinn Fabray realized something that could only be described as pivotal to the direction in which she was taking her life; she would never love Noah Puckerman as strongly as she loved Santana Lopez, but he was a good man and deserved her best efforts to love and keep him. Quinn slept with Puck for the first time since they had conceived Beth. She was actually surprised by how considerate of a lover he was, but it doesn't matter, really; all she could think of was the night of another wedding, in another hotel room, with another member of the Glee club. Santana weighed heavily on her mind even as she called out Puck's name.

Eventually he gets her pregnant, again, but this time she's twenty-eight and they've been married for four years, most of which have been tolerably happy. She often wonders how Santana is doing, if she's still with Brittany, if she's enjoying her life. If she's doing what she wants. If she's happy. Of all of the friends that Quinn has made throughout her life so far, the loss of her relationship with Santana still burns her. People talk, of course, and the New

Directions, even the younger ones, are still tight-knit; in spite of this Santana and Quinn never cross paths. She has specifically asked that nobody mention Santana to her, and as this is unfair to the group as a whole, slowly Quinn stops attending New Directions parties; even passing glimpses of the feisty brunette, who still (unknowingly) holds her heart in a clenched iron fist, are painful.

Shortly after Quinn turns thirty, Puck is killed when his plane malfunctions and crashes just south of the training ground. She feels the anger hit her first; it must be quite a sight, she thinks, a pretty, young blonde mother and newly-minted widow holding her two-year old tightly as she screams at each and every person that she can think to blame. When she's all yelled out, Quinn grieves over the loss of her husband and close friend, but she can't say that it has the same effect on her that it does on Puck's family; Jake and by extension, Marley, are stricken, and poor Mama Puckerman can't even look at her granddaughter without crying; for all that their child looks exactly like Beth (exactly like Quinn), her father's smile, dopey and endearing, is a constant reminder that Noah Puckerman lives on through her. Claire is, obviously, quite unsure of what is all going on, but by the time she's finished crying because everybody else is Quinn has explained that Daddy is in heaven, being badass and eating Egg-o waffles to his heart's content. The child doesn't exactly understand, but then Quinn never expected her to. It will take time. Quinn devotes her entire life to little Claire, even more so than before. People are calling and sending her their love and sadness, but if Santana sends her anything it must be Fate taking the sent messages and burying them away somewhere, because Quinn can't find any trace of them.

One year after Puck's passing she and Claire ends up moving into a fashionable loft in Manhattan with Shelby; it makes sense, she thinks, as the older woman never married, and it would be nice for Beth, beautiful just like her mother at fifteen, and baby Claire to get to know each other; they're sisters through and through, after all, and Quinn offers up a silent thanks to Puck for helping her bring two such beautiful souls into the world. Thankfully, Beth takes well to her biological mother, and absolutely adores her sister, and Shelby is quite wonderful about the whole thing. Rachel and Kurt come to visit them a lot, and eventually so do Jake and Marley.

"You're always going to be family," Marley says during one of their visits, and Quinn can tell that the pretty brunette is sincere. The blonde is grateful, and she says as much to Marley, who's currently playing with Claire's chubby baby hands and cooing softly. "You don't need to thank me, Quinn...hey, are you coming to the reunion? It's next week, at Kitty and Artie's place, I think." Quinn politely declines. They have a reunion five times a year without fail, and that's not including birthdays and the like (sometimes it can't be helped and people miss those): the beginning of the year, one day in spring, once in the summer, right before the beginning of school, and Christmas time. Quinn comes up with excuses for each invitation, but it doesn't stop her friends from trying to get her to come out and see them. They're almost all in New York, unbelievably good luck by anyone's real world standards, and the ones who aren't are either in Toronto or L.A. Still, despite their adamancy that Quinn can't ignore them forever, she continues to do so for four more years, until finally Shelby has had enough of her hiding from her friends.

"You owe it to them to make an appearance, Quinn, even if you never do it again," Shelby says, chastising a now thirty-five year old Quinn like as if she were eighteen again, with the cigarettes in her pocket and the pink hair and the ironic tattoo of Ryan Seacrest on her lower back. Quinn knows that the older woman is right, but she still can't help the feeling that going to the reunion will be a bad idea. "It's only going to be for a few hours today, and then you never have to see them again if you really don't think you can handle it."

"Mom's right Mama Q," Beth says as she lugs her suitcases downstairs. "Besides, don't you think it's just a bit unfair to Claire-bear? I mean, she should be making memories with all of the other New Directions kids, but she only ever sees Maisie. Uncle Kurt and Uncle Blaine's daughter isn't exactly representative of the whole New Directions experience. You should go, if only for Claire's sake. She should get the chance to play with the all of Baby Directions."

"Yeah? Maybe I should take you with me too, Beth. By that logic you should be making memories with them as well," Quinn jokes. Beth laughs as Shelby nods in mock agreement; it's scary how much the younger blonde reminds Quinn of herself at nineteen; the year when she realized how deeply she'd begun to fall in love with her best frenemy, Santana Lopez.

"Sorry Mama Q, but college awaits! I promise I'll go to one with you eventually, right Mom?" Beth saunters over to Quinn, her walk ever-reminiscent of the HBIC strut. Throwing her arms around her biological mother she sighs dramatically, "I mean, I'll practically be a *goddess* to all those little munchkins."

"You heard her, Quinn," Shelby says, giving her daughter a kiss on the cheek as she begins to push her suitcases out the door. The older blonde woman comes to stand with Shelby as they watch their shared daughter shove her things into the trunk of the minivan they'd gotten her as a gift for getting into her dream school; Princeton is a great match for Beth's writer's personality, and Quinn knows she'll be great. "Love you baby girl!"

"Love you too mom!"

"I want that promise in writing, young lady!" Quinn jokes again as Beth closes the trunk.

"Love you too, Mama Q," Beth says with a sassy smile. "I'll call as soon as I'm settled in!" She blows a few last kisses to her moms and then Beth Corcoran is gone, driving off towards the start of a new school year.

Quinn backs away from the doorway slowly as Claire comes downstairs, eyes puffy. "Mommy is Bethie gone now?" Quinn stoops to collect the tiny seven year old in her arms. If the way she and Frannie grew is any indication, soon she won't be able to hold her daughter like this, so she relishes every opportunity to do so.

"Yes sweetie, isn't that why Bethie came to your room to talk to you? What did she tell you?" Quinn kisses her daughter's cheeks, thankful that Claire will never have to go through the pain of being called ugly by her peers.

"That I'm supposed to be good for you and Auntie Shelby, and that if I'm really good she's going to write her stories for me," Claire says. Shelby comes over and gives the now-calmer child a kiss on her forehead.

"That shouldn't be hard for you, you're such a good girl," Shelby says, and Quinn shoots the woman a grateful smile. Shelby has always been excellent with Claire. "And you know what else? Today your mommy is taking you somewhere where you're going to meet a lot of new friends! Isn't that exciting, princess?" Quinn's face falls slightly; damnit Shelby!

"OH MY GOD IS THAT QUINN FABRAY?!" Considering how Rachel, Kurt and Blaine have dinner at her and Shelby's every weekend it's ridiculous that they should be so loud about her presence. Their excitement sits well with Claire, obviously, though the volume must be a little startling as the small girl clutches onto her mother's leg. "Oh I'm sorry, did I scare you Claire-bear?" At this the tiny blonde stands up straight and puffs out her chest, just like how Puck used to do.

"Nuh-uh Auntie Rae, I'm so brave, ask Mommy!" Rachel laughs and scoops the girl up.

"Pretty soon I'm going to have to stop picking you up, huh Claire-bear?" Rachel snuggles with the tiny blonde for a while, and Quinn feels her tension slowly dissipating; she can get through this, *these are her dear friends*. "She looks so much like you Quinn." Rachel says it every time she sees Claire, but Quinn can tell that this time it's only being said because Rachel can't really think of anything to say right now.

"That means I'm gonna be soooo beautiful when I'm older, right Auntie Rae?"

"You're already the most beautiful girl here, Claire-bear...except for your Auntie Santana, but that's only because she'll be mad if I say otherwise," Rachel says, and the concern that washes over her face when Quinn actually flinches is intense.

"Quinn..."

"I don't want to talk about this right now, Rachel." Rachel drops the matter, though her pursed lips suggest that she is far from finished discussing this topic. Of course Rachel knows how the blonde feels – felt, she forcefully corrects herself – for Santana; she claimed to understand it all along, and Quinn isn't up challenging that. The blonde nods but says nothing else for a while. Then Artie is wheeled in by Kitty and their son Nathan and Quinn remembers how much she's missed them.

"Do my four eyes deceive me? I think not! It's Quinn Fabray looking just as goddamn gorgeous as she always did." Kitty looks at her husband reproachfully as five-year old Nathan's eyes bug out – clearly somebody should be a little more careful with his language around a five-year old. "Come over here and give us a hug!" Quinn laughs in spite of the return of her anxiety and she quickly rushes over to give Artie his hug. She turns to Kitty next and afterwards, to little Nathan.

"Nathan, this is your Aunt Quinn; can you show her how you say hello to people you love?" Kitty pats her little boy on the shoulder and he looks Quinn square in the face before wrapping his tiny fingers around her own and kissing her hand.

"How sweet! Oh, hold on a minute guys...Rachel? Rachel where are you and more importantly where is Claire?" Rachel appears still holding the seven-year old, and Claire hops down from her Auntie Rae's arms to hide behind her mother's legs again. "Claire Fabray-Puckerman, this is your Uncle Artie and your Aunt Kitty, say hello sweetheart. And don't forget to say hello to Nathan as well," Quinn ruffles the boy's hair lightly with her hand.

"Hello Uncle Artie and Aunt Kitty," she says obediently, walking over to the pair of them and kissing their cheeks as they bend down. "Hello Nathan," she says, giving the boy a kiss on the cheek as well. He blushes bright pink before saying hello back, shyly, and then the two are off, playing games with Kurt and Blaine's daughter Maisie. Quinn breathes a little easier as Jake and Marley enter next with their twins. Brittany and her son show up minutes later, and Brittany is so overjoyed to see Quinn that she picks the other woman up and doesn't set her down until she's "sure that it's Quinnie and not a clone". Within the next twenty minutes it looks like everybody who's going to make it today has arrived, and Quinn excuses herself from a story Tina is telling in order to use the washroom.

She spends a few extra minutes staring at herself when she's there and the door is locked; she looks good for being older, Judy's genetics the main cause for this, and when she comes out and goes to look at the children there's a new little girl playing with all the rest. The child has beautiful lightly tanned skin and dark curls. Santana Lopez stands just a short ways off, watching as the child (who is undoubtedly hers) bonds with the others, particularly Claire, and when her eyes meet Quinn's the blonde can swear she's just been thrown into the eye of a storm. She's still in love with Santana Lopez, after all these years and everything that's fucking happened in her life, and she instantly regrets coming here today.

Claire stands up at the sight of her mommy standing stock-still against the washroom door. She waits for a while, and Quinn can see that the child wants to say something to her, but it's a few moments later before she actually puts that in words. "Yes, baby girl?" Quinn prompts.

"Mommy I need to pee." Claire is wiggling around and Quinn immediately feels a little guilty for inadvertently causing her daughter discomfort. She moves aside, smoothing down unruly blonde tresses as the little girl darts into the washroom and closes the door decisively.

"I figured she was yours," that husky voice says. "You and Puck made some beautiful babies." Quinn steps away from the door, a little bit closer to the Latina. She can tell that literally everybody has at least one eye on them and it's unsettling to be this close to Santana after sixteen years (those short glimpses in their early 20s don't count).

"Thank you." She doesn't know what else to say, but since Santana opened with her children as a discussion, Quinn figures that it would only be polite to do the same. "Is that little one yours?"

"Yeah... well technically she's Dani's," Santana says, and the look in her eyes makes Quinn think that talking about Dani is not the way to go. "But obviously she's mine as well. Her name is Felicia and she's seven. How old is your daughter?"

"Claire is also seven," Quinn says, and she can feel the gazes of the other New Directions turn back to each other save for Marley and Kitty who watch their once-mentors with interest, and Rachel and Kurt who are huddled together, obviously analyzing everything about the situation. "How are you, Santana?" The way that the Latina recoils a little at the sound of her name is discouraging.

"I've been doing well. I'm slated to make partner at my firm in a year or two and Felicia's an angel most days. We live with Britt and Landon; shared rent on a nice place on the Upper West Side. How've things been on your end, Quinn?" The blonde hates the little tingle up her spine that she gets when Santana's voice says her name.

"Writing has been a bit frustrating lately, but everything is fine," Santana nods as if she shares the same problem, and there's an unspoken congratulations in her eyes. "Claire is a good girl; I live with Shelby and Beth, in a loft in Tribeca." It strikes her all of a sudden that she and Santana live in Manhattan; how have they never run into each other at all? Then she remembers, she's been purposefully avoiding the Latina; perhaps Santana has been doing the same all these years?

"I'm glad that things have worked out so nicely for both of us," Santana says, and Quinn can't help but feel like the other woman sounds a little bitter. They don't talk much for the rest of the party, though sometimes Quinn catches the other woman's dark eyes on her.

Over the next few months they see each other enough to *almost* make up for about half of the time in which they had both seemingly avoided each other like the plague. Then, the night before Valentine's Day, the inevitable happens. Quinn and Santana, both thirty-five and single mothers, end up falling into bed on a girls' night out with Mercedes, Rachel, Tina, and Brittany. It starts when Santana agrees to go to see where Quinn lives. No, it starts earlier than that.

It starts when Shelby calls and tells Quinn that she and Claire are going to be going to Kurt and Blaine's; Kurt needs help with a role and obviously Claire is too young to be left home alone. The girls all crow that Quinn "has the house all to herself" and it feels so silly and juvenile that Quinn retaliates with a sly wink and a cheeky grin, noting how it may very well be some attractive stranger's lucky night. For some reason Santana looks as if her whiskey is just a little *too* sour, but Quinn can't really get a read on the tanned woman. They all laugh and joke about how, while they may be "too old" to play the field that way anymore, at least none of them looks it.

Next, Brittany and Tina go home early, and Santana forgets to remind Brittany that the tall blonde has both of their house keys in her purse. Eventually Rachel and Mercedes leave as well, citing the need to wake up early tomorrow for a recording; tomorrow is Sunday and Santana still wants to have fun, so Quinn stays with her. "You know, Q, we were always solid with each other, weren't we?"

Quinn laughs, a short bark really, "Yeah, when we weren't trying to rip off each other's ponytails..." She can tell that Santana is serious though, after a moment's silence, and she thinks about it. When it counted, yes, she and Santana had always been fairly solid. "We came through for each other when we really needed it," she says softly, eyeing down her beer like it's a long lost friend.

"Then why did you leave me alone the morning after the Wemma-Wedding-Fail?" It's so soft that Quinn barely catches it.

"What was that?" She looks down quickly to a text from Shelby. She and Claire won't be home until lunch tomorrow. Great, Quinn thinks, though she doesn't know why it's so great until what happens next.

"Ah fuck, leave it alone, it's nothing. Aw shit Britt took my keys... and she's probably asleep now." Santana grumbles a bit, downing another shot before searching for her cellphone. She's progressing into Weepy-Santana very quickly, and Quinn, in spite of herself, invites her once best friend, twice-lover back to the loft for the night. She doesn't think of Shelby. She doesn't think of Claire (well, of course she does, but not really). She doesn't think of anything really.

And that's how they find themselves here, Quinn pressed against the closed door of her bedroom, Santana lips suckling on her flesh almost desperately, the way they had the first time she and Santana had ever had sex. This time, however, Quinn isn't experimenting. This time their bodies aren't youth-perfect and without many obvious 'imperfections', but they've picked up experience and a few tricks along the way. When Quinn cries out Santana's name as she reaches her peak it feels right. When Santana practically sobs out Quinn's name, it feel like home.

"Quinn. Quinn, wake up. Fucking hell, wake up," Santana raspy voice is even sexier in the morning, but the first thing that Quinn can think when she opens her eyes is *ohmygodwhatthefuckhavewefuckingdone*. This could very well run everything, she knows, and when she sees Santana fully clothed her heart shoots straight through her chest and blasts through the wall. At the very least, she'd had the decency to leave Santana alone, to let her sleep. This, she thinks, this is cruel.

"Why the hell are you still here?" She deflects angrily, hoping that Santana will be able to forgive her for being such a hypocrite, even as she does her best to yell the other woman out of her life, possibly for good.

"Excuse me, but *I'm* not the one who fucking left without a word. You left me note, Quinn, a fucking note. Do you know that when you touched me during our toxic performance, I had every hope that you would tell me that you wanted me again?" The conversation has escalated in only a few sentences, and Quinn can feel her pulse pick up. She still isn't ready to deal with this conversation.

"How dare you say that to me, Santana? You had Britt anyway, Britt and Dani, actually! And what in the world made you think that I wanted you in the first place?"

"Because I felt the same way too," Santana says. "And in spite of how fucking ridiculous you've been for more than a decade, I still do." It's softer than Quinn expects, and she can't think about any reason for Santana's tears but they're there. Surely she can't be drunk still, which can only mean that this is real. "And then you and Puck started dating and I left for Lesbos with Brittany, but nothing happened. I was still dating Dani, after all. Then you just dropped off the face of the fucking planet and as much as I tried to talk to you again, you ignored everything I ever tried to do. So I gave up. I figured that the others were hiding things from me, so I just left you alone; if you were happy that was enough for me. Of course, that didn't stop me from keeping up-to-date with all of your contact information."

"You never called, or emailed, or texted. All of the big moments in my life; the book, the wedding, Claire, Puck *dying*. You didn't write me or anything, Santana, not even a 'Congratulations' or 'I'm so sorry, you bitch'!"

"I did. I just never sent any of it." At this point Santana is sitting on the bed, clinging tightly to the sheets with one hand as her other hand digs around for something in her bag. She pulls out an iPad and opens up her email, gently holding the delicate technology out to Quinn, who takes it. "Read. The folder that I've opened, those were all of the things I wanted to say to you over the years, but never did." Quinn doesn't believe her, but soon she's crying as the endless emails float in and out of her sight. Every single one starts with 'Dear Quinn' and ends with 'All my love, always, Santana'.

"I—I think I should brush my teeth and uh...get ready for the day," she says lamely when she's finished. "Will you still be here?" Santana shrugs

"My iPad is like, dying, so yeah. I'll just be charging it in the living room." It amazes Quinn how easily they slip back into their high school ways; all yelling and tears one minute, perfect nonchalance the next. "And besides...there are things you don't know still, Q. I've suffered and had success, same as you, and you weren't exactly looking to extend any olive branches either." When Santana says it, Quinn is immediately ashamed. It's true. She sighs and has to nod in agreement and apology, which Santana seems to understand. She just doesn't have the words right now.

"What else have I missed out on in your life, San, aside from, you know...your feelings...for me..."

"Dani and I got married around the time when you and Puck did. That's why I couldn't make it to your wedding. We were so busy preparing ours, and I had to study for my bar exams, and everything was just happening so fucking fast, Q." Santana looks distressed and Quinn, on instinct, takes one of her hands; it's secretly pleasing when the Latina doesn't pull away.

"If I can ask...what happened with you and Dani?" Quinn feels like she already knows the answer, but she wants to know if it's true. Either way, she already sorry for thinking about it.

"Dani...she didn't want me to get pregnant first, since I was just starting out with law... we didn't think she would have a hard time, and she didn't, really. Then she gave me Felicia, she gave me this beautiful little girl and picked out a great name, and then she came home and we were happy...and then she died, a few days later, complications that were nobody's fault, really." Quinn gasps a little, she can't help it. "She just fucking *died*, Q, and I didn't know what I was going to do without her. And then, when you didn't say a fucking word to me, I was destroyed."

"Don't get me wrong, Q, I loved my wife, and losing her was painful to me, but I have always loved you as well, and you not being there for me just really crushed me. That's part of the reason why, much as I kinda had my own certain love for Puck, I never sent those emails, it's why I never called. I wanted you to save me from the sadness that losing Dani brought me, and when you didn't, and the time came, I refused to be there for you." Quinn can feel the tears building and they're crying again; this conversation should have happened years ago, she thinks.

They sit on the couch together for a bit, tears streaming down their faces as they talk and just...bond. The way that they used to. Quinn admits her feelings, how unchanged they are, and Santana does the same. It's fucked up, she thinks, the way that after all these years, the only time that she and Santana could possibly have a future together is when they've already begun to achieve the futures they saw as bright-eyed, bitchy cheerleaders. Shelby and Claire come home to find them holding hands over the table, talking very seriously now. They aren't going to rush into things, they decide. Claire and Felicia get along well, but perhaps they aren't quite ready for anything like an new parent and sister just yet.

It's another three years before Quinn proposes to Santana, and when she does, she does it grandly; the New Directions group has rented out the McKinley auditorium for their alumni reunion, segregating themselves in the beautiful, familiar space where they'd done so often for three years. Quinn gets down on one knee in front of all of her best friends and their children, in front of the framed and hung pictures of Finn and Puck, and she proposes to Santana Lopez. They're thirty-eight, which isn't an uncommon time to wed in this day and age, and when Santana says yes, Quinn knows for sure that her life has finally clicked into place. They spend that night talking about it; Santana teases that if Quinn had only been a little braver, they could have had this life already, years and years ago.

But then, Quinn counters, they would have had less time to grow apart, to grow up, and worse, there would be no Felicia and no Claire. Looking at the family that Quinn and Santana have come up with separately, and soon together, Quinn knows that as painful as everything leading up to this point may have seemed, it was for the better. She may not have had Santana with her at the beginning of their futures, but now she's here and they have many, many more years to come. Quinn wouldn't allow anything else to happen. For the third time in her life, as a wedding, her own, draws nearer, Quinn Fabray realizes something that could only be described as pivotal to the direction in which she is taking her life; every single step from here on out, she'll have Santana by her side.

New Addition, by lightblue-Nymphadora

Birthdays at the Lopez house were insane affairs. That was mostly Quinn's fault. She'd had the normal birthday experience growing up - little parties, sleepovers, that sort of thing. But she wanted crazy huge parties for the boys, because she liked to plan them.

Thus, there was a life-size pirate ship playscape in the backyards, a treasure hunt was currently taking place, and each kid's party loot bag was a miniature treasure chest. There were cupcakes, each decorated like a Jolly Roger flag.

"This feels like a bit much," Santana remarked, trying not to laugh.

Quinn was in full pirate costume, and looked like she was having the time of her life. "Argh, it be just enough for our little mateys!"

Santana spit out the drink she'd just taken a sip of. "No," she gasped, laughing. "No. I swear you're not getting any for a month if you keep that up," she added under her breath.

"Please, like you could wait that long," Quinn said. "Look at how much fun they're having."

The team of five-year-olds had just found the next clue, buried in the sandbox. They were running to the other side of the yard now, as the rest of the parents snapped pictures.

Santana wrapped an arm around Quinn's waist. "I can't believe they're going into kinder this year. You sure we want to start again from scratch?"

"Shhh," Quinn said with a grin. "We said we were going to tell them later."

"It's not like they're listening."

There was a cry of jubilation as the group of eight kids found the pirate flag. They all rushed over to hand it to Santana.

She hadn't dressed up, but was sporting a sword as well. She had to use it to fend off an attack from the twins' rambunctious friend, Feeny. "Right, right! Well done! Are we ready for cake now?"

"Because what they need right now is more sugar," Matt said, coming over with the camera.

As Quinn watched the children troup into the ship and sit down for cupcakes, singing the birthday song to her boys, she was more than positive about their decision to do this again.

"Boys?"

Neither woman was sure how the twins were still up after all the excitement, but they were. They came shuffling into the living room in their Buzz Lightyear and Frozen pajamas (Kai was obsessed with Elsa and positive that he would marry her one day).

"We have one more present for each of you," Santana said as they climbed onto the couch. She and Quinn passed them each a box.

They'd gotten the hang of opening presents by now (helped along by the grandparents on both sides) and sat staring down at their t-shirts in no time. One was red, the other was blue. Each said the same thing.

"Big brother?"

"That's right," Santana said.

"You and Kai are getting a little sister."

Future Quinnntana, by noiseinallthequietspaces

Quinn smiled softly, leaning down to lift the thin blanket off the back of the couch before draping the material over Santana's body, tucking it around the woman's bare shoulders and across the length of her legs as she slumped over the arm of the couch. Quinn's hazel eyes shimmered with affection at the sight of the exhausted woman, her eyes scanning her face, taking in the relaxed curve of her lips and soft lines of her eyebrows before tucking a stray strand of hair behind the woman's ear and pressing a kiss to her forehead.

The blonde haired woman shifted around the small apartment that she shared with Santana, picking up the evidence of the other woman's dinner - a plate abandoned on the coffee table amidst multiple sheets of paper and pens of all colours as well as a powered down laptop. Quinn rolled her eyes at the sight of a small post-it note on top of one of the many folders - the message read 'Remind Quinn to pick up milk' even though the dark haired woman rarely bothered to mention anything to do with the shopping to Quinn leaving her to check before leaving the apartment.

"You goof," Quinn murmured softly, her voice filled with affection as she tucked the note into her back pocket before moving towards the kitchen with the plate and two mugs.

An hour later Quinn wandered back into the living room, kneeling down at the side of the couch before resting her hand lightly on Santana's shoulder to shake the woman into wakefulness. "Come on San, it's time for you to go to bed."

"Don't wanna." The younger woman groaned, shifting on the couch, tugging the blanket tighter around her shoulders as she pushed her face into the soft leather. "Sleep here."

"You know that you won't sleep well if you try to sleep on the couch Baby." Quinn murmured softly, twisting her hand around the back of Santana's neck as she leaned forward to place a tender kiss on the crown of the woman's head. "If you come to bed with me I promise a night full of cuddling and soft kisses."

"I just want to sleep Quinn." Santana whined quietly despite leaning into the blonde haired woman's touch, her lips curling upwards into a contented smile. "Leave me to sleep."

"I can't do that Baby." Quinn answered gently, shaking her head as she spoke. "I can't sleep without you in bed, and there's no way that my back will take sleeping on the couch all night. You've got to come to bed with me."

Santana's eyes opened blearily, her head twisting to the side in order to take in the soft smile on Quinn's lips and the hopeful glint shimmering in the girl's eyes. "You know that it's mean to use the back card on me Quinn."

Quinn rolled her eyes before lifting her eyebrow. "I'm not playing the back card as you so nicely put it." She said after a moment's thought. "I'm just telling the truth. There is no way that I'd be able to walk properly tomorrow if you insist on sleeping on the couch tonight. We both know that I don't sleep without you there to hold me."

"Ugh," Santana groaned, twisting off the couch and onto her knees at Quinn's side gracelessly. "Then I suppose you better give me a hand to bed. I lost my way earlier after finding the couch."

"I love you." The older girl whispered softly, leaning forward to place a tender kiss against Santana's lips before shifting onto her feet, helping Santana to stand.

"I love you too Quinn." Santana answered quickly, sliding her fingers between Quinn's fingers to tighten her hold on the girl's hand. "Forever."

"I think you're turned into a sap." Quinn laughed, tugging Santana's hand to lead her across the apartment to the small bedroom that belonged to the two of them. "Not that I'm complaining for anything, but who would have thought the great Santana, a sap."

Santana shook her head in amusement, biting down on her lower lip as she allowed her eyes to rack over Quinn's slight frame. "If I'm not mistaken roughly three minutes ago you told me that you could not sleep without me to get me to come to bed tonight, so who is the sap here?"

"You were saying my name in your sleep, so still you." Quinn answered, a grin spreading across her lips as she tugged Santana into a long kiss before falling backwards onto the bed pulling Santana down on top of her.

For the Win, by OncefortheFun

Quinn was so close to the edge that she could taste it. She needed just one more thing, one more thrust, one more tweak, one more something, and she was there. "Quinn?" Santana huffed.

Quinn hummed, because that was the best thing she could do. She swore that if Santana was about to do some sneaky bitch crap like demand that Quinn beg...well she would, but she'd make damn sure that Santana paid for it later. "Will you marry me?"

Quinn's eyes snapped open, and she looked into the brown eyes that were hovering over her. "What?" she panted. This was new. It had definitely never come up in sex before. Santana's tongue gave a quick flip over the pebbled edge of Quinn's very stiff nipple, before she bit down on it. At the same time she curled her fingers inside of Quinn. "Marry me," Santana panted.

Quinn opened her mouth, and it was at that very moment that her orgasm spread through her body, and whatever she was going to say was momentarily forgotten as Santana's name was wrenched from her lips. Santana's fingers continued to move as the waves of her orgasm flooded her, and Quinn thought that it was because Santana was trying to help her through it, but then she felt Santana's tongue on her still sensitive clit. Santana's fingers started thrusting inside of her again, and when she gasped, Santana pulled out for a second to add another finger to the equation.

Her walls clenched against Santana's working digits, trying to draw them deeper inside of her. Quinn fisted Santana's hair, her hips canting into Santana's capable and willing mouth as Quinn was brought to the edge of her third orgasm of the night. Her nails dug into Santana's back, no longer scratching lightly, and it was all she could do to remember to breathe out. She wasn't going to last very long this time around; it was almost embarrassing that Santana could manipulate her body like this, and she was...wait. Was she slowing down?

Santana's fingers had nearly stilled, her tongue flickering lazily against her clit. What the hell? "San-," Quinn panted, arching her back.

Santana kissed at the clit. "Will you?" she questioned. She slammed into Quinn hard, her fingers going deep.

Quinn gasped. "Will I...oh, God...er...what?"

She brought her fingers nearly out, and pushed them back in, temptingly slowly. A moan slipped past Quinn's usually very composed mouth. Santana smiled up at her. "You like that?"

"God...yes!"

Santana continued to pump slowly, working Quinn to madness. She was going to give Santana the biggest case of blue...Quinn suddenly felt like Homer with a donut. Oh God, was she actually drooling? "Marry me," Santana whispered onto her knob, her voice throaty and raspy.

Santana's fingers started to work faster, teeth gently grazed her clit, and Quinn was surprised by the intensity of it when she crashed into her orgasm. She struggled to hold onto consciousness, vaguely aware of Santana's fingers still moving inside of her. She wanted to push her fingers away, but she'd forgotten how to move at the moment.

"Good?" Santana questioned.

Quinn's eyes fluttered open and closed so she didn't see the proud smirk that Santana was wearing.

"Mmm...yes." Quinn murmured, vaguely aware that Santana was bringing her to yet another climax.

"Marry me."

The part of her mind that was still working was amused. *Santana asked me to marry her.* She lost her fight when the fourth orgasm gripped her. *Well, okay,* she thought. "Why not?" It was her last thought before she blacked out.

She woke up with that feeling that she had slept for too long, but she felt deliciously detached from her body, weightless. She smiled. She usually only felt this way after a night with Santana, because despite all of her faults (and believe her she had a lot of them), only Santana knew how to fuck her until she forgot her name. She stretched, sore, and slightly confused by the warm feeling on her lower abdomen. She looked down to see a hand wrapped possessively around her.

Her eyes narrowed. "The fuck," she whispered.

She studied the head that was pressed into the pillow beside her. It definitely belonged to a woman, and if the passion fruit and sex smell that permeated the air was any indication, it was Santana. She knew she was in Santana's bed. These were Santana's sheets. She recognized Santana's shoulder blades; she'd watched them move gracefully over her the countless times Santana had topped her. Yep, they were hers, but the tanned, muscular arm that rested on top of her stomach couldn't be Santana's. She and Santana didn't cuddle. Like ever. Quinn was actually surprised that she was still in the bed.

Oh, God, Quinn realized with a groan. *Santana finally got me to have a threesome!*

"Mmm...stop moving so much," Santana mumbled, sleepily. That voice was definitely Santana's, and there was no one else in the bed, so there had been no threesome. So why was Santana's arm around her? Santana pulled her closer into her, her leg entangling with Quinn's. Quinn froze. Something was happening...or was it had?

She struggled to remember the events of the night before. It started with a phone call. "*Quinn! Drop whatever lame ass thing you're doing tonight, because tonight you're doing me!*" Okay, that wasn't unusual. Santana's pick-up lines were always half-assed because honestly she didn't even try anymore because they both knew Quinn was Santana's go to hook-up. Although...now that she thought about it, it had been a little early in the evening when Santana called; the sun had still been up.

Quinn went over to Santana's place. That was normal. Santana pinned Quinn against the door as soon as she walked through it, kissing her roughly. Still normal. They drank some. Santana called her beautiful. That was...*odd*. Music was turned on, they kissed some more, Quinn and Santana had a show of dominance. Quinn won. She pushed Santana down onto the carpet, and brought her to orgasm...still nothing unusual. They ended up in Santana's bedroom. That was a given. (Well, not really. There were plenty of times that they never made it to the bedroom).

Okay, so they were in her room. Santana pushed Quinn down onto the bed. Mouths were everywhere, breasts rubbed together, Santana was on top and had her leg wedged between Quinn's, her knee occasionally hitting her core. Santana had gone slow. Teasing her towards an orgasm, but backing down before she could achieve it. That was...*fun*. A lot of the time their transactions were just that, transactions. Sometimes they drank before sex, sometimes they made out. Most times they didn't. Well, didn't kiss on the lips, anyway. Sometimes one or the other would spend the night, but it was rare for the other to bother with saying good-bye before they left, but they always left with the other satisfied. Sexually.

Quinn dismissed Santana's teasing. She could have just been bored last night and didn't have anything else to do. Quinn finally came, hard, she blacked out, and now she was here. With Santana cuddling her. She felt like somewhere in there she had missed something.

"You're thinking too loudly," Santana grumbled. Quinn lifted a hand to push Santana off of her, and saw something small, and glittery, wrapped around her finger. If Quinn didn't know better, she would have thought it was a ring. If Quinn really didn't know better, she would have thought it was an engagement ring.

Her hand paused in the air.

Okay, it was definitely time for Santana to be up. Quinn shoved her, nearly pushing her off the bed. "San!"

Santana growled, actually growled, as she sat up on her side. "Quinn, I swear my apartment better be on fire. What. The. Hell!"

"What did you do?"

A confused frown appeared on Santana's sleepy face as she thought about it. She was sure that she'd turned the stove off, and she was doubly sure that she had given Quinn multiple orgasms the night before so...that covered everything right? She bit down on her bottom lip trying to figure out what had Quinn's panties in a bunch. Quinn watched the action, disgusted with herself. Was she really getting turned on over a lip bite? Like really? *Now?*

Santana seemed to give up. "I don't know, Q, what did I do? And while we're playing 21 questions, why am I not sleeping right now?" A thought seemed to occur to her, and Santana suddenly looked hopeful. "Hey, since you're up, you wanna make me breakfast?"

Quinn rolled her eyes. "Fucking Un. Believe. Able."

Hope vanished from Santana's face and she looked utterly miserable. "So...no?" When Quinn didn't answer, Santana rolled back over, pulling the sheets around her.

Quinn pushed her again. "You're not going back to sleep!"

"Q, you're giving me whiplash!" Santana protested. "Make up your mind! Sleep or breakfast?" Another thought seemed to possess Santana, and Quinn was astounded at how quickly Santana turned around and was on top of Quinn, tugging her hand between their bodies. "Or you could give me a morning quickie."

Quinn pulled her hand away. "I'm not giving you a quickie!"

Santana grunted and rolled off of her. She shook her head. "Unh, I need coffee." Without bothering to dress, Santana got out of the bed and headed for her kitchen. She started the Keurig, listening to it warm up. Quinn, after pausing to put on a shirt and pull on shorts that belonged to Santana, came stomping behind her, coming into the kitchen just as Santana was peeking into the refrigerator. Quinn couldn't help but be appreciative of the sight of Santana's bare ass in the air, swaying in tune to the song Santana was singing under her breath. Quinn stood in the doorway, just staring.

Quinn was sure there was a reason she'd gone chasing after Santana, but all Quinn could think about in that moment, was pushing her into the fridge door, hiking her leg up, and taking her right there. Quinn had actually taken a few strides to do just that, when she shook her head. Now was *not* the time. Santana noticed Quinn had joined her. She closed the door. "Babe, I really think that you should be making me breakfast since you woke me up at like," she checked the clock. "9:00 a.m. On Saturday!"

Quinn briefly remembered that she had things she was supposed to be doing today, the start of which was waking up in her own bed. She was wasting time by being here. "Don't call me babe," Quinn said crossly.

Santana shrugged. "Okay, *Quinn*. Breakfast?"

"I'm not making you breakfast, Santana!"

Santana pouted. "Boo. You're a terrible wife! No sex, no food. What kind of woman doesn't make her wife breakfast after dragging her out of bed?" In a huff Santana pulled down a mug, and slapped a carton into the brewer.

Santana's words brought Quinn back to where her mind needed to be. "Okay, first, I'm not your wife, second...did you really freaking propose while *we were having sex*?"

A twisted smile appeared on Santana's face, and she looked pretty proud of herself. "Yea. I was going to put the ring on my clit and tell you to go down on me, but I thought that the way I did it was a better touch." Although, now that she was thinking about it, Santana really wasn't sold on the clit not being the better choice. Quinn was amazing with her tongue.

"You can't ask someone to marry you in the middle of sex!"

"What?" Santana questioned. She had been envisioning Quinn sucking the ring off of her clit and had got distracted. "Why not?" Quinn was startled to realize that she was absolutely serious. "You said yes."

"Cause I was out of my mind,"

Again with the smile. "I know." There was no mistaken it that time. Bitch was proud of herself. The machine stopped pouring and Santana squealed. "Whoo, coffee's done!" She paused in a moment of consideration. "I'm not really used to doing the morning thing with you. Do you want a cup, too?"

Santana didn't wait for an answer. She sat the cup in front of Quinn and immediately went to brewing another. Quinn, though slightly touched by the gesture, was not to be distracted. "We're not getting married, Santana!"

"You said yes," Santana said matter-of-factly. "No halvesies, no take-backs."

Quinn rolled her eyes and her fingers tensed as she willed herself not to smack the woman standing in front of her. The naked woman in front of her. The naked women drinking coffee in front of her. What was she doing? Oh, right. "You can't use playground logic on a wedding proposal."

Santana smiled down happily into her cup of coffee, but then looked up and squinted at Quinn. "Why not?"

"Are you serious?"

"Totally. You said yes."

Quinn couldn't believe that she was having this conversation! Santana proposing wasn't a surprise in the 'Oh my God, I can't believe that the person that I'm completely in love with wants to actually spend their lives with me' kind of way. It was a surprise the way Hiroshima was a surprise to the Japanese villager who didn't know that they were at war. She and Santana had definitely, definitely not made it to this point in their relationship.

Actually, they didn't have a relationship. They weren't dating. They had a mutually beneficial symbiotic connection that started in college, and kind of just never ended. Every couple of months or so, they'd run into each other seemingly by chance (though at first it was all planned because you can't accidentally run into someone you live a hundred miles away from, even if Santana always said surprise!), they'd have sex, maybe for a couple of days or weekends in a row, and then they wouldn't talk for a couple of months.

It worked for them. They had never exchanged 'I love you's', they never cuddled, most of the time one of them left in the middle of the night because they both preferred their own beds. They were fuck buddies, nothing more. After all this time the most adoration Santana had ever expressed was sending Quinn flowers one year on Valentine's Day (which Santana later sent her the bill for) when she needed an emergency rescue from a jerk at work, and the most concern Santana had showed for her general well-being was her telling Quinn, after she had gone down

on her, *"Oh, yeah...so I kind of had sex with some really sketch chick last month and didn't use a dam, so you might want to get checked out."* Well she did follow that up with an *'Everything check out?'* text a month later, which was instantly negated by the *'Cool, so wanna bump uglies'* one that came after Quinn texted her back *'yes'*.

Quinn studied the girl that she's known for more than a decade. They probably knew each other better than anyone else ever would, and yet nothing in their past suggested that those particular words would come out of her mouth, and certainly not be directed towards her. Maybe Santana forgot she wasn't Brittany. "You're actually serious? Like you are seriously proposing that you and I get married?"

Santana gave her head a firm nod. "Yep."

"Why?"

Santana looked Quinn in the eye, her face adopting a serious look. "I don't know, Q, I just guess I woke up one day and I realized that the only person who ever truly got me was you, and..." Santana burst out laughing, spilling coffee as she did so. "Dude, I can't. I almost gagged just trying to say that sappy crap." Santana shrugged. "Think about it, Q. We've been friends for years, we're already having sex and we enjoy it, and you know, maybe I love you."

Quinn's lips pulled into a straight line, in a very school teacher kind of way. It made Santana wonder why Quinn never wore her hair up and her glasses on when they had sex. "We need a ruler," Santana mumbled.

"What?"

Santana shook her head. "Huh? Nothing. Did you say something?"

Quinn was still wearing the stern teacher look. "I said, 'do you really?'" She repeated, probably in as sarcastic a voice as she used the first time she said it when Santana wasn't paying attention. Santana knew that Quinn took her response for the utter bullshit it probably was.

"Dunno. I'm not used to that question being posed without music being involved. Why don't you sing me something so I can be sure? I'll hum in the background if you need me to."

Quinn took a much needed step back from the counter. "Okay, I'm going to go take a shower, and then I'm getting dressed and going home."

Santana scratched at her ear. "Er...okay. Like I said, I'm new to this, but I thought that maybe we'd hang today, or something, but I guess if you have things you have to do I understand. Can I tell my mom, though, or do you...is that something we should do together?"

Quinn raised an eyebrow. "We're not getting married, Santana!"

"God, you're just being confusing now! We both agreed that there's no take backs. I asked, you said yes. It's too early for all this back and forth, Fabray! I hope we're not going to be like this our whole marriage."

Quinn felt like pulling her hair out. "Santana, what is this really about?"

Santana sipped on her coffee innocently. "What do you mean?"

"I'm not stupid, and neither are you. Where is this coming from? Why are you *really* asking me to marry you?"

Santana decided to level with Quinn. Maybe it would help. She sat her mug on the counter. "Okay, so I may or may not have made a bet that I'd get married before Puck would, and I just found out...you know Puck's getting married in a month?"

Quinn's jaw actually dropped open at her words. "This is about a bet? You proposed to me because of a bet?"

"Well...yeah. I mean, I could have asked a stranger or something, but we have great sex and you're kind of hot...I mean we'd make a cute couple, I think."

Quinn wanted to make sure that she had all the facts. "You want to get married because of a bet?"

Santana looked seriously into her eyes. "I really hate losing, Quinn."

"I'm not gay, S. Why in the world would I marry you?"

Santana shrugged, closing off the distance that was between them. She looked in Quinn's eyes. "Well, I do do that thing with my tongue that you really like." Santana purred, letting the tongue in question slip over her thick, plush lips. Quinn's eyes followed the movement. She felt heat move to her abdomen at the sight. She shivered. Santana backed her into the counter. "And, you'd get to have sex with me whenever you want."

Quinn swallowed. "And...uh...how is that an incentive?"

Santana postured. "*You* get to *have sex with me whenever* you want. How is that *not* an incentive? I mean have you had sex with me?"

"Yes, and it wasn't great enough for me to want to marry someone over it."

"I beg to differ," Santana protested. "You're not even walking straight right now!"

Quinn flushed. "Only cause my back pain keeps flaring up."

Santana chuckled. "Right, Quinnie. Your 'back' is about as queer as the rest of you, and you're pretty gay, Quinn, hate to break it to you."

"You still haven't told me a logical reason for marrying you."

"Oh come on, Quinn, I'm like the best relationship you've ever had." Quinn scoffed. "Alright, fine, I'm the *longest* relationship that you've ever had."

This stopped Quinn short because sadly that was true. And incredibly sad. She was 29 years old for crying out loud! What the hell did it say about her that the only thing that had been consistent in her life all this time was Santana? "I don't really have sex with other women when we're on anymore, and I bet the only time that you sleep with someone else is when you realize that you haven't been sleeping with anyone but me."

Now that...was scarily accurate. But it was a recent development. As in the past four years recent development. It was just that this thing that she had with Santana was easy. She didn't have to try. She didn't have to put in work. All she had to do was call Santana when she needed a tuning, and Santana would show up. She only broke with that agreement when she realized that she was never going to ever get married if she didn't date, so she'd go out with some John from work, but she never seemed to connect with anyone. Other than Santana. Good God, if Santana somehow turned out to be the love of her life she was going to shoot herself. Or the Geico lizard because, seriously, it was time.

"And I'm kind of fond of you Quinnie," Santana said teasingly, but there was some truth to it, too. Quinn could hear it in Santana's voice. "Tell you what: if you say yes, I'll get up and cook breakfast for you every other Saturday."

It was a suspiciously generous offer considering how late Santana liked to sleep on the weekends. "For how long?"

"A year."

Quinn's brow furrowed. "How long do you think we'd be married?"

"Forever. I'm Catholic, babe."

"You're also gay."

"Minor details. I'll carry our first child."

Quinn wasn't sure which part needed to be addressed the most. The word first, child, or the fact that she was even entertaining this conversation.

"Umm...how many children would you want? Hypothetically speaking of course because we're not going to get married."

Santana shrugged. "At least two. If we just have one then we'll give birth to the next Rachel Berry," Santana shuttered and Quinn laughed. "The world wouldn't survive."

"You know you love her."

"In small, small doses," Santana responded. "I'll even let you raise the kids Catholic."

"I'm Protestant, Santana."

Santana winked at her. "I know...that's why I'm saying I will *let* you. It's an honor, take it."

"We're not getting married."

"I won't buy you corny crap on Valentine's Day, but I will dedicate a whole day to you somewhere between March and June and make you feel really special because I want to and not because television tells me I have to."

"No."

"I'll watch *Sex and the City* with you when you get your period like I know you like to do, and I won't even complain."

"*You* won't complain."

"Much. I'll even make sure that you have chocolate, and I'll rub your belly."

"No."

Santana realized that she was going to have to pull out the big guns, though she was foggy on why she even had to bother since Quinn had already said yes. It was only fair that she went through with it. "I'll like only sleep with you, and stuff. Unless you want to have a threesome. Or foursome. Or an orgy, I'm not picky, but I'll at least tell you beforehand if I'm about to have sex with someone else."

"You already do that anyway," Quinn pointed out.

Santana thought about it. "Do I? Shit, I really am in a relationship with you, aren't I? Well, then, it makes even more sense that the two of us get married since I mean we practically already are."

"How many times do I have to tell you-,"

"Get off of it, Quinn, you're totally going to marry me. We're like perfect for each other, and stuff. I never really thought about it, but there's probably a reason that neither of us have had serious relationship with anyone else, and our periods have already synced up." Santana nodded as if it was settled. "And, if you say yes, when we buy a house, if there's only a one car garage, I'll park out on the street, and you can have the driveway?"

Quinn actually paused. So did Santana. "Really, Q? That's what gets you?"

"What?" Quinn questioned innocently. "You've seen my hair when it rains!"

"You'd marry me for a parking space?"

Quinn was actually starting to consider the idea. She shook her head. "Course not."

"Hey, and when we get old, and wrinkly, and you're not so hot anymore, and you stop having sex with me, I won't put you in a nursing home."

"Really?"

"Nah, I'll like, move you to a back room in the house, and move my young girlfriend in, but I totally won't abandon you."

"Why do you sound like you mean that?"

"Cause I do."

"I can't listen to this anymore. If I say yes, will you finally shut up?"

"You already said yes," Santana pointed out.

"Fine, fine, yes, I'll do it, but only because Russell hasn't disowned me yet, and the news of me marrying another girl will probably send him to an early grave...and then I'll get my inheritance."

"Vicious."

"You love it."

Santana gave a half nod. "I think maybe I do."

"But I'm not changing my name."

"Of course you're changing your name. What's the point of marrying me if you're not going to become a Lopez?"

"Why am I the one changing my name?"

"Do you know how lame Santana Fabray sounds? And anyway, I'm like the butchest of the two of us so you should have my name."

"Butch, please! You get a manicure every weekend."

"I know how to change a tire. And the oil. Plus: I was a cheerleader."

"So was I."

"Yea, but I was a cheerleader *longer*. Which makes me more athletic, and athleticism totally makes me the dude."

"I have a tongue ring and a tattoo."

"Of Ryan Seacrest! And you took the tongue ring out!"

"You read fashion magazines!"

"You actually had a thing for Robert Pattinson!"

"I did not."

"Oh, you so did."

"I'm on top more."

Santana blushed, licking her lips subconsciously. "Yea, well, that's just because I worry about your back. I'm totally the real top; I just dominate from the bottom."

"How does Quinn Lopez, Lucy Lopez, sound any better than Santana Fabray?"

"Are you kidding? Lucy Lopez is totally *way* better. First it's because it's Lopez. Secondly, if you were to get a monogrammed shirt it would look like it says L.O.L."

Quinn was honestly doubting her sanity. Did she really say she'd marry this woman? She rubbed at her temple. "What if we combine them?"

"Seriously, Q? You're supposed to be all smart and that's your solution? You want to make some poor child walk around with the name Fabrez or Lopray?"

"Err...right. What if we hyphenate it?"

"That's so gay!"

"And marrying a woman isn't?"

"Oh, point. Okay...but my name goes first."

"Why does your name go first?"

"Because Lopez-Fabray sounds better than Fabray-Lopez," Santana stated as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

"Fabray-Lopez sounds much better," Quinn insisted, saying so only because she didn't want Santana to get her way.

Santana shrugged a shoulder. "Fabray-Lopez it is. God, you're such a sucker, Quinn. No one's going to bother with saying the Fabray. You totally just took my name!"

Santana did a little victory dance around the kitchen. It was so ridiculous, and so freaking cute, and Santana was still so absolutely naked, (and Quinn had just agreed to marry this girl, so it was her right anyway), that Quinn couldn't help herself. She wrapped an arm around Santana's forearm, roughly pulling Santana to her. Their lips slammed together almost painfully, joining together in a kiss that could only be described as nothing short of carnal.

Quinn felt Santana pull back her lips enough to smile into her own for a quick second before she started to kiss her back, a hand dropping to lewdly cup her ass. "I knew you'd see it my way," Santana smirked.

Quinn was absolutely fed up with Santana. "Shut. UP," Quinn grunted, biting down on Santana's lip. It did the job because she stopped talking. Quinn quickly licked the spot she had bit to soothe the burn, and Santana's tongue chased after hers, seeking contact. Quinn practically pushed Santana into the countertop, before she lifted her up, and sat her on the counter. Santana kicked her legs open, giving Quinn a front row seat to her glistening sex. "Well, well, Fabray," Santana said seductively. "Now that you've got me here, what *are* you going to do with me?"

Quinn licked her lips, and Santana tensed in eager anticipation thinking that Quinn was about to go down on her, but she didn't. Quinn settled herself in between Santana's legs, wrapping those sensuous appendages around her waist, Santana's unclothed sex, pressed against her barely covered core. Santana moaned softly every time the bottom of the shorts hit her in just the right way. "What *should* I do?" Quinn teased.

"Anything you want, baby," Santana returned.

Quinn's mouth came back down on hers, and Santana didn't even try to fight for dominance, letting Quinn's tongue lay claim to her mouth, tasting her thoroughly. Kissing, especially like this, wasn't something they did often. Usually it was done just to speed them towards the end, and for sure they both knew exactly where this was going, but it wasn't quite the same as any of those other times. Santana's hands trailed up Quinn's arms to her hair and neck, pulling her even closer to deepen the kiss. How had she never known how hot kissing Quinn was? Why didn't they do this more often?

The answer came to her immediately: because it was intimate, and intimacy was one thing that they didn't do. Santana was liking this, though. She was seriously thinking that she wouldn't

mind if this became their Saturday morning routine. Well, correction, she wouldn't mind if this became their *late* Saturday morning routine cause it was still too freaking early.

Quinn watched Santana's thoughts flicker in her eyes. Santana, seeing her stare, met her gaze. Their heated moment had temporarily passed; Quinn couldn't even tell you when they stopped kissing. They took a moment to just enjoy being together like this. A short moment. Santana's need became more pressing, and her hips started to rock slowly on the countertop, seeking out some needed friction. Quinn's fingers crept down Santana's torso, crawling over her abs until they slid between Santana's legs. Santana's legs parted for the finger that Quinn drew along the folds of Santana's core, teasing.

"Quinn," Santana pleaded. Before the word was fully out, Quinn slipped two fingers inside of her, coming across very little resistance because Santana was so freaking wet.

Quinn placed a very light finger onto Santana's clit, eliciting a garbled groan from Santana, who bucked forward. "I want to watch you to fuck yourself," Quinn purred. Santana's hooded eyes, dark with lust, didn't leave Quinn's. She nodded, obediently rocking her hips slowly on Quinn's fingers. Still maintaining eye contact, Quinn leaned forward to initiate another slow burning kiss, her lips slowly moving downward to lay claim to Santana's neck. Santana started to throw her head back to give Quinn easier access, forgetting where she was sat. Before her head smacked against the counter though, Quinn placed a hand behind her head. When Santana's head smacked into it, it caused the both of them to giggle at what had just happened, but Quinn's hand didn't move, and Santana never stopped moving against her.

It was hella sexy. Santana was just so freaking sexy, and Quinn realized that she never fully noticed before because she never allowed herself to. Things between them had always been temporary, and maybe they still were, but for the moment Santana was allowing her to claim some permanence, and Quinn was surprised by how much she was enjoying the thought.

Without a break in her movements, Santana leaned forward, and pulled Quinn's shirt off, smiling at how hard her nipples were, how obvious Quinn's arousal was. Quinn didn't have much in the breast area, just a handful, but Santana wasn't complaining. She knew how to work with what she had, and she knew how to make a woman feel appreciative of her skills. Quinn leaned into her caress, shuttering every time Santana's fingernail scraped against her nipples.

Still slowly working herself on Quinn's fingers, Santana slipped Quinn's shorts down just far enough that she could slip a hand inside of them, using a steadying hand on Quinn's back to pull her closer. When Santana's fingers came in contact with Quinn's heated core, Quinn wondered for a minute if she should feel embarrassed over how wet she was, but the thought had barely time to settle before Santana's fingers were inside of her, working her over. Santana's fingers kept pace with her own thrusting hips, her thumb casually flicking over Quinn's clit every now and then.

It was an incredibly intimate moment. They moved in tandem, barely touching each other at any point other than their hands. Santana's spare hand had moved and was stilled on Quinn's breast, and Quinn's was lightly touching Santana's cheek. Nothing was said between them as they

moved in the same rhythm, eyes staring into each other, quiet moans and gasps the only sounds that entered into the moment.

Santana reached her climax first, and Quinn came tumbling down almost immediately after. It was perhaps one of the gentlest orgasms either had ever given or received and after, they both just stared at each other, their bare chests heaving as they both tried to regain their breath. Quinn wasn't sure, but she was almost positive that something monumental had just happened.

This gentle quiet lasted for maybe another minute or two before Santana jumped down from the counter. She pulled the shorts back up for Quinn. "So I can tell my mom now, right?"

Quinn's head merely moved up and down in stunned agreement. "Awesome! She'll be so happy, and now I no longer have to hear her ask me when I'm going to get on with it. I'm going to go take a shower." Santana started to dash away, but paused for a moment to kiss Quinn on the cheek. She took two steps towards the bathroom before she paused, again, this time stilled by the sudden realization that she and Quinn were actually going to get married. Santana turned back towards Quinn, gave her ass a firm slap, and whispered 'eggs' into Quinn's ear.

"I thought you were doing Saturday breakfasts," Quinn protested, but Santana was already gone and had the shower running before the words were out. Dumbfounded, Quinn just kind of stood there until she did the only thing that she could. She went searching through Santana's cabinets for a frying pan, and made Santana her damn breakfast.

—

With a shit eating grin on her face, Santana waited as the call connected. "Go for Puck."

"Hey, Puckster!" Santana greeted, silkily.

Santana could hear him shifting on the phone. "Lopez! What's happening?"

"You nervous?"

"About the wedding? Nah, Shelly's great. I can't wait actually. You got your tux?"

Santana made sure her eye roll could be heard through the phone. "I told you already, I'm not wearing a freaking tux."

"You're my best man, San. How am I going to have a best man wearing a dress?"

"You're breaking my heart, Puck, seriously," Santana teased. "Hey, guess what?"

"What?"

"I got married last weekend! Congratulate me, I be a misses!"

Puck cursed. "Are you shitting me, Santana?"

Puck could hear her giggling through the phone. "Nope. Swear on my life. It was a spur of the moment kind of thing. We're going to have a big reception after you get back from your honeymoon, but we went ahead and exchanged vows."

"What girl was stupid er...I mean lucky enough to land your ass?"

"Har har, Puck, and yes," her eyes fell on Quinn. "Her ass is really lucky, cause I'm a damn catch." Both Puck and Quinn laughed. "You might know her, actually. She's this really hot blonde-ish chick with fuck me hazel eyes named Quinn Fabray-Lopez."

Santana wished that she could see his face because she could only imagine it over the phone. "Did you say Quinn?"

"Fabray-Lopez."

"*You* married Quinn Fabray?"

"Lopez."

"Like hell you did! Quinn's not even a lesbian, and there's no freaking way!"

"One second, Puck," Santana covered the mouth piece. "Hey babe, come here?"

Santana turned on the speaker. "Hi, Noah," Quinn greeted, giving him a smile even though he wouldn't be able to see it.

"Tell me that San is lying out of her ass."

"Unfortunately," Santana kicked her, "Ouch. She's not. We really got married."

Santana picked up the phone, turning the speaker off. "And as I believe that you aren't getting married until *next* weekend, that means that I got married first, which makes you, sir, a loser, and me the winner. I will be expecting my payment in the upcoming months."

"Fucking hell, Santana, did you seriously? You're serious. You really married my baby mama?"

Santana nodded vigorously, smiling at Quinn who had an amused, and kind of stunned look on her face. It was the same expression she had been wearing ever since she agreed to marry Santana.

"I did."

"This doesn't count. We both know that you two are going to get divorced as soon as Shelly and I tie the knot, which doesn't make this shit real."

Santana's expression softened, her eyes on Quinn. "No, I'm not," she said seriously. "This might have come out of nowhere, but I'm serious. We're forever."

Quinn cocked an eye at Santana. Santana shook her head. "And I promise that we're not going to take anything from your day, but I'm serious about you paying up!" she taunted.

She could almost see the pissed off look on Noah's face. "Fuck you, Lopez."

"You did, remember? But you still love me though, right?"

"Shit, you know I do."

"Yep. I love you bro. See you soon, okay?"

"Yeah, yeah, I look forward to it."

Santana hung up the phone, sitting it on the couch beside her. Quinn raised an eyebrow, tilting her head. "What was that about forever?" Santana shrugged. "Nothing much. Just Puck talking shit, you know how he is. He's pissed, but not really."

Quinn chuckled. Santana gestured. "Hey, so why are you over there all by yourself? Come cuddle with me."

Quinn grunted. "You're not going to be one of those clingy women who gets all sappy and what not are you? Cause I didn't agree to that."

"The fuck I'mma do that for?" Santana questioned. "I already got the woman. I'm just feeling kind of cold and don't want to get up to get a blanket."

"Did I ever tell you that you're so very charming, Santana?"

Santana's head bobbed. "Nope, but I already know this."

Quinn shifted from the love seat to the couch, cuddling into Santana's side. Santana put an arm around her.

"Santana?"

"Yeah, babe."

"How much was the bet for?" Quinn was already envisioning what they could spend the money on for the reception.

Santana nuzzled against Quinn's cheek, causing her to laugh. "Oh, that. A dollar."

Quinn pulled away to look at her...wife. "What? We did this for a dollar!"

"Well, no," Santana said. "*You* did it for free and because I'm freaking awesome. *I* did it for a dollar."

Quinn wasn't sure if she wanted to strangle Santana, or just laugh at the absurdity of the whole thing. "You asked me to marry you over a dollar bet?"

Santana only shrugged casually. "Well like I said, you're really hot. Besides I really, *really* hate to lose."

Note: continued on <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10316076>

Six Flowers, by PieAngel

Quinn wakes up and yawns, she looks at the empty space on the bed next to her and smiles, before reaching over and fluffing the pillow, like she has for the past year. She gets out of bed and walks around the bed, making the sheets. When she gets to the other side, she presses a kiss to the pillow.

Making her way into the bathroom, Quinn turns on the shower and picks her white sundress from the closet, the one that was her favorite, and places it on the counter, ready for when she gets out. After grabbing a towel, she enters the shower.

She steps out from the shower after fifteen minutes, and wraps the towel around her, turning on the hairdryer, and curling iron. As she finishes blow drying her hair, the curling iron is ready, and she starts curling her hair.

When her hair is done and pretty. She goes on to brush her teeth, depositing her tooth brush next to the green one in the toothbrush holder, once she's done.

She takes one last look at herself in the mirror. She has to look perfect today. She just has to. She has always looked perfect on this date. This year won't be any different. Except it is.

Quinn goes into the kitchen to make breakfast. Just a simple milk and cereal today, cornflakes with exactly three raspberries on top. Just like how she used to make it. Sitting at the table, she quietly eats her food, occasionally glancing at the empty seat across from her.

Once the things are placed in the sink, Quinn makes lunch, for two, and packs it into a picnic basket. Then she goes into her-their, living room, and pulls a blanket from a trunk, adding that to the basket.

She smooths the nonexistent wrinkles on the skirt of her dress before opening the front door. The sun is shining, there aren't any clouds out, and the street is still quiet, the sound of birds chirping could still be heard. The weather was absolutely perfect.

She steps out onto the porch and locks the door behind her. Making her way to her car afterward. Placing the picnic basket on the floor of the passengers side, Quinn then starts the engine. She drives to their favorite floral shop, it was where they bought all their flowers. No matter what occasion.

The bell chimes as she walks in and Thomas, the old florist behind the counter, smiles at her. She has been in here enough for him to recognize her. Both of them have, but today it's just her.

Making her way to the flowers, she picks a red chrysanthemum, a pink carnation, an arbutus, a forget-me-not, a yellow zinnia, and a rose in full bloom, and has them wrapped into a bouquet.

Getting back into her car, she places the bouquet of carefully selected flowers, on the passengers seat, in a way to prevent any of them from getting damaged. She then, starts driving.

When she gets to the destination, it's just before noon, and she picks up the basket placing the flowers on top of it, carrying it on her left arm. She opens the gate and it creaks as it opens. Quinn makes her way down the path, until she reaches the one that she came for.

She places the basket down, and gets the blanket out, setting it in front of the significant object. She arranges the lunch for her and her love, then soon after begins eating, and talking to her lover. Once she has finished lunch, she packs away the plates and remaining food back into the basket.

Quinn picks up the bouquet, and unwraps it, picking up the red chrysanthemum first, and kissing it before placing it down on the headstone.

She picks the full bloomed rose next, kisses it and places it next to the chrysanthemum.

The arbutus is next and she kisses it, same as the first two, and places it next to the rose.

She kisses the yellow zinnia and puts it next to the arbutus.

The forget-me-not gets kissed too, and placed next to the yellow zinnia.

The pink carnation is last, and she slowly picks it up. She closes her eyes and kisses it softly, opening them again as she places it last in the row of flowers.

Six flowers. Six flowers for each year that they have been together. Six that each mean something different.

The red chrysanthemum means, I love YOU. The fully bloomed rose, I STILL love you. The arbutus, I ONLY love you. The yellow zinnia says that she remembers and thinks of her EVERYDAY. The forget me not is for all of their memories that they made TOGETHER. The carnation, means that she will ALWAYS love her.

Today, today was a special day. They always spent this day together. Always. No matter what. This was the first year that Quinn wasn't woken by her kisses. The first time since forever that they didn't get ready together. The first year that they didn't make breakfast for the other. The first year that she didn't get any flowers.

But Quinn still spent it with her. And Quinn got her flowers. The day was still spent thinking of her. Still full of nothing but love.

So with tears running down her face, Quinn smiles as she thinks of the love of her life, and whispers, "Happy Anniversary Santana."

A Little Piece of Perfection, by SCWritings

Santana and Quinn were laying in their shared bed, fast asleep when a little girl pattered into the room. Santana, being the light sleeper that she is, peeks one eye open, then closes it quickly so the little girl wouldn't see that she is, in fact, awake. She heard the little girl stop right beside the bed, and then she waits a few seconds, knowing that the girl is about the jump on top of her. The little girl jumps and Santana sits up and catches her before she even lands.

"Nice try, mija," Santana smirks down at her daughter, who is looking up at her with big, round eyes. Santana gets off of the bed, still carrying her daughter. "Let's go get you some breakfast before you wake your mommy up."

As soon as Santana is out of the bedroom, she lets her daughter down and the little girl skips down the hallway. Santana looks back into her room and she sees her wife laying on the bed, fast asleep. They had gotten married right after Quinn finished college at Yale, then Quinn had their first child at the age of twenty-two. Santana had their second child a few years later at the age of twenty-seven. Now they are thirty-two with a beautiful ten year old girl named Emily, and their five year old girl named Rosario. They decided to have a little inside joke with each other, and they were beautiful names.

The Latina slowly closes the door after admiring her wife, and heads downstairs to the kitchen. She rounds the corner and sees Rose bouncing up and down in her seat, ready for her mami to cook her something. Santana is an amazing chef. She got a pan out ready to make her daughter her favorite breakfast, huevos rancheros, which is eggs and salsa. She butters the pan after it is heated, and cracks a single egg into the pan and starts to scramble it. When the egg is done, she puts it onto a plate, and drizzles some salsa over the egg. As soon as she turns back around to give Rose her breakfast, she sees Emily sitting at the table as well.

Santana puts the plate in front of Rose, and she digs into her breakfast. The older woman walks around the table, stopping in front of Emily. "Hey, sweetie, I wasn't expecting you up so early," Santana says, giving her eldest daughter a hug and kiss on the cheek.

Emily returns the hug and says, "Rosie woke me up a while ago and I couldn't fall back asleep." The older sister shoots Rosie a glare, but smiles anyway.

"You're just like your mommy," Santana says with a smile. Then she sees Rosie crossing her arms and pouting at her sister's glare, even though it was fake.

"And you are just like your mami." Santana looks up and sees Quinn walking into the room with an adorable case of bedhead. The blonde walks over to Rosie and picks her up. "Such an attention seeker," Quinn says to her daughter as she peppers her face with kisses.

"And she likes your kisses. Rosie and I are practically the same person," Santana laughs as she walks over to her wife giving her a chaste kiss and ignoring the groans from their kids. "Do you want anything for breakfast, babe?"

"Pancakes?" Quinn asks with an adorable childlike tinge to her voice.

"Yeah, pancakes!" both of their kids exclaim.

Santana looks at Rosie skeptically. "You just had breakfast, mija."

"I want pancakes!" Rosie says, bouncing with excitement again in Quinn's arms. Quinn laughs and puts her daughter down.

"Alright, alright." Santana makes her way back into the kitchen, cleaning the pan she was using.

Quinn follows her wrapping her arms around the Latina from behind. "Anything I can do to help?"

Santana smiles. "You can go mix the batter."

Quinn salutes her wife, and she starts to make the batter as Santana heats up the pan again. Once the pancakes were done, the family sits at the table, eating their breakfast.

"I'm full," Rosie complains.

Santana looks at her daughter's plate and laughs. "I told you, you wouldn't be able to eat all of it."

The woman reaches to take her daughter's extra pancake, but Rosie protests. "No! I'll eat it!"

Quinn laughs loudly at the exchange. "Just like your mami."

Santana sticks her tongue out at her wife, but leaves the extra pancake for Rosie to eat. As soon as everyone is done eating, Santana smirks and starts talking, "Vaya se preparan para el día." (Go get ready for the day.) Their daughters get up from the table and head upstairs.

Quinn looks so confused as she watches her daughters walk up the stairs, she then glares at her wife. "San," she whines, "you know I don't know Spanish!"

"Lo siento, Quinnie." (I'm sorry, Quinnie). Santana smirks at Quinn's facial expression and cleans up the dishes. Quinn is still pouting at the table with her arms crossed when Santana comes back from cleaning up the dishes. She walks over to her wife and wraps her arms around her neck, whispering, "Usted es tan hermoso. Te quiero muchísimo." (You are so beautiful. I love you very much.)

Quinn only caught a couple of words. She knew 'beautiful' and 'I love you' was in there, so she relaxed. She wraps her arms around Santana's waist and whispers back one of the few Spanish phrases she knew, "Te amo también, Santana." (I love you too, Santana.)

Just then their kids come down the stairs, fully dressed and ready to go out. Santana looks to her kids and then back to Quinn. "We promised them we would take them to the beach today."

"Oh, yeah!" Quinn said, running upstairs to get ready, Santana following closely behind.

Upon reaching their shared room, Santana stops short when she sees Quinn taking off her clothes to put a bikini on. Even after having a baby, both Quinn and Santana have great bodies

and were in excellent shape. They both silently thanked Sue for that. Once a Cheerio, always a Cheerio. Meaning they still exercised like Sue was yelling at them.

Santana walks over to Quinn and ran her hands up and down her sides. "San, we can't right now, the kids are waiting."

Santana huffs out a breath of air. "But we haven't in like three days!"

Quinn chuckles and gives her wife a chaste kiss. "Tonight? The kids will be tired from the beach, so they'll be out like a light."

"Fine..." Santana says, dragging out the 'n'. "I'm changing in the bathroom then." She walks into the bathroom and closes the doors. A moment later, Quinn feels something hit her in the back of the head. Turning around, she sees Santana's underwear.

"Oh, she's gonna get it," Quinn mutters as she finishes changing her clothes.

The family gets to the sunny California beach and they all admire the view. The cloudless sky overhead, shining a bright blue. The waves that tumble onto the shore, yet the air holds no winds. The sun shines on all of the bodies in the sand, and those in the water. Rosie squeals as she runs towards the water, eager to jump in.

Santana looks at her wife, who says, "You go get her, I'll set up." Santana nods and starts to run off, but she runs back as if she's forgotten something. Quinn gives her a confused look before Santana pecks her cheek and runs off again toward their daughter.

Quinn stares after Santana with a look of pure love, but she's brought out of her thoughts when she hears her oldest daughter's voice, "You guys are so gross."

The blonde looks at her daughter, who is practically a mini-version of herself and smirks. "Just wait until you find yours."

Emily fiddles with her fingers. "Hey, mom?" Quinn looks down at her. "Would you and mamita be mad if I like boys?"

Quinn stops in her tracks and stares down at her daughter. "No, baby, why would we?" Quinn gets down on her knees so she is eye level with Emily. "I dated a couple boys in high school before I was with your mami. There's nothing wrong with that in our eyes."

"Are you sure? What if mami doesn't feel the same?" Emily continues to fiddle with her fingers, shifting her feet around nervously.

"I'm one hundred percent positive, baby. Want to go talk to her together?" Quinn asks, taking one of her daughter's hands. Emily nods, and Quinn gets up, holding her daughter's hand and leading them to where Santana is building a sandcastle with Rosie. "Hey, Santana?" Santana's head whips around at the rare use of her full name.

Seeing her wife gripping onto their daughter's hand, who is looking like a nervous wreck, she tells Rosie that she'll be right back and makes her way towards the other half of her family. "What's going on, babe?" Santana asks, glancing from Quinn to Emily.

"Let's sit down," Quinn suggests, letting go of her daughter's hand to spread a beach blanket, then guiding her daughter to sit in her lap.

"Is everything okay?" Santana asks, getting increasingly more worried as she sits down, staring at her daughter.

"Baby, do you want me to talk?" Quinn asks her daughter. She nods. "Emily is afraid that you would get mad because she likes boys."

"What? No! Baby, come here." Santana holds her arms out and Emily scrambles into her arms. "Just because your mom and I are together, doesn't mean you have to be with another girl." Santana looks up at Quinn. "Who would have thought that straight kids would be afraid to come out to gay parents?" The three of them laugh for a minute before Santana resumes, "I remember when I came out to my parents. I was pretty much forced, but it was scary. Baby, you don't have to be scared about what we will think of you or if we will ever stop loving you." The woman kisses her daughter on the head. "We love you unconditionally. Te amo, querido."

"Te amo también, mami." Emily says back. The little girl looks to her other mommy. "I love you, too, mommy." Quinn goes in and they all have a group hug.

It's a nice, soft hug until something barrels into them. Looking up they realize it was just Rosie wanting in on the action. They all laugh and Santana and Quinn carry their daughters into the water and plop them in, participating in the upcoming splash fight.

That night, the two women had tuck their kids into bed, taking turns of course, and were standing outside of Emily's bedroom door watching her sleep. "She's so cute," Santana whispers as she closes the door with a soft click.

"She's brave," Quinn whispers back.

The blonde grabs Santana's hand and the Latina looks down at their hands, feeling a weird material between them. Quinn let's go, leaving the material in Santana's hand and when she opens her hand, she sees the pair of underwear she had thrown at her wife earlier in the day. "Wanky," she husks as she chases Quinn into the bedroom.

As soon as she's through the door, she's pushed up against the door, lips crashing against her own. Teeth nibble on her bottom lip and she runs a tongue over her wife's lips, asking for entrance. Quinn immediately lets her in.

Santana slips her hands under Quinn's shirt intending to pull it off, when a knock is sounded at their bedroom door. Santana pulls her lips away with a resounding pop and sighs, trying to control her breathing. She turns around and opens the door, revealing a little Rosie standing in the doorway.

"Hey, baby, you okay?" Santana asks with a smile on her face.

"I need some water," Rosie says in a sleepy voice.

Santana chuckles and picks her daughter up, carrying her downstairs. Since Rosie can't reach the faucet, her moms had to get her water for her. Santana gets a glass, and fills it up, carrying her daughter back up to her room and sets the glass on her nightstand.

"Goodnight, sweetie, I love you and I'll see you tomorrow," Santana whispers in the room only illuminated by a nightlight in the corner.

Rosie rolls over while mumbling, "Love you too, mami."

Santana walks out of her room and down the hall back into her room where she finds Quinn under the covers reading a book, waiting for her. Santana strips down to her underwear and crawls in bed, resting her chin on Quinn's stomach. "I love our kids."

Quinn laughs and puts down the book, and moves her hand through Santana's hair. "Is that so?"

"Of course, I do. In fact," Santana says as she makes her way to Quinn's lips, "I think I want another."

Quinn smiles. "Really?"

Santana leans in to capture Quinn's lips once again. "Mhmm."

Quinn pulls away only to whisper, "I love you so much."

Santana barely gets out an, 'I love you too' before Quinn's lips are once again on hers.

Future Quinnntana, by seemenopeu

Quinn her folded arms and judged the building in front of her. Club Leopard. Was that a pun on something? It had a picture of a leopard next to, sporting a baseball cap and a glass of beer. Classy.

"Come on, Quinn," Kitty nudged her shoulder with her own, "It's not that bad. I promise."

Quinn shook her head and began to leave, "No way. I haven't been in one of those in years."

"And," Kitty stopped her and turned her back to the building, "You had loads of fun? Right?"

"Not especially," Quinn checked the watch on her wrist. 9:30 pm. It's wasn't too late to go home and watch Netflix or something.

"But you will this time," Kitty bounced on the balls of her feet, "Some of the glee kids from high school are going to be here. It's going to be like an early reunion."

"I'll pass," Quinn turned to leave but Kitty stopped her again.

"I know it doesn't sound that great and in actuality I can barely think about anyone from that high school without wanting to throw back three shots of tequila," Kitty sighed and looked back at the building, "but I'm sure it'll be funner than spending another night at home. Semi alone."

Quinn rolled her eyes as Kitty started to pull her towards the club and continued to talk, "Some of them will be from your year, too. So it won't be that much of a drag."

Quinn just shook her head as the smaller blonde lead her into the building.

For a club named Club Leopard, the atmosphere was not what Quinn was expecting. The music blared loud that the bass was the only thing recognizable, but that was the only thing that matched the club name. The rest of it just looked like a coffee shop gone night club with minimal people dancing and lots of people sitting at tables talking and eating glorious amounts of food.

The lighting was dimmed slightly and it only took a few seconds before a table of familiar faces recognized them both and waved them over. Quinn recognized a few of the faces as they walked over, that Marley-girl, Puckmen's half brother, and a few others that she couldn't remember the names of.

She and Kitty sat down at the table with the group and Quinn leaned over to her, "I thought you said that some from my year would be here, too."

"Yes I did, Quinn," Kitty said before putting all of her attention on Marley.

Quinn listened and watched the group for a few moments before deciding she needed to get a couple drinks into her system if she wanted to get through the night. She excused herself and navigated her way through the small crowd to the bar.

She leaned over the counter of the bar and called over the bar attender, but before she could order, someone spoke for her, "She'll be having what I'm having."

Quinn worried her brows and turned to face the voice ready to cut away at whatever ego they have, but smiled at the familiar face, "Santana!"

"Tubbers-" Santana started to greet back but got caught off by a crushing hug by the blonde, "Why are you hugging me?"

Quinn pulled back and took her time to look at the tight red cloth that hugged Santana's body before responding, "I'm just happy to see you."

"Really?"

"Well, I guess," Quinn turned to grab the drinks once the bar attender was done with them, "I'm just happy to see anyone, really."

"Why? Isn't there a like a glee reunion thing tonight?" Santana reached over for her drink and took a sip from the straw.

"Yeah, isn't that why you're here?" Quinn took a sip from her own drink and coughed, "What is this?"

"Technically I saw that Kitty posted a event thing in Facebook about a glee reunion thing here and knowing that no one was going to show up, I really wanted to go," she motioned for Quinn to drink more of her drink and the girl complied, "I'm surprised you even showed up. You barely show up for anything."

The next sip made Quinn cringe, but it tasted better, "I live in the area so..."

"So who's here?" Santana asked and Quinn pointed over to the table and named as many people as she could. Santana huffed before she could finish, "Pass."

She grabbed Quinn by the wrist and lead her across the room until they walked outside to a porch type place where tables were intimately placed around it. Santana sat them over by the edge and sighed, "I wasn't abouts to hang out with those people."

"Then why are you here?" Quinn took another sip, this time without it stinging so much.

"Long story," Santana leaned in, "I needed a break from New York and people and Rachel Berry. So I jumped at the opportunity to only be bothered in Connecticut by the only people who live here. You and that cat girl."

"Kitty?"

"Is that her name?" Santana looked into the distance as she analyzed this.

Quinn laughed, "You haven't changed."

Santana smirked, "And you have?"

"It's been awhile since we've seen each other and I would hope that I have," Quinn looked over the balcony and sighed, "We haven't talked in so long."

"I know," Santana took a long sip of her drink, "Summarize everything that you've been up to in the last- how long has it been?"

Quinn squinted her eyes to think, "Three years."

"Three years," Santana repeated.

"Actually we barely talked when we did so its more like five," Quinn clarified.

"Okay, five years. Now summarize."

"You've missed so much Santana. I-"

Santana put up a hand, "I said summarize."

Quinn huffed, "Okay, what's the last you remember?"

Santana hummed, "You had that baby with that guy."

"Which guy?" Quinn worried.

"Not Puck," Santana smiled, "That one guy you got married to right after college. What was his name?"

"Biff?"

"Yeah! That's the ugliest name on the planet," Santana nodded her head, proud of herself for remembering, "Now summarize."

Quinn looked up as she tried to recall everything, "Well that baby is now seven so congrats on not paying attention to anything, ever. I divorced Biff two years ago. My father died four years ago and surprisingly left me behind a lot of money so I don't work full time right now. And, uh, I got a dog last year."

"Oh Jesus, Quinn," Santana looked down at her drink, "I've-I've missed a lot."

"No kidding," Quinn smiled and took a long sip of her drip, immediately regretting it as she felt the alcohol going to her head.

Santana took a deep breath, "Are you at least happy?"

Quinn shrugged, "I'm fine. My daughter's happy, my mom's happy, and my dog's happy. So, I'm fine."

"I feel like an asshole," Santana rested her head on her hand, "How could I have missed that much."

"You would think that Rachel would have told you."

"Yeah, well I stopped listening to what she was saying years ago."

"More drinks, Santana," Quinn pushed her now empty glass towards the other woman.

Santana laughed, "You'll get drunk."

"Not before you do," Quinn challenged with an risen eyebrow.

Santana laughed, taking the challenge before rising out of her chair to get another drink.

She came back with two more glasses and watched Quinn gulp a large amount of it down.

"I should have brought water," Santana reached for Quinn's glass but the blonde placed it out of her reach.

"I'm still drinking this," Quinn took another sip.

"Okay, two things," Santana reached for the glass again, "One, you're a light weight. And two, you're suppose to take it easy when you're downing Long Island Iced Teas."

Quinn smiled at the liquid in her glass, "It's been so long, my friend."

"Okay, seriously," Santana stood up from her chair to grab the glass but got her hand slapped away.

"Sit down and tell me about your five years," Quinn commanded with a wag of her finger.

Santana rolled her eyes and sat back down, "What do you want to know?"

Quinn smiled and leaned on her elbows towards the other woman, "Summarize."

Santana smirked, "I haven't done much. Still in New York. My production company is doing well. Britt and I broke up like two years ago. I found out that-

"Wait," Quinn stopped her, "Brittany broke up with you?"

"Why would you think that Britt broke up with me? I could have broke up with her."

Quinn laughed but immediately stopped once she saw Santana's serious face, "You broke up with her?"

Santana folded her arms, "Maybe."

"What the hell, Santana?!"

"Don't get mad at me. I had reasons."

"Yeah, sure," Quinn shook her head, "Just continue."

"I don't want to anymore," Santana looked away to the view past the edge of the patio.

Quinn took this moment to admire Santana's dress but instead was met with a large amount of cleavage, "Where's your clothes?"

Santana turned back, "What?"

"Your clothes, Santana," Quinn reached over and pinched her shoulder strap, "Aren't you cold? We aren't teenagers anymore, we can't keep dressing like that."

Santana scoffed, "How are we suppose to dress then? Like we have no fashion sense at all? We can't all be like you, Fabray."

"So sorry I can't go dressing like a hooker every time I go out," Quinn took another sip of her drink, "Even if I wanted to, I couldn't pull it off. My body isn't the same."

"What do you mean?" Santana scanned Quinn's outfit, "You're one of the hottest bitches I know. After myself of course."

"Don't flatter me, I know how I look," Quinn frowned, "I'm getting fat again."

"Not even!" Santana was starting to get riled up, "I'm not lying to you, Quinn. You're fucking hot."

Quinn blushed, "Thanks, San."

"I'm serious, Quinn," Santana said with determination, "What can I do to prove that I still think you're hot?"

Quinn squinted her eyes and tried to figure out if Santana had just said that she "still" thinks she's hot. The blonde looked down at her drink and rose her eyebrows, "I think I'm about drunk."

"Is there food places around here?"

"No Breadsticks," Quinn joked, "but yeah. I'll take you to one if you want."

Santana stood up and offered her hand, "Anywhere's cool, as long as you have no more alcohol."

Quinn grabbed her hand, but not before downing the rest of her drink while her eyes locked on Santana's.

"Nice one, Fabray," Santana commented as she pulled Quinn to her feet and back into the club.

In a few moments, they were out of the club and walking down the sidewalk hand in hand. Quinn thought about how Kitty was doing but the thought was soon forgotten once she almost tripped over air making the two of them start in a fit of giggles.

They walked for a while, talking about everything that they've missed with each other's lives and laughing at poorly said jokes that only the two of them could get.

Quinn stopped walking, making Santana's hand yank back, "What are you doing?"

"I'm stopping," Quinn announced and Santana laughed at the obvious, "I have to be honest, San."

"Hmm?" Santana walked closer to Quinn and swung their hands between the both of them.

"Don't be mad."

"Just spill it."

Quinn held in her laughter as she stepped closer to Santana, basically whispering in her ear, "I don't know where we are."

"Quinn!" Santana threw her head back in laughter, "Why didn't you tell me earlier?"

"I was having so much fun," Quinn looked down, "I didn't want the night to end just cause we're lost."

"It's okay, Q," Santana raised Quinn's chin to see her face.

Quinn stared at Santana, the woman's dark brown eyes almost too striking to look at in the moonlight. Quinn's eyes journeyed down Santana's face to stop at her luscious round lips, which were being involuntarily licked from the gaze. Quinn flicked her eyes back to the dark brown orbs, her heart beating too hard to hear anything.

Quinn then realized that she wanted to kiss her. She should probably ask first.

"San," Quinn started, her voice raspier than it was before they stopped talking, "I think I want to kiss you."

Santana's eyes went wide, "That's cool."

"Can I?" Quinn asked as she started to lean in.

As Quinn's lips ghosted over Santana's, the Latina whispered, "Yeah."

Then their lips surged and Quinn felt like she was going unconscious from the sheer force of the kiss.

A loud ringing in her ears made her eyes jump open as she realized that she had indeed went unconscious and was now laying, fully clothed, in her bed. She looked around; she was alone.

She sat up and held her head jarring as she reached over to shut off the alarm.

Quinn knew that she hadn't been dreaming, but she just couldn't remember what happened after that kiss.

Quinn cringed. She had kissed Santana Lopez. She cringed once more. She had kissed Santana Lopez *again*. Hopefully this time she didn't sleep with her.

"Mom!" A little voice practically screamed from downstairs. It was her daughter, Anna, and it was also 6:30 in the morning on a school day. She usually got up before the alarm to get dressed, make breakfast, and pack up a lunch for Anna. Now she's late and aching. Hopefully from just an hangover.

She crawled out of her bed and opened up the door to raise her voice, "I'll be down in twenty! Looks like your having cereal today!"

"Mom!" Anna whined and Quinn rolled her eyes.

She shut her door and groaned at the noise before making her way into the bathroom. One long shower later and she grumbled her way downstairs and started working on her kid's lunch.

Anna watched her mom as the woman raced around the kitchen and scooped a spoonful of cereal into her mouth, "What's wrong with you?"

Quinn didn't bother to look up as she tossed a sandwich into a lunch bag, "Nothing, Sweetie."

"You look tired," Anna took another bite.

"Don't talk with your mouth full," Quinn handed the girl her lunch and perked her ears at the sounds outside, "You're going to miss the bus."

Anna jumped from her chair and Quinn watched the girl gather her stuff and launch out the door, amazed on how grown up she was.

Quinn sighed and slumped over to the couch in the television room and looked up to the ceiling. She wasn't ever going to drink again.

The doorbell rang and Quinn groaned. It was probably Kitty, wondering why she had ditched her at the bar-club place. Quinn stood to her feet and tried to think of a decent excuse.

She opened the door and furrowed her brow, "Santana?"

"Don't look too surprised," Santana smiled from outside. She looked like she didn't even have one drink last night and Quinn wondered if maybe she was a light weight after all, "Are you going to let me in."

Quinn nodded her head and made room for the Latina to come in. She closed the door behind her and watched the Latina look around, "What are you doing here?"

"You're so welcoming," Santana walked further into the house.

Quinn rubbed at her eyes and followed behind, "How do you know where I live?"

"I took you home last night," Santana walked into the family room and went straight for the pictures set up, "You were trashed."

Quinn sighed, "How bad was I?"

"You don't remember?"

"No not really," Quinn sat down on the couch, "I probably wrote it down."

Santana looked over her shoulder, "You wrote it down?"

"Yeah I picked up a habit of writing down stuff on sticky notes when I'm too drunk," Quinn slumped down into the couch, "Picked it up in college. I think I read about it somewhere."

"Well, no need to look at your notes," Santana teased as she moved to sit next to the blonde, "You wouldn't want to know what happened."

"Was I that bad?" Quinn whined and Santana nodded her head. Quinn sat silently, trying to think of the last time she had gotten *that* drunk, before turning her head to Santana, "Why are you here?"

Santana shrugged, "I wanted to see if you wanted to do lunch."

"It's 7:30 in the morning."

"Breakfast?"

"Breakfast?"

Santana threw her hands in the air, "I just want to spend time with my best friend! Is that so bad?"

"I'm still your best friend?"

"Okay, forget it," Santana stood up but Quinn stopped her and sat her back down.

"We can spend the day together, I'm not doing anything so it's about perfect," Quinn leaned back into the couch, "But first a nap. I think I have a bit of a hangover."

"Get yourself an aspirin cause I'm not about to spend most of the day watching you nap," Santana stood up again, but this time bringing Quinn up with her.

The morning was spent with them nagging at each other because of Quinn's headache and Santana's intolerance of her attitude. Once the aspirin set in, it was much better and they spent the day talking and trying their best to catch up.

By middish day, they were in Quinn's room, Quinn sitting on the bed watching Santana root through and insult her closet.

Santana peaked her head to look at Quinn, "What time is it?"

Quinn checked her clock on her nightstand, "Half past three."

"Shouldn't Anna be home by now?"

Quinn smiled at the fact that Santana had remembered her name, "She likes to go over her friend's house after school. She's just across the street."

Santana walked out of the closet and sat on the bed next to Quinn, "That's okay?"

"She's really mature for her age. Also the school is only down the street and she walks home with a bunch of kids," Quinn criss-crossed her legs, "Plus, this is considered one of the nosiest neighborhoods in the city. So, eyes everywhere."

Santana smirked, "Why would you want to live in the nosiest town in the city?"

"It's helpful in some places," Quinn shrugged, "Are you going to tell me what happened last night?"

"Hell nope," Santana leaned back on her arm.

"I remember a few things," Quinn set her finger on her chin, "We drank a bit, we left, we kissed-"

"You remember that we kissed?"

"Unfortunately yes."

Santana smirked, "Selective memory you've got there, Fabray."

"Alcohol does that to you, Lopez."

"I just love how you can't remember anything but kissing me," Santana gave a smug look, "I must be that good."

"Once again, it was just the alcohol."

"Stop with the excuses and just admit it."

Quinn rolled her eyes, "Oh you wish."

"I do."

Quinn tilted her head, "Are you trying to flirt with me?"

"Barely."

"Well stop."

"Why?"

Quinn looked away, "I haven't heard from you in years and you randomly come to Connecticut to what? Get me drunk and make out with me? Is this some kind of poorly executed plan to get in my pants?"

Santana flinched, "You'd think that I would actually do that?"

Quinn shrugged so Santana leaned forward and whispered, "Not to hurt your ego or anything Quinn, but if I wanted to get into your pants I'm sure I wouldn't have to put that much effort into it, like making a plan. All this is a bit of flirting between two friends. It's not hurting anybody."

Quinn leaned closer to her and started to whisper also, "What's your angle?"

"Maybe I just wanted to kiss you again."

The door bell rang, making them jump apart. Quinn stood quickly and rushed downstairs. She opened the door and didn't have to think of a greeting as Kitty barged her way in.

"Where have you been?" Kitty folded her arms, "I haven't hear from you all day."

"I've been busy," Quinn lied.

"Busy doing what? You don't work!"

"I'm sure it's work being a stay at home mom," Santana said from in back of them, whom was now holding a chilled water bottle, "By the way, Fabray, where's all your good drinks?"

Kitty scrunched up her face and whispered to Quinn, "What is she doing here?"

"You remember Santana? Right, Kitty?" Quinn smiled.

Santana squinted her eyes, "Of course she remembers me."

"How can I forget," Kitty mumbled before looking back to Quinn, "What is she doing here?"

"Why does it matter?" Santana folded her arms.

"It doesn't, I'm just looking out for Quinn."

"What, are you her guardian or something?"

"Why does that matter?"

Quinn gave out a nervous laughter before they got too far into it. She didn't understand what was wrong with them, but she didn't like it, "You guys are ridiculous."

"You're right, Q," Santana walked to the door and sighed, "I'll leave before too 'crazy' in here."

Quinn stopped her, "You don't have to leave, San."

Santana smiled before pulling the door open, "See later, Q. You know, now that I know where you live and everything."

Santana walked out of the house and Quinn sighed.

She looked over to Kitty, whom had an eyebrow raised, "What was that all about?"

"What?" Quinn walked away to the kitchen.

Kitty followed behind, "Why was she here?"

Quinn shrugged, "Does it matter?"

"Now you sound like her!"

Quinn smirked and looked in her fridge, realizing that they only had water as a beverage. If you don't count the milk of course.

"I don't know what's happening here, but it needs to stop."

Quinn turned to look at her, "What are you talking about? Santana's just visiting."

"I know you've had a crush on her since like forever."

Quinn swallowed and turned back to the fridge, "I think I might need to go to the store. For food. And things. Maybe tomorrow."

"Actually, I can't remember," Kitty sat at the island in the middle of the kitchen, "Did you have a crush on Santana or was it that Rachel chick?"

Quinn closed the fridge door and turned on to the other woman, "Seriously? Neither. They're my friends. There was no crushes."

"Sure," Kitty rolled her eyes.

"Look," Quinn sat on the chair next to Kitty's, "Santana and I were and are just friends. It's been that way ever since I can remember. Now stop."

"But-"

"But stop," Quinn put up her hand, making the younger woman sigh.

"Fine, whatever. Just know that her coming here is basically asking for the whole neighborhood to be in your business."

"And why is that?"

Kitty took a look around, like anyone was watching before whispering, "When's the last time you've had a non-neighbor come out of your house."

Quinn blew out some air and sat back in her seat, "It's been a while."

"Exactly," Kitty clicked her tongue, "People will start asking questions, like about who that was or about your sexuality-"

"Why would they ask about my sexuality?"

"Well, I mean, come on," Kitty gestured her hands around.

"Well I hope they would have the decency to mind their own."

"They might, but let's just say that you and Santana are having like a crazy affair thing-"

"Which we're not," Quinn interjected, "because she's only been here for like a day and how would it be an affair anyways?"

"Don't interrupt," Kitty put out a finger, "Let's just say you are. Would you be ready for that type of thing?"

"A relationship with a woman?"

Kitty huffed, "A relationship in total."

Quinn bit her lip and turned away. Of course she was ready for a relationship. She's been divorced for two years now and she had come to terms with her bisexuality right after college. She was more than ready, even for a potential relationship with Santana. If there even is one.

She squinted her eyes at the other blonde, "I see what you're doing."

Kitty smiled, "I'm not doing anything, Quinn."

"You're trying to make me talk about this like its happening though its not," Quinn pointed out of the room, "You can walk yourself out for that."

Kitty rolled her eyes and scooted out of her chair, "Whatever, Quinn. Just make sure you determine the relationship before the neighborhood starts talking."

Quinn rolled her eyes at her friend as the woman walked out of the room.

Quinn sat there for a while trying to figure out why now was a good time for her to have any feelings for Santana. What made right now seem so perfect?

She smiled, realizing the reason was because she was finally happy.

Then she frowned, realizing that she really needed to get to the store. Which didn't make her as happy.

Once at the grocery store, Quinn scanned the aisles, looking for a specific breakfast cereal that her daughter loved more than real food. She walked with a shopping kart in front of her, but stopped once she saw a familiar face.

It was Santana, scowling at items in front of her in aisle. Quinn smiled as she made her way over, stopping just a few feet from the woman, "What are you doing?"

Santana looked over, gave a small smile, before turning back to the items, "I just don't understand."

Quinn furrowed her brows and looked at what the Latina was glaring at, "What?"

"Does this store only carry water?" Santana picked up a bottle and examined it, "What kind of neighborhood is this?"

Quinn laughed, "This is the healthiest supermarket in the city. Self-proclaimed."

Santana placed the bottle to its previous spot, "Disgusting."

Quinn drummed her thumbs on shopping cart before blurting out whatever was on her mind, "I can buy you a soda. During dinner tonight. Or something."

Santana looked over to her, "Are you asking me out?"

Quinn nodded and Santana smirked before saying, "I would love to."

"Great," Quinn blushed but remembered something, "But first you have to find me this cereal thing that Anna likes."

"I don't think you'll find anything that a seven year-old would like in this place," Santana said as she started to push Quinn's cart for her.

Quinn followed with her hands behind her back, "You'd be surprised what a seven year-old would like."

Santana sighed, "You are right about that one, Fabray."

"Fun fact," Quinn poked the woman's side, "I missed you so much before Anna birth, that I actually named her after her Aunty Tana."

Santana smiled and looked down at the cart, "The lies you tell me."

They preceded to walk to the correct aisle, laughing at themselves and finding a cereal that, as Santana said, wasn't fit for anyone to eat.

I'm With Them, by ShadowKira

Note: (Glee x POI Crossover AU) Quinn and Root are not present in the preview but they will be in the story. Quinn will be the last character introduced. This is a preview and will be continued on <http://shadowkira.tumblr.com/tagged/Quinntana>.

"Good morning, thank you for showing up so promptly." Finch said, smiling as Reese and Shaw made their way into the room.

"No problem. Where's the fire, Harold?" Shaw asked, trying to get a look at the board behind him.

"We've got a new number... Santana Lopez. A prosecutor for the district attorney's office."

"Huh, wonder why her number came up?" Shaw asked sarcastically as she and Reese stopped a few feet behind the shorter man.

Harold shot her a look, clearing disapproving of her blasé comment.

"She's young, fairly new at her job but it appears that she's just landed a big case. One that more seasoned prosecutors would want to steer clear of... A young man was pulled in on an assault charge but it would seem his phone had some interesting information on it... It was actually a hit gone wrong. His Father is a drug lord and they're planning on using his slip up to not only arrest him but also his Father and their associates. "

"I'm guessing she views it as a great opportunity?" Reese asked, meeting Finch's gaze.

"It would seem so. She's been quite vocal about refusing any form of protective detail, although... By the looks of it, she's quite vocal about *everything*."

"Fantastic..." Shaw muttered, rolling her eyes.

"I do hope you can get used to it quickly, Miss Shaw."

"...Why's that, Harold?" The woman asked shooting him a glare and arching her brow.

"Head to this address, and you'll see." He said, a small nervous smile appearing on his lips as he handed her a slip of paper.

"You have got to be kidding me." Shaw growled through her teeth, staring at the U-Haul in front of Santana's building.

"You will be Miss Lopez's new neighbor, Carmen Morales."

"You do remember that I am Persian, right?" Shaw asked as she slid out of the car she and Reese had pulled up in.

"Yes, I am well aware... But you handled quite a few impressive undercover missions with your previous employers, or so your file says. I think you can make it work, Miss Shaw."

"Harold is right, don't sell yourself short." Reese said, a smile pulling at his lips.

She shot him a glare before the two of them crossed the street and approached the U-Haul, opening up the back so that they could finish their conversation in private.

"Half of the larger furniture has been delivered already... But for appearances sake I figured that you would want to take some of it up yourselves."

"Gee, how thoughtful of you."

"I've also made a selection of clothing in your size that is already stashed away in your new dresser, Miss Shaw. And, there is an outfit already laid out for you to change into for today, I do hope that you like it."

Although she was still scowling, the woman managed a shrug, "It looks comfortable."

"Yeah, I know. It's amazing!" Santana agreed, smiling as she listened to Brittany talk excitedly on the other end of the line. As much as she wanted to continue listen to the blonde talk about the subject at hand, a noise out in her hallway distracted her.

Rising from her couch, Santana made her way across the living room of her condo and toward the door. She rolled up onto the balls of her feet and closed one eye to peer out of her peep hole.

"Hey Britt, I'm going to have to call you back... Yeah, everything's alright. But it looks like I'll finally get to meet my new neighbors..." Although Brittany didn't seem too enthusiastic, Santana ended the call. She wasn't one to be shy, so she immediately opened her door smiling toward the man and woman in the hallway.

"Hello."

The woman looked up, she had been mumbling something to the man but the other brunette hadn't been able to make it out. "Oh, uh, hey!"

"So, you're the mysterious owner of the furniture that was delivered the other day." Santana asked, arching a brow but keeping her smile in place.

"I am." The other woman said, immediately setting down the love seat that she and her companion had been trying to fit through the doorway.

The man grunted and sat his end down as well, frowning slightly at the fact that she hadn't given him any form of warning. "Name's Carmen Morales, nice to meet you."

Santana narrowed her eyes and cocked her head to the side slightly. "I think I like you already. Name's Santana Lopez, I'm right next door if you need anything... Although I'll admit now that moving furniture isn't my area of expertise."

She gave them a small wave and smile before ducking back into her apartment. Within seconds of her disappearing, Shaw was connecting to Finch. "What was *that* all about?"

"I may or may not have modeled your alias after a fictional character."

Reese chuckled nearby and Shaw shot him a glare, "What?"

"You don't know Carmen from the L Word?"

"...The L Word? *You've* seen the L Word?"

"It's a good show, what can I say." The man said with a shrug, ignoring the way that Shaw was looking at him incredulously.

"So you named me after a fictional lesbian?"

"Yes, I did. Miss Lopez shares Carmen's romantic taste for women..."

"So, you're using me as *bait*? To make her feel more comfortable for when we have to make our move?" Shaw hissed quietly, shooting Reese a warning glare for him to remain silent as they went back to moving the love seat.

"That's the idea, Miss Shaw." Harold replied, a smile in his tone.

And One More Makes Fifty (2), by solvethebomb

Quinn's P.O.V

I miss her so much it hurts.

Some days I can move, function, really *live*, as if she isn't elsewhere. Other days it feels like every breath, every moment is weighed down by the sheer magnitude of her absence.

I wait, but waiting doesn't seem like the right description. Waiting implies that I know the outcome, that a certain eventuality will inevitably be realized. But I *don't* know. I don't know where she is, I don't know how she is, I don't know if...when...I don't know *when* she'll be back.

I got an email, as she promised, when she arrived in Kuwait. It was simple and to the point. She was safe. She loved me. She'd call me when she got to her base in Afghanistan. And yet...

That was a month and a half ago. I haven't heard a word from her, and it is tearing me to pieces. If something, God I can't even think it, but if something *happened* I'm not sure how I'd find out. Since we're not married, her parents would be notified, not me. I've never actually spoken to Santana's parents. I'm not sure if they'd even know how to reach me. I want to be confident that she planned for the possibilities, but I also don't want to believe that she even considered not coming home a possibility.

It's so much harder than I ever really thought it would be to be in love with someone who does what Santana does. Loving her is the easiest thing I've ever done. Dealing with her deployment is the hardest. It's a painful, heart-wrenching dichotomy. She loves her job, I know she does, but how many more times will I send her off to some foreign place to fight an invisible war? What if we decide to have children? I'm selfish enough to want her home with me even though I know that her particular set of skills are rare and important.

My mother has listened to me cry so many times that I feel like I can't call her again for a while. I know she wants to be there for me, but I've asked her and my sister to bear a load that I can't really share. There is nothing they can say or do, no number of times I could cry to them, no solution to be worked out that would fix this endless ache. Only my love, only one amazing, beautiful girl can fix this.

Every phone call, every e-mail, every facebook message...every single notification I get that someone is trying to reach me, I pray it's her. It will be, eventually. It has to be.

Santana likes to say "ruck up and shut up," whenever she talks about Soldiers whining, so that's what I'm trying to do. I know she wouldn't want me to mope around. She has told me more than once that I'm stronger than I give myself credit for. I hope she's right. I want to prove her right. But damned if I don't feel like I'm crumbling.

I miss her so damn much it hurts.

Santana is lying next to me, but I know it's a dream. I see her every night lately. She's rarely ever this close to me though. Usually she's just out of reach, walking ahead of me and I can't catch up to her.

She's looking at me steadily, but suddenly sits up. I'm trying to follow her as she leaves the room. I think she's trying to answer the phone. It's ringing, somewhere. She's frantic, trying to get it before the ringing stops.

Ringing. It's ringing.

Shitmyfuckingphoneisringing.

I shoot up and snatch my phone from the charger, accepting the call immediately without looking at the number.

"Hello?"

Silence, then a garbled sound.

"Hello? Santana?"

"Qui-"

It's her! She's alive! I can barely hear her, but she's alive and I'm crying and oh my God she's on the phone.

"I'm here, baby, I'm here. Can you hear me?" I tell her, desperate to hear more from her.

"I hear you," she says, sounding far away and underwater, "I'm on a sat...ite...one...on't...uch time."

I'm on a satellite phone, don't have much time.

"Okay, babe. Are you okay? I love you." I'm just rushing words out, hoping she can understand me better than I understand her.

I bite my lip during the long pause that follows.

"I'm okay," she sounds clear as a bell suddenly and I nearly squeal with joy. There's a long delay, but she's talking to me. "We lost everything. All of our internet capabilities were lost in a rocket attack. I'm so sorry Quinn. I love you too."

"It's okay, babe. I'm just so glad you're alright." My voice wavers from the crying, and I can actually feel the snot rolling out of my nose, but I couldn't give a fuck less. *She's okay.*

"I'm doing good, just miss you so much. I sent you a letter, snail mail style. Hopefully it gets there soon. Look, baby, I have to pass the phone on. Everyone needs to call their people and we've only got two phones. I love you so much though. I'll try to call again soon, and I'll write you, I promise."

No, don't go. I want to cry in her ear and beg her not to go, but I can't. She needs me to be tougher than that.

"Alright, baby. I love you so fucking much, Santana. I *miss* you," I say with as much strength as I can muster.

"I miss and love you too, Quinn. Bye honey."

"Bye."

I bury my face in my hands and weep, torn between joy that she's okay and I heard her voice, and a desperate sadness that she had to go so soon. I cry and laugh at times, because at this point there are too many emotions for one person to know what to do with.

She's alive and she called me.

I miss her so goddamn much it hurts.

The letter comes two days later. I tear it open with the excitement of a five year old on Christmas morning, thrilled to be holding something that she had in her hands. My eyes tear when I see the distinctive all caps handwriting that I know so well. Santana told me once that she filled out so much paperwork in the Army that she just gave up using lowercase letters entirely.

DEAR QUINN,

HOW WEIRD IS THIS? AN ACTUAL LETTER! I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THIS WILL TAKE TO REACH YOU, BUT I HOPE I'LL GET TO CALL BEFORE IT DOES. LITERALLY THE DAY I GOT BACK WE TOOK A LOT OF ROCKET FIRE, IT WAS CRAZY. THEY TOOK OUT OUR INTERNET, ALL OF IT. I THINK WE MIGHT HAVE OUR SECRET NETWORK UP AGAIN, BUT I CAN'T USE THAT TO CALL YOU. I'M SO SORRY IF YOU'VE BEEN WORRIED.

I'M NOT SURE IF THEY ARE GOING TO PUT THE CIVILIAN INTERNET BACK UP AT ALL. WE'RE GETTING READY TO TEAR DOWN THIS COMBAT OUT POST ANYWAY, SO THEY MIGHT NOT. I HOPE THEY TEAR THIS DUMP DOWN SOONER RATHER THAN LATER SO WE CAN MOVE TO A BIGGER PLACE WITH MORE STUFF. THERE IS A FORWARD OPERATING BASE IN ANOTHER AREA OF OPERATIONS WITH A COFFEE BEAN AND A REAL CHOW HALL! IF I MOVED THERE I'D PROBABLY BE ABLE TO CALL YOU ALL THE TIME, BUT I'M TRYING NOT TO GET MY HOPES UP TOO MUCH. IT'S EASIER TO DEAL WHEN YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE IN A SHITHOLE DUMP AND THEY SURPRISE YOU WITH SOMETHING NICER, RATHER THAN HOPE FOR SOMETHING GOOD AND BE DISAPPOINTED. THE ARMY HAS A MAGICAL WAY OF SCREWING YOU HARDER THAN YOU'VE EVER BEEN SCREWED, SO MINIMAL EXPECTATION IS FOR THE BEST. SORRY IF THAT SOUNDS NEGATIVE, IT JUST REALLY SUCKS OUT HERE WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO TALK TO YOU.

HOW ARE THINGS BACK HOME? SAY HI TO YOUR FAMILY FOR ME. ACTUALLY, THAT REMINDS ME, I SAW MY DAD ON MY WAY THROUGH BAGRAM AIRFIELD. HE'S LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING YOU. I SHOWED HIM YOUR PICTURE AND HE ASKED ME IF

YOU'RE A MODEL OR AN ACTRESS OR SOMETHING. IMAGINE THAT, SOMEONE ELSE THINKS YOU ARE TOO GORGEOUS FOR REAL LIFE...

ANYWAY, I MISS YOU SO MUCH, QUINN. I THINK ABOUT YOU EVERY SINGLE DAY. I HOPE YOU ARE DOING ALRIGHT. BE BRAVE FOR ME, BEAUTIFUL.

ALL MY LOVE-
SANTANA

I read the letter over and over again, until I've memorized most of it. I find myself tracing her blocky handwriting with my finger, imagining her huddled in an armored truck or somewhere on the side of a mountain, writing to me. I've seen pictures of her from other deployments and from the beginning of this one, so I see her pretty clearly in my mind's eye—

Her uniform is faded from the sun and the dirt permanently rubbed into it. She's wearing her helmet, which she tells me they call a Kevlar after the stuff it's made of. She's got body armor on, with all sorts of stuff attached to it. Santana pointed out to me what all of it is, but I don't remember what each thing is called. (I just remember the magazines, because I thought that was a weird thing to be carrying, until she explained that a "magazine" in the military is what holds their bullets, not something they read.) She's wearing gloves. In every picture I see, she's got tan gloves on. Oakley sunglasses, which she tells me are capable of saving someone's eyesight in a blast. I thought that was impressive. Finally, I see Santana's face. Her face is tanned and dirty, and she wears this indescribable half smile. It's the kind of smile that indicates someone who is completely at ease in their world.

Santana is the most badass human being I can imagine, but she doesn't seem to think anything of it. Sometimes it's hard, when people ask about her, not to brag. This is a woman who has voluntarily put herself on the front lines of the fight, rather than do some administrative job or stay on the base. She is so selfless and brave, it's actually kind of terrifying. I know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Santana will risk her life for other Soldiers. It's basically what she does on a daily basis.

Sometimes I have to remind myself of what she's doing when I start to feel sorry for myself. It sucks so bad to miss her so much, but she misses me just as much. And on top of that she has to deal with rocket attacks and firefights and IEDs and God only knows what else. Santana is my hero, bottom line.

I sit down and write a long letter back to her, carefully transcribing her address onto the back of the envelope when I'm done. It's crazy to think that in this world of interconnectivity and instantaneous communication, we've been reduced to writing letters as our only real means of speaking. I'm okay with that, as long as Santana is always on the other end.

I miss her so fucking much it hurts.

Santana's P.O.V

"Puckerman, get your fucking ass down! What the fuck are you trying to do? Keep your head down."

I'm tired, so fucking tired.

"Oh I'm sorry, I thought you wanted some more magazines. I could just take these to someone else though, if you don't need bullets to kill the bad guys."

"Don't be a fucking smartass. Give me four. Put the others right here behind this rock so we can reload faster."

"Think we'll get another wave?"

I glare at this idiot for a minute before I get my sharp tongue under control.

"Yeah man, we're going to get more. They're calling in the birds but...I don't know, the choppers are coming from a ways off and won't have long overhead before they have to refuel. I just want to make sure we get the wounded out."

"Shit."

Yeah, shit is right. This fucking deployment sucks. Everything about it has just been worse than any other I've been through. It's manageable, like all things are, but at every single turn there is a setback. This firefight has been going on for three hours. It doesn't seem like we can knock enough of these assholes down to stop them from coming again, and they will kill every last person in the village to our south if we can't fight them off. The Taliban doesn't take kindly to Afghans who are friendly to US forces. They don't actually take kindly to anyone who won't cower beneath their heel.

I hear the distinctive snap of a bullet flying over my head and I know it's back on. One by one the guns on our end begin to return fire.

Puckerman and I have a good position, looking down the mountain, protecting the flank. Normally I'd be somewhere in the middle of our defensive circle, guiding in the medical evacuation birds or waiting for someone to need me, but this fight is a shit mess, and we need every weapon we can use.

There's movement below us and I recognize the telltale pop of a grenade nearby. I return fire first, carefully squeezing the trigger so as not to waste our dwindling ammunition.

9...10...11, 12...13...

I count each round in my head so that I won't go empty unexpectedly. Puckerman takes over while I slouch down and unhook my pistol, just in case.

There's a snap against the rock above my head and pieces of shale rain down on me. Instead of popping back up where I was, I roll left and fire a heavy volley down the mountain to get those bastards to duck.

14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20...21, 22...23, 24...25, 26...

"I need to reload," I shout at Puck and pops back up to take over for me.

27, 28, 29, 30

I roll back over and change my magazines as fast as I can.

1, 2...3, 4...

"MEDIC!" Someone is screaming behind me. "MEDIC!"

I look at Puck for a second.

"GO Lopez! I'm good here. GO!"

FUCK.

I snatch up my aid bag and sprint, keeping my body as low as possible. The trees around me are splintering from bullets hitting them, but I don't stop. I shouldn't be able to move this fast. My legs should be quitting, my lungs should be screaming, but I can't feel anything. I run to the sound of the yelling and drop to my knees next to a scared sergeant who is bleeding profusely from his leg. I know him. Evans. *Fuck.*

I push my hands as hard as I can against his wound and look him in the eye.

"Listen to me. I need you to start talking to me. Name, rank, last 4, blood type. Keep telling me while I work on you so that I don't forget."

All of the things I just asked him to repeat over and over are actually sewn on to his helmet, I just need him focused on something other than the fact that at this particular moment he is bleeding out. He starts rattling off this meaningless information while I assess his wounds.

Entry, exit. The exit is nasty, too. Bigger than the entry. I have to tourniquet him, as much as I don't want to risk having this kid lose his leg, his femoral is nicked and I have no choice.

I quickly apply pressure dressings first, to cover his open wounds and hopefully prevent all sorts of nastiness from getting in there. Then I grab the tourniquet off of his kit.

"Sergeant Evans, Samuel. 8170. A-positive. Sergeant Evans, Sam...hey, is that my tourniquet?"

I ignore him as I slide it up his leg, a few inches over the wound. If we don't get him out of here quickly he'll lose his entire left leg. He screams as I ratchet it down tightly. I look up to see where I can move him that is safer.

"Am I going to lose my leg?"

I see a spot, up a little ways that has better cover, but it's going to suck to get him up there. I reach down and unhook the dead weight on his kit, instead snapping it onto mine.

"Seriously, Doc, am I going to lose my leg?"

I pause for a fraction of a second and look him in the eye.

"No."

I'm back to work, putting a splint under his leg and tying it down, too. Bark rains down on us as the tree next to us takes a bunch of rounds.

I swing my weapon up and begin firing on the muzzle flashes I can see as I position myself between Evans and the incoming gunfire.

5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

My thumb clicks the safety on my rifle and my rounds start coming out in threes.

11, 14, 17, 20, 23

I pause for a second, still knelt down. I don't know if I've killed any of them or all of them, all I know is that we need to move.

I turn and grab Evans' body armor by the shoulder, hoisting him cleanly to a sitting position. He seems to recognize my urgency and does all he can to help me pull him up. He's over my shoulder in a second and I grab his rifle as I stand up and start running as hard as my legs will carry me.

30 meters.

Fuck.

25 meters.

FUCK.

The crescendo of gunfire is mind blowing.

15 meters.

Four Soldiers appear before me and sprint past us, laying an unholy amount of gunfire down the mountain. I trudge the last few meters and drop Evans as carefully as humanly possible behind a huge rock.

"How are we doing, Sam?"

He's wide eyed and clearly overwhelmed, but he cracks a smile with his abnormally large mouth, his fishy lips cracked from the sun.

"Alright, alright, alright," he says in a Matthew McConaughey voice.

I shake my head and start laughing hard. It wouldn't even be that funny, except that this jackass is *shot through the leg* and still doing impressions. I laugh the entire time I'm hooking him up to an IV to keep his blood pressure up.

My laughter ceases as soon as I hear the beautiful sound of rotary wings above my head. The cavalry has arrived. Now that I have a minute I unsnap the stretcher that's folded down in my aid bag and get some of the guys that ran past us with guns blazing to help me carry him to the makeshift landing zone.

We guide the helicopters down and then run forward carrying Evans on the stretcher, the wind from the blades whipping us in the face. He grabs my hand after I hand off his IV to the flight medic, nodding a thank you. I give him a short nod and run away from the chopper so that it can go.

Before it can take off four guys run up with a bodybag and load it inside as well, right next to Evans. I'm pissed at first, because it's fucked up to put a dead guy next to a guy that's still fighting, but I know in my heart that the most important thing is that everybody, dead or alive, gets off this mountain.

I turn to the team of guys that were carrying the body when they run back to where we are.

"Who was the KIA?" I ask.

"Specialist Puckerman."

I nod, fighting the urge to scream, or cry, or fall to my knees and do both.

"I'm sorry, brother," I whisper as I watch the helicopters fly off.

My bags are packed. Most of our shit has already been sent back to the States in containers. We only have about three weeks left in this shithole country and then we'll be flying home.

I've never been more scared in my life.

It's the weirdest thing in the world, but I'm terrified. I do fine outside of the gates. I can do my job, I can deal with gunfire, I'm never really afraid out there.

But in here...it's fucking awful. There's no control. I don't live or die based on how well I handle my weapon, or how well my brothers do their jobs. I live or die based on a math equation that varies every single time a rocket is fired. Trajectory, speed, angle. All unknowns. A problem cannot be solved with all unknown factors. I have a stupid Mean Girls quote stuck in my head all the time.

"The limit does not exist."

I don't know why I can't stop thinking about it. Maybe because it pisses me off that the answer to the problem is a non-answer. I just keep living. I go to the gym, I eat in our mess tent, I walk to the shower trailers, and I sleep in a fucking plywood building. Any moment, any day, any hour, those assholes could launch a lucky ass rocket that just happens to land on my forehead, or at least close enough that my body is destroyed by the blast or fragmentation. It's a total crapshoot.

What's crazy is that this has been true literally the entire time I've lived here, and yet it only bothers me now. We're so damn close to going home. I'm so damn close to holding Quinn, to kissing her, that it feels like an impossibility. Like there has to be *something* that prevents me from reaching her.

It's fucking terrifying.

I miss Quinn.

Quinn's P.O.V.

Any day now, she'll be home.

The dates keep changing, but any day I'll get the call saying what time she'll be on the ground. I'm so excited it's hard to function at work. It's pretty hard to function at all, actually.

My phone is buzzing in my pocket, so I excuse myself from lunch with my coworkers to answer it.

"Hello?"

"Hi! This is Debbie Anderson from the Family Readiness Group. Is this Quinn Fabray?"

"Yes, this is she."

"Great! You are listed as the contact for Staff Sergeant Santana Lopez with 146th Medical Detachment, and I'm calling to inform you that her unit will be arriving back at Fort Stewart at 2300 tonight."

"2300?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, military wife, military time. That's 11 o'clock pm."

"So Santana will be home at 11 pm...*tonight?*"

"That's correct, dear."

"Great! Thank you! Thank you so much!"

"You're welcome, bye now."

I end the call and return to my coworkers, a broad grin on my face.

Tommy, a handsome guy whose exact job I can never seem to remember, notices me first.

"What's got you so excited? Find out when Santana's coming home?" he asks playfully. My entire office is well aware of my fiancée's impending return from Afghanistan.

I bite my lip and nod.

"So?" All eyes are on me.

"Tonight! She'll be home tonight!"

I'm waiting, impatiently. It's almost midnight, and we've been informed that the flight has landed, but that our Soldiers are in-processing.

An older guy who looks vaguely important steps up to a microphone.

"Good evening, I am Colonel Hall, and I'd like to welcome you all to the welcome home ceremony for 146th Medical Detachment. Your Soldiers will march in shortly, we'll say a few words, and then they'll be released to be with you again. I recognize that I'm the only thing standing in the way of a lot of long awaited reunions, so I promise to keep it short."

Some music starts up and all eyes turn to the entrance as a bunch of travel weary Soldiers march in smartly. They look exhausted, but they move in perfect synchronization.

My gaze travels from face to face until I see her and my heart stops. She stands stiffly at attention, her eyes straight forward until seemingly by magic they slide directly to mine. She winks and then looks straight ahead again.

I can't even hear what the old guy is saying. I'm just plotting routes to get to my fiancée as quickly as possible.

"...so without further ado. Company! Attention! Fall out!"

I'm on my feet and weaving between couples and families reuniting, heading in the general direction of where she was standing. All at once I see her, smiling, waiting for me exactly where I saw her.

I jog the last few steps and jump into her arms, wrapping my legs around her waist and kissing her soundly. She smiles into the kiss, and it's just...*everything*.

She's kissing me. She's home. *Hallelujah*.

I put my feet on the ground again and just hold her close to me. She feels so tiny, thinner than when I last saw her. Her slight frame is shaking.

I've never seen Santana cry before.

"I love you so much, baby," I murmur into her ear, "welcome back."

"I love you too. God, I love you. I love you, I love you, I love you," she whispers back.

—

Santana's P.O.V.

Quinn is flushed, her breath comes out in quick, shallow pants. We're both moving slowly, our fingers buried deeply inside of one another. I lean forward and kiss her, my stomach clenching yet again when I realize I can still taste myself on her tongue. Quinn has a brilliantly talented mouth. Not long ago she had her lips wrapped around my clit and two fingers inside of me, making my body arch with the light suction she applied until I finally came, my mind instantly blanking from the intensity of my orgasm. It's amazing really that I can even handle her touching me again, but she is positioning her hand so as to carefully avoid stimulating my clit and her fingertips keep grazing over the spot inside of me that steals my breath.

The intimacy of this moment is overwhelming. Quinn is all I can see or feel, and I'm grateful, so very grateful, that she is such an amazing, strong woman. She stands by me even as I struggle

to be the person I was before Afghanistan. I wish I knew how to tell her. Instead, I use these moments to try desperately to show her what she means to me, how much I love her, that I need her more than anything else on earth.

We move in rhythm, my left hand in her and her right in me. The pace is picked up wordlessly, and we cant our hips to meet each other's thrusts. Quinn holds my eyes with her own until neither of us can keep our eyes open anymore. I have to show her what I can't say.

Our orgasms come in quick succession, and I keep my hand in place as I feel the pulsing inside of my lover slow and weaken until it stops. I sigh when I feel her fingers slip out of me, and I reluctantly follow suit. My eyes open then, and I find Quinn looking at me with an adoration and concern that threaten to stop my heart. She cups my face with her left hand and brings her mouth to mine, gently caressing my lips with hers.

She knows. She knows that everything inside of me is wrong, even though I try to hide it from her. She knows that I'm trying. She knows that I love her more than my own life.

Quinn pulls me close to her and brings my head to her chest. I can hear her heart, erratically thumping away. For a second I imagine what she must feel in these moments. Does she feel like this is the only time I'm me? Does she let go of it all and just let herself feel my love? Does she miss the person I used to be? I stop thinking about it, because I know she must miss that version of me. Hell, *I* miss that version of me.

The guilt. Always the guilt. I'm fighting it, because I'm still here in my moment with the love of my life, but soon the guilt will crush me once more until I go numb. I bite my lip to push back the tears that threaten whenever I let myself feel things.

I'm sorry, Quinn. I'm trying. I promise.

Quinn's P.O.V.

Santana has been back in the States for just over 90 days. The Army tracks that, they count up the months you've been home so that they know when they can send you back. It's called "dwell time" and Santana officially has three months of it. After twelve they can send her back without any waivers. Anything sooner and she has to voluntarily waive her dwell time to be able to go.

I'm afraid she'll go back. I'm afraid she'll volunteer, because sometimes being overseas is easier than dealing with being home. I can see her struggling, I can feel her confusion and her sadness and her depression. It didn't happen right away, but this change has slowly crept into my fiancée's eyes, a change that I cannot understand or chase away for long. I know she doesn't want me to see it, and I know she's angry at herself for feeling it, but it's there and it's scary.

Sometimes I think back to when I met Santana, how her vivacious personality and subdued confidence drew me to her. She has such expressive, warm eyes, and they shone with playful

mirth as we flirted with one another. I so miss that girl, she seemed so sure of herself and her place in this world. It pains my heart to see the light dimmed in those beautiful brown eyes.

The first three weeks she was home were a blur of kisses, sex, take out dinners, long showers...really whatever it took to stay as close as possible to each other. Santana kept her hand firmly entwined with mine whenever she could. She would smile randomly at me, as if just looking at me made her happy. When I ran out of vacation days and had to head back to Jacksonville, Santana pulled me tightly to her and whispered, "Stay. I'll take care of you. Just please stay."

So I went home and gave my two weeks notice, then I moved up to Savannah to live with my future wife as soon as it was up. Even then, I didn't see it right away, the change. It took another week before I saw the first sign that the love of my life was in the midst of an internal battle that I couldn't possibly understand.

It was innocuous enough, that first sign. I reasoned it away easily, because that's what you do when the strongest woman you know promises that she's fine, that it was just a bad moment. Somewhere inside though, I think I knew. Watching Santana's knuckles turn white with the intensity of her grip on the shopping cart, the way her neck flushed and sweat beaded on her forehead, I could literally see her fighting against the discomfort that was overtaking her. When we got to her truck I asked if she was okay, and Santana explained that the crowd made her feel claustrophobic. She smiled at me and gave me a kiss, reassuring me that her reaction was pretty normal for someone who just came back from Afghanistan, and that it would pass with a little bit of time.

Less than a week later I woke up to Santana sobbing into her pillow. I was shocked, if not a little bit horrified. I asked, then begged, her to tell me what was wrong but she just shook her head and buried her face in my neck. She cried until she fell asleep, but didn't acknowledge that anything was amiss the next morning, simply telling me it was "just a rough night." Her dismissive shrug essentially told me that she had said everything she was going to say. It was the last time Santana stayed in bed for the entire night. That was when I started to really look. And once I did that, I finally began to see.

Decisions seem harder for my usually decisive other half, as if the sheer number of options are overwhelming for her. Suddenly I find her looking to me for final input on everything, small or big. Santana hasn't gotten any better dealing with crowds either, she tenses up if anyone unfamiliar encroaches on her personal space, as if her fight or flight instincts have gone into overdrive. She's exceedingly uncomfortable if she doesn't have either an escape route nearby or a weapon handy. Santana has a concealed carry permit, which has been a blessing in a way because we'd never leave the house if she couldn't carry a gun. When we first met she'd usually just have one in her truck, but now it's almost always in a holster somewhere on her body. This particular change we *have* discussed, because my fiancée insisted that I learn how to safely handle each of the guns she owns once I moved in with her. Only recently have I even thought to worry about Santana's access to guns in combination with her depression. I don't *think* she is suicidal, but now that the fear has crept up on me I feel like I'm always on edge. I check and re-check that

the guns are in their normal places, and I watch San like a hawk whenever she starts drinking. It's stressful, but actually not even what I worry about most really.

Santana doesn't sleep. She thinks I don't know that, but I started setting alarms in the night to check on her. Or I'll pretend to be asleep and see how long it takes Santana to leave our bed. She always does eventually. Sometimes she goes to the living room and watches TV. Sometimes she gets dressed and goes running. More often than not I find her with the TV on mute, writing in a notebook with an array of empty bottles in front of her. I haven't said anything, but the words sit on the tip of my tongue every time I look into her tired eyes or find her napping fitfully when the exhaustion finally overtakes her.

Just as sleep has slipped away from her, she has begun to slip away from me. She tries, God she's trying so fucking hard, but her absence has become more pronounced with each passing day. The only time it feels like she is really with me is when we're making love. It's then that she looks into my eyes, that she lets me see her, that she seems to beat the darkness inside of her. I'm afraid that this last reprieve will slip away as the silence overtakes our home. Talking to Santana is...difficult. She gives me her opinion on wedding stuff, she answers every question I ask about work, she updates me on the recovery of one of the Soldiers whose life she saved. Santana answers me, but her voice is empty and flat. We don't talk about the change. I tried once or twice, but she refused outright, insisting she is fine.

Even still, up until the last week or so, we have managed. I know that San loves me, I can feel it in her touch, and I can see it in the private war she's fighting. She wants to protect me from herself, from whatever is happening inside of her. But now...we're at a precipice. Something has to change or we're both going to fall over the edge and lose everything. Up until now I've generally ignored the drinking, justified the sixth and seventh beers or the fourth glass of wine, accepted that this was something Santana needed to feel better, and honestly, after a few drinks she was more herself, so I let her be.

Watching her now, opening yet another beer despite the fact that she is swaying on her feet and her eyes are glazed over, it's impossible to ignore the fact that this is only getting worse. She smiles at me as she pops the top and tosses it on the coffee table. She drops heavily on the couch next to me and leans on my shoulder, snuggling close to me. I put my arm over her shoulder, but keep my eyes trained on the book that I haven't read a word of because I've been surreptitiously watching Santana get drunk alone. She opened the first bottle within 3 minutes of walking in the front door from work, not even pausing to take off her boots. Since then, she has not gone more than a minute or two without a drink in her hand, even taking a fresh beer with her into the shower.

"You're awfully quiet tonight, beautiful," she says with just a slight hint of a slur. The fact that she can still speak even remotely clearly is almost the most disturbing thing about this picture. She has had at least seven beers already, maybe eight. For someone her size, she should be completely wrecked. Her tolerance for alcohol is scary, especially considering she just spent a year essentially dry.

How have I ignored this for so long?

"Am I? Sorry, honey, I've just been thinking," I reply lightly. I don't want to fight with her, I hate that I already know she's going to be defensive and angry if I say anything.

"Thinking? 'Bout what?"

I sigh and put my book down. I know she only sounds sober. Now is not the time to start this discussion, but I fail to keep the sadness out of my voice when I answer her.

"Nothing, babe. Let's talk about it tomorrow."

Santana is quiet at first, then sits up and turns to look at me, her eyes narrowed. "If it's 'nothing' then why do we need to talk about it tomorrow?"

I can see in a glance that her body has tensed up and she is looking at me with a mixture of apprehension and accusation. My silence in response doesn't help, and her chest seems to be heaving from the force of her breathing. We look at each other for a long moment before she looks away, and I know she knows what's on my mind.

"Quinn, I'm *fine*, okay? I just need a little bit of time to get my feet back under me, that's all. You don't need to worry."

My eyes close at her insistence that she is fine. She isn't fine. We aren't fine. *THIS* isn't fine. When I finally look at her again, the full weight of my helplessness falls on my shoulders and I fight to keep tears from falling.

"You're not fine, San. You are struggling with something, something really big, but I can't help you if you won't talk to me, baby. I really want to understand, I really want to be there for you." The words tumble out of my mouth as if I can no longer hold them back. I'm trying hard to be calm, but I feel so scared inside.

Santana's mouth opens and then closes, her jaw clenching as she looks up at the ceiling. Her voice is a whisper when she finally speaks. "There are some things that can't really be explained. I can't explain this. But I'm okay, really I am. I just need time."

For a moment I feel hopeful that she's going to acknowledge that this is happening, but once again she returns to the mantra that she's 'okay.' All at once I decide that I can't let this go another minute. I lean forward and take her beer from her hands, placing it on a coaster before taking her hands in mine. My gaze stays fixed on our joined hands until another wave of courage hits me and I look at my favorite face in the world.

"Santana, listen to me. You aren't okay. I'm not okay, either. Baby, *we are not okay*. We're surviving, not living. And I know, God I know, that you are trying so hard, I see that you are trying, but we're drowning. We're drowning in alcohol and depression and silence. I need you to talk to me. I'm begging you, please, just talk to someone about what's going on with you."

Dark brown eyes study me for a long moment, holding my eyes as a slender tan hand reaches out and picks up the beer on the coffee table. Santana's eyes glint with defiance as she takes a long sip from her drink and then stands up. She looks down at me and then turns to walk away,

disappearing into the kitchen without a word. Any other night and I would let it go, but not tonight. I'm tired. I'm done pretending that everything is great. I follow her into the kitchen and stand in the doorway.

"So that's it? You're just going to walk away from me like that? Because let me tell you, San, the girl I fell in love with wouldn't get up and ignore me when I'm clearly hurting over this. The girl I fell in love with-

Santana slams her beer down with enough force to make me jump, and my eyes flash to her hands gripping the counter top as if it will hold her back.

"THE GIRL YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH IS **DEAD**, QUINN. She's somewhere on a mountain in a dirty, backwards country, wishing she could come home. But she CAN'T, because she's fucking DEAD, just like Noah, just like so many of her brothers and sisters. I am all that is left of her, and I'm doing my fucking best here. You don't have any idea what you are asking, but I am telling you, I *promise* you, that you don't want to know any of this shit. You don't want to hear this, okay? So please just let it go."

I'm shocked, to say the least. Santana has never raised her voice at me like that. Even she looks taken aback by her outburst, but I'm not sure if it's because she yelled at me or because she admitted things to me that she didn't intend to. This is the most she has said to me about whatever it is she struggles with, and my heart breaks when she tells me that she's dead. It would seem so crazy, except that I've seen her eyes and a part of me believes her. I swallow down the sob that rises in my chest and take a slow breath.

"I can't, Santana. I can't let it go, because it's pulling you away from me. You aren't dead, San. You aren't! I know you're hurting and you're maybe a bit lost right now, but you are still here, baby. And I want to be here with you, not just sitting here watching you try to drink away whatever is wrong. Please let me try to help you."

Santana is shaking her head and it's simultaneously infuriating and heartbreaking. I can't watch this woman destroy herself. I love her too goddamn much to watch her surrender to her demons.

"You are blowing this out of proportion, Quinn. Have I missed a single day of work? Do I drive drunk or become unmanageable? No. So I like to have a couple of drinks after work because it helps me relax. The bills get paid on time, the wedding is being planned, we're here together. What else do you want?"

I scoff in complete disbelief. Santana's glassy red eyes narrow, but I just stare right back. She's shifted back to completely ignoring the real issue, choosing instead to focus on the drinking aspect. I'm incredulous.

"That's...Santana, what the hell does any of that even mean? The bills get paid on time? *The fucking bills get paid on time?!* You think that somehow, because we pay our bills, we're doing okay? Let me tell you something, we are *NOT* here together. I'm planning a wedding to someone who can't spend an entire night in bed with me, but refuses to tell me why. Just because you are

functioning doesn't mean you are *okay*. What I *want* is for you to talk to me. I know you think I don't want to know, and maybe there are a thousand things that I really don't want to hear, but I will bear that burden because *I love you*. I can't LIVE like this, Santana. I can't spend the rest of my life worrying, hoping you'll eventually come back to me. I am *begging* you, please get some help."

Santana stares at her feet, clearly my words have made an impact this time. My heart sinks when she picks up her head and sets her jaw. Her hands still grip the counter tightly.

"I'm going to bed. You were right, we should talk about this tomorrow," she finally says, her voice eerily calm. I watch her turn and dump the rest of her beer in the sink as she stares me down with her eyebrow cocked.

I feel frozen, uncertain of the best move now. She's not really fighting back anymore. I'm not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing. "Please don't walk away from me right now," I manage.

The proud, strong woman that I admire so much looks utterly destroyed with those words, her front suddenly evaporated to show the horrible pain she is in.

"I don't want to hurt you, Quinn." It's a whisper, and it terrifies me. Hurt me how? Physically? Emotionally? Mentally?

"You won't," I say with a confidence I don't have, taking a step forward to show her that I'm not afraid.

A quick sob escapes Santana's body. "I already am. Look at us, Q. I'm fucked up and dragging you down, too. I can't do that to you anymore."

Something about the way she speaks tells me that she's not talking about going to get help to address the problem. She's talking about leaving me because she thinks it will be better for me.

Jesus Christ, no.

"You said it yourself. You can't live like this, Quinn. I refuse to be the reason you are unhappy," she elaborates into the shocked silence I can't fill with words. It wakes me up to what she's saying though, and I shake my head vehemently.

I'm surprised by the firm, calm voice that comes out of my mouth despite my panic. "No. I'm not leaving you, and you aren't leaving me, either. You aren't fucked up. You're dealing with normal things for someone who just came back from war, but you don't have to do it alone. I love you, baby. We might not have made our vows yet, but I love you in sickness and in health, forever. So we're going to need to find another solution."

Santana stares at me, the war in her eyes evident. She wants to fight for me, but the demons tell her that she can't, that she's crazy, that she's wrong or bad or evil. I'm not sure what exactly her demons say, but I know I won't let them have her without a fight. I step even closer to her, within arm's reach.

"San, I know you love me. So please, for me, don't give up. Whatever you do, don't give up. I'm not going anywhere, okay? You taught me to be brave and face my fears. Well, we're going to

be brave together now, and we're going to face this. You and I together, Santana Lopez, we can do *anything*. Please fight this with me."

It's a flash in her eyes that brings the slightest smile to my face. I see my Santana there, looking at me resolutely. The nod is nearly imperceptible, but unmistakable. I reach out for her and pull her into my arms, relieved when she wraps her arms around me and holds me close. We're both crying, but it feels like a good thing.

For the first time in a long while, I feel hopeful.

Santana's P.O.V.

The cold sweat on my skin results in goosebumps all over my body, the tiny hairs on my body standing straight up. I swallow a sob and gasp raggedly, trying to bring my breathing under control. I stare wildly at the ceiling, my eyes wide. My heightened senses make everything feel dangerous, like something terrible is on the cusp of occurring if I don't catch the signs.

I've been avoiding my dreams with exhaustion and alcohol, but tonight I came to bed with Quinn and allowed myself to drift off next to her, sobered considerably by the conversation and the realization that I was devastating the only person I want to spend my entire life with. My punishment for going to sleep instead of passing out is my dreams.

Noah Puckerman speaks to me sometimes. Usually he's already dead, but he asks me why I left him to fight alone, his grayish eyes look empty but accusatory. Sometimes it's just that I can't get my weapon to work. The bad guys are coming, they're right there, but my rifle is jammed or I don't have the strength in my finger to pull the trigger. Tonight it was an explosion that blinded me, but I could hear everyone calling for a medic. I'm trying to go to voices and help them but I can't see. One by one the voices fade out because I don't get to them in time. The last voice to fade out is Quinn's. I know it's her because she says "Save me, San. Please. I'm dying." No one else calls me San. I woke up as soon as I felt her die, because in my dream it's just a thing I know. Quinn is dead, because I couldn't save her.

I feel a strong urge to run from this room without looking at her. I know she isn't dead, I can hear her steady breathing, but I'm afraid that if I look I'll find wounds. I can't resist though, I have to be sure she is okay, so I turn my head and look.

Her face is angelic, her lips slightly parted as she breathes evenly. There isn't a mark on her, she's as perfect as ever, and I let out a long sigh of relief.

I still want to run away though, like I've been doing for weeks, ever since the first horrible nightmare caught up with me. My body seems to be pulling me back down though, because even as I think about escaping, my eyes stay fixed on Quinn's face. Running isn't working. And she knows, anyway. I'm not hiding anything from her. If anything, I'm failing her every time I leave our bed.

My hand moves of its own accord, lifting to my fiancée's perfect face and tucking her hair back, then resting on her cheek until she begins to stir. She seems to pop awake suddenly rather than slowly come around, her eyes quickly find mine and she sits up.

"What is it, baby?" she whispers, her hands reaching for mine.

I take a deep breath. It's hard to show her this weakness, but I remind myself that she's suffering anyway. "I had a dream. It was really bad," I tell her finally, unsure how much I should tell her.

Quinn nods and says, "I'm sorry honey. Do you want to tell me about it? You don't have to right now if you don't want to."

I know I can't tell her right now without breaking down, so I just scoot closer to her. "Can you just hold me? I just want to feel you right here."

I look away from her eyes, fighting the hot burning of shame that comes at how weak I feel, but Quinn catches my chin and brings my face up so that we're looking at each other when she tells me firmly, "I will always hold you. You are safe here with me, San."

My heart constricts at the use of my nickname. "*Save me, San. Please. I'm dying.*"

But she's not dying. She's here, and she's alive and well. She's fighting for me.

I nod and lean forward to kiss her gently before turning to let her wrap her arms around me and press our bodies closer together. I'm enveloped by her scent and her soft skin. A smile forms on my lips when she gently kisses the skin just below my ear, and I close my eyes to welcome sleep once again.

It isn't a dreamless sleep. I wake up twice more, terrified. But Quinn wakes up with me, her arms still around me. She tightens her hold when she feels me jerk awake, holding me close to her until I can close my eyes again.

I make a promise to myself before drifting off to sleep for the last time. Tomorrow I will tell Quinn something, one of the many things I've kept hidden from her since I came home. I don't know what I'll say exactly. Maybe I'll be strong enough to tell her more than just one thing. All I know is that I can't lose her, and if saving us means talking, I have to find a way to do it. I can't ask her to spend the rest of our lives like this, both of us so unhappy.

Quinn's P.O.V.

I wake up to Santana's lips on my skin for the first time in ages. I don't move right away because I don't want her to stop, my heart soaring as she kisses my fingertips, the inside of my wrist, the crook of my elbow. She takes her time placing feather light kisses along my collarbone, then presses her lips to my throat, my jaw, my cheek, my forehead.

I can feel the smile in her kiss, and I know that she knows I'm awake. I slowly open my eyes and smile at this girl with clear eyes above me, who looks exactly like the Santana of old. For the moment she looks so carefree and young again.

"Good morning, beautiful," she says, one corner of her mouth twitched upwards and her eyes soft with affection.

"Hi, baby," I respond, arching my back as I stretch out my sleepy muscles. "Shouldn't you be at PT?"

Santana smiles fully and leans down to kiss me.

"Yes, I should be, but I called the First Sergeant and explained that I needed to go in to see mental health today. And that I wanted to be here when you woke up after our conversation last night. He agreed, so I'm here with you."

Dark eyes study my reaction to this news carefully. My beautiful girl looks nervous, but brave. Her vulnerability reaches deep within me and tears spring to my eyes immediately as I put my arms out to her. She doesn't hesitate, lying half on top of me and burying her face in my neck in one smooth motion.

"Thank you," I whisper, my voice heavy with emotion. Relief washes over and through me, touching every nerve in my body. The heavy tension I've felt in my body is released, if only for the moment. We have a long way to go, but this is a huge moment for us both.

Santana picks herself up to look at me. "No, thank *you*. I couldn't do this without you. I'm so sorry for how things have been, but it's going to get better, okay?"

I shake my head quickly. "Don't apologize, it's not your fault. I know this isn't easy, but I do know it will get better. Honestly, it kind of already has," I tell her, squeezing my arms a little tighter.

She kisses me then, a tender touching of lips that slowly transforms into a passionate kiss that threatens to set fire to my body. When we break the kiss, Santana leans her forehead against mine in a gesture I recognize as her trying to slow herself down and gain control. After a moment she leans back and grins at me before climbing off of me and the bed.

I try not to pout when I ask her where she's going.

"We need to talk," she says with a slight smile and a shrug, as if her offering to talk with me is the easiest thing in the world. I know it's not, I know this is hard for her, and I love her so much more because of it.

I climb out of bed and follow her to the kitchen, where the coffee is already made and Santana is pulling out bowls of fruit from the fridge for us. I sit down at the table, smiling when she bends over to kiss the top of my head as she puts the food down in front of me, then sits down as well. We sip our coffee quietly for a moment, hers black, mine with just the right amount of milk and no sugar.

Santana regards me as if she's assessing my readiness for whatever she has to say. I keep my eyes on her and wait, nervous to hear what is torturing her so much, but also ready to listen to her for as long as she wants to talk. Brown eyes close for a second as Santana draws a long breath, then open and find mine steadily.

"I guess I should start with Noah Puckerman. Everything up to him was going fine. We'd had a lot of guys wounded, but he was our first KIA. I...I was the last person to speak to him. I left his side when Sam Evans got wounded, do you remember Sam?"

I nod, because of course I do. Santana received a Bronze Star for Valor for her actions to save him during a firefight. I held her hand as his wife thanked her for saving his life at the ceremony. He was standing next to her, holding his son, and I remember squeezing Sam's hand as I looked into that little boy's dark eyes. She saved his daddy. I was so proud.

"Well, that first dream, the first time I woke up in the night, was about them. Sam with his leg bleeding, and Puck...he was shot in the head. They uh...they were telling me to, um...choose... which of them got to live."

I close my eyes at the ache in my heart as I realize the depths of her pain that night. When I open them, Santana is looking at me with concern, as if she has said too much. I pick up her hand and kiss the back of it, my eyes trained on hers. I'm not backing down, and Santana sees it. She nods once and then continues.

It's heartbreaking to hear, but as she explains the feelings she has the best she can, I begin to see the relief on her face as she shares her burden. I listen, only occasionally interjecting a question or encouragement. Some of the stories she tells are actually funny, anecdotes that she locked away when she left Afghanistan along with the painful ones. When she struggles I lean forward to press kisses to her hands or her cheek, affirming that I love her and I'm still here.

We laugh, we cry, we hold each other for a long time. Where before I was just hopeful, I now feel a certain confidence that we'll be okay. Santana is still fragile, but she's finding that strength I know so well. I'm more proud of her than ever before.

Fuck you, demons. She's mine.

I'm Not Going (1), by TakeMyBreathAwayTwoTimes

"Come on, Quinn, it's just one night! Please?" Rachel begged her best friend.

"Oh, it's not me you have to convince!" Quinn chuckled as she washed down the counter tops from dinner and turned on the dishwasher. "You know as well as I do that Santi isn't going to want to and I'm not putting up with a grumpy wife for the night."

"Oh Quinn, please? It's important to me that you be here, I haven't seen you in ages." Rachel pleads. "You can fly into New York Saturday morning early and be back on Sunday afternoon."

"It's not my fault you didn't take that movie offer here, Rach. It's never going to happen." Quinn replies certainly.

"Well you shouldn't have left in the first place!" Rachel insisted. "Just talk to her about it and let me know. I've got to get back, I'll talk to you later."

Before anything else could be said, the line went dead, a little to Quinn's relief. The constant pestering gave her a migraine. Checking to make sure everything was cleaned up, Quinn went in search of her wife.

As she expected, she found her in the baby's room. She stood leaning down on the edge of the cot, staring in awe at their little girl. It was a miracle these days when she wasn't in here.

Quinn quietly walked over and leant down next to Santana, slipping her arm around her wife's waist. Santana turned her head to the side slightly to catch Quinn's eye and smile at her lovingly before going back to watching over her little girl.

The arrival of their little girl had been an eventful one. After much debate about who should carry it, who the donor would be and everything else that was possible to disagree on, Quinn carried and they picked a man that could possibly be Santana's twin in another life. Their life had changed for the better and although they made mistakes, neither could be happier.

Quinn reached down to brush a dark blonde curl from her daughters tanned skin before slipping her hand into Santana's and pulling her out of the room.

"Come on, let her sleep, baby." She whispers as Santana is reluctantly dragged from the room.

"Who was on the phone?" Santana asks as she's pulled into her wife's lap on the couch.

"Rach. Wants us to go to some party." Quinn replied as she let her wife's warmth surround her.

"Hmm." Santana replied as she let herself sink into Quinn's embrace.

"So do you want to go?" Quinn asked as she ran her fingers through Santana's hair.

"To New York? For a party? No." Santana replied as she purred with the scratching to her scalp.

“Aw but baby, we could use a little break and it's only for 24 hours...” Quinn argued.

“You can go if you want. I'm not.” Santana said with finality as she got up to make some tea.

“Why not? It will be nice just us and we'd get to see our friends and...” Quinn reasoned.

“No, Quinn. I don't want to leave Alexia on her own, she won't understand why we're not here and she'll get upset.” Santana argued.

Quinn sighed, she'll have to think of better tactics.

Saturday came faster than Quinn would have thought, much to Santana's disappointment. Santana had been up twice during the night with Alexia and by the time seven am came around and it was time to get up, she was in a sleep exhausted comatose. Quinn got up feeling rested and thankful for her wife's thoughtfulness. She quickly moved into her slowly waking daughter and picked her up to get her fed before Judy came to mind her for the weekend. After a lot of begging and bribery using sex, Santana had agreed to go to New York for one night as long as they stayed in a hotel away from Berry and were back by Lunchtime on Sunday. Quinn could easily agree with those terms because 1. It was a hotel with Santana! 2. She didn't want to be away for too long and 3. Sexy times!

Once the baby had been settled into her playpen, Quinn went back into her room to wake the dead. She found her buried under the covers with only the tips of her hair showing on the pillows. Quinn climbed onto the bed softly and pulled the covers back from her wife's face. She looked so peaceful and serene when she wasn't worrying about work or the baby or any of the other million things that went through her heads on a daily basis. Although her worry face, her nervous face and frown were pretty beautiful and serene too. I moved the hair out of her face before leaning down close to her ear.

“Santana, baby. It's time to get up.” Quinn said softly.

The only reaction she received was a slight movement in her face where Quinn's breath hit Santana's face. Quinn began to shake Santana lightly and run her fingers through her hair as she called on her.

“San, come on I know you're tired but we have to go soon.” She grunted in reply. “We have a plane to catch.”

“Quinn, leave me alone. ‘m sleepin.” Santana muttered as she shoved her face into the mattress to hide from me.

Quinn got up and went back into the kitchen, grabbing Santana's mug and quickly filling it with coffee. She placed it down on the bedside table as she went back to shaking her awake. Santana shuffled and pulled away, groaning and Quinn was sure there were curses in there, but she couldn't hear her with her mouth muffled against the mattress.

“I've got coffee...” She called sweetly as her Santana turned half her face to look at her.

“Good coffee?” She asked, voice husky with sleep as she squinted out of one eye at Quinn.

“Only the best for you baby. Picked it up yesterday.” Quinn said as she rearranged the pillows against the headboard.

Sitting up against them, she opened her arms for her wife to crawl into. Santana begrudgingly pulled herself up and into her arms as she sighed with her exhaustion. Quinn picked up the coffee cup and offered it to her as Santana rested her head on her shoulder and sipped slowly.

“Where's mi pequeña bebé?” Santana asks as she looks up at Quinn.

“Happily playing in her playpen waiting for her morning cuddles from her Mami.” Quinn replies as she leans down and pecks her lips.

“Mm Quinn, I have morning coffee breath. Wait till I brush my teeth.” Santana stops her as she finishes off her coffee quickly.

“I don't care, everything tastes good on you.” Quinn comments as she pulls her wife into a deeper kiss.

They are interrupted soon after by the buzzing of their intercom. Quinn sighs as she gets up to answer it.

“It's been years and she is still fucking interrupting me!” Santana groans as she too gets up and heads to the bathroom, sighing dramatically.

—

“Okay mom if you need anything, you can call Quinn or me and all the emergency numbers are on the fridge and my parent's number and our substitute babysitter and...” Santana lists frantically.

“Okay Santana she knows, she's done this before.” Quinn interrupts, rubbing her wife's back softly to calm her down.

“Yes but never for a night, Quinn.” Santana snaps as she goes over to cuddle her baby. “Bye bye baby. Mami and Mama will be back soon and then Grandma is going to mind you while we're gone. If you need anything, you call okay?”

“Santana, she's nine months. She doesn't even know what a phone is!” Quinn laughs.

“Yes she does, she chews on mine all the time.” Santana replies as if it's obvious. “Don't you?” She says tickling Alexia's stomach.

The baby immediately starts giggling at her silly Mami and Santana smiles at the beautiful sight and sound along with Quinn.

“Okay come on, we have to go.” Quinn says as she lifts the baby from Santana and hands her to her mom.

“Don't you worry Santana, my little star and I get on just fine.” Judy smiles kindly at the worried mother.

Santana pouts as Quinn picks up both their bags and grabs her hand to drag her out the door.

“Bye Alexia.” “Bye Darling” they both call as they leave.

Quinn rubs her thumb along Santana's hand to comfort her before lets go of her hand to press the button on the lift.

“I know you don't want to leave her, but it's good for us to separate a bit. We'll be back before you...Santana?” Quinn comments before realizing her wife is no longer there.

She found her wife back in the apartment cuddling her daughter to her chest. Rolling her eyes she put the baby back in her playpen as Judy watched in amusement and dragged Santana out the door again.

Turns out Santana's pout is pretty cute too but don't tell her that. They got into the cab and Santana laid her head on Quinn's shoulder letting out a pathetic huff. It was going to be a long weekend.

Note: continued on day 7: free day

Future, by team-valkyrie

"Santana, not that I don't love being here, but what are we doing?" Quinn asked as they stepped into the auditorium. Santana had insisted they visit Lima, thus why they were currently at an empty McKinley High.

"This is where it all started," Santana said. "These halls saw everything. Saw us fight, make up, backstab each other, be there for each other, everything. But most importantly, it saw us grow closer than ever before. So, I figured this was the perfect place to do what I have planned."

Santana walked Quinn over to the front row where she sat her down. Then, Santana made her way up to the stage.

"Uh, guys, you can come out now," Santana said behind her. Quinn thought her girlfriend had gone crazy until she saw the old Glee Club step out on stage. Everyone was there. Rachel, Kurt, Mercedes, Tina, Artie, Mike, Noah, Blaine, Sam, Mr. Shue. Even Brittany. "This school means a lot to us both, but what meant the most to us was being part of this club. This crazy, goofy, amazing club. This club helped us not only grow, but learn. It gave us that family that we have always wanted. So I recruited everyone to help me make this special. I know we're one person short but I also know that Finn is watching over us wherever he is." Everyone teared up at the mention of their fallen member but they knew Santana was right.

"So without further ado, I want to perform a song for you babe. And I want you to listen to every word I say. Hit it!" Santana said as the music started and everyone took their place.

(Santana)

Oh, hey, oh

Baby, baby, are you listening?

Wondering where you've been all my life

I just started living

Oh, baby, are you listening?

(Everyone)

When you say you love me

Know I love you more

*And when you say you need me
Know I need you more
Girl, I adore you, I adore you
(Santana)
Baby, can you hear me?
When I'm crying out for you
I'm scared oh, so scared
But when you're near me
I feel like I'm standing with an army
Of men armed with weapons, hey, oh
(Everyone)
When you say you love me
Know I love you more
And when you say you need me
Know I need you more
Girl, I adore you, I adore you
(Santana)
I love lying next to you
I could do this for eternity
You and me—we're meant to be
In holy matrimony
God knew exactly what he was doing
When he led me to you
(Everyone)
When you say you love me
Know I love you more (I love you more)
And when you say you need me
Know I need you more
Girl, I adore you, I adore you
When you say you love me*

Know I love you more
And when you say you need me
Know I need you more
Girl, I adore you, I adore you

Throughout the song, Santana had moved closer to where Quinn was sitting. When she finally stood before her girlfriend, she knelt down on one knee and pulled out a beautiful emerald engagement ring.

"Baby, I meant every word in that song. I care, love and adore you with all of my being. We have been through so much together and I can't wait to spend the rest of my days with you. So will you please do me the honor of being my wife?" Santana asked with tears streaming down her face.

Quinn tackled her and kissed her before saying "yes, yes, yes" over and over again. Everyone behind them cheered on, happy to see them be so in love.

Quinn and Santana finally separated from their hug and turned to everyone. "Thank you guys so much for the help, I couldn't have done it without you. Let's go to Breadstix to celebrate!" Santana said as she took her fiancé's hand.

They all agreed and started leaving. As Quinn and Santana left McKinley, they knew they were starting the rest of their lives together. And they couldn't be happier.

Waiting Room, by tehedward

"Babe, sit down. You're wearing out the tiles on the floor." Quinn says calmly, not even looking up from her magazine.

"Calm down! How the hell do you expect me to calm down!? That's our baby in there!" Santana yells as she stops her pacing to glare at Quinn. A nurse in the background tries to shush her but Santana just turns and snarls at the poor woman who quickly busies herself with paperwork.

"I'm well aware of who's in there. I just don't see why you're freaking out?" Quinn briefly looks up at her wife, arching an eyebrow before going back to her magazine.

"Our baby is in there all alone-"

"She's not alone, John's with her."

"She's going through an extreme medical procedure!"

"Oh for goodness sake, she's giving birth not having heart surgery." Quinn says rolling her eyes at how her wife is behaving.

"What if she needs me, what if she's scared!?"

"I reiterate, John's with her. She'll have all the comfort she needs."

"What if the doctor isn't giving her enough medicine and she's in pain!?"

"She has enough medicine."

"Well what if he's giving her too much medicine and her heart stops or... or she never wakes up!?"

"The doctor and nurses know how much medicine to give her."

"What if something happens with the baby, what if it's sick and they need to operate on it or something. Or what if armed terrorists hijack the hospital and our grandbaby is born in the middle of a fire fight!?"

"I knew I shouldn't have let you watch that movie," Quinn mutters. "The baby's going to be fine, every checkup says that it's going to be happy and healthy."

"But... but what if..."

Quinn looks up from her magazine and realizes just how nervous her wife is. Santana is standing there hands held in front of her anxiously as she bites her lip. She's gazing longingly at the doors that lead to the birthing room and Quinn can see that tears are starting to build in her eyes.

Quinn sets her magazine down and moves to stand by her wife of 23 years and wraps her arms around the woman from behind. "Sweetheart, it's going to be okay. I promise. I know you're nervous but this is a happy time. We're going to be grandparents for the very first time."

"I am happy but... what if she needs me? My baby's having a baby and I'm out here just waiting, completely useless."

Quinn places a kiss on Santana's cheek before turning her around so that she is looking into her eyes. "If she needs us, she'll call for us. But right now is more about her and John and the little child that they are bringing into this world. Our little girl is starting her own family and the best thing we can do is to just be here waiting in the wings if called, but ultimately letting them do this on their own."

Santana nods her head sadly.

"San, what's going on? You were never this worried when you or I were pregnant, what's going on, what's got you so anxious? There is nothing out of the ordinary going on so talk to me, what's going through that pretty little head of yours?"

"My little girl she's... she's all grown up and I can't help it, but I just keep thinking of her when she was little and she would have a nightmare or something and she would sneak into our room and crawl into bed with us. I keep thinking about how much she needed me and now she's all grown up, and like you said she's starting her own family... what if she doesn't need me anymore?"

"You're her mother, she's always going to need you." Quinn says softly as she wipes away a tear from Santana's cheek.

"She's right you know." A masculine voice says coming from the direction of the birthing rooms. They look over to see John smiling at them, he looks tired but excited as he makes his way over to them. "Hey mamma Q, mamma S." He greets them both with a kiss on the cheek.

"Is the baby here yet?" Santana asks excitedly.

"No not yet, it looks like we're in for the long haul." He says, "But Sarah wanted me to give you guys an update and to let you know that everything is fine, it's just going to take a while."

"And how are you holding up?" Quinn asks, affectionately ruffling his hair.

"I'm doing fine, I just wish there was more I could do. Hey have my parents arrived yet?"

"I got a call from them about a half an hour ago. They were caught in traffic but they're on their way." Quinn tells him.

"Great, well I better get back there."

"You tell her to be strong and that her momma's loves her." Santana says seriously.

"I will, and of course she'll stay strong, she is your guy's daughter." He gives them each a peck on the cheek before heading back into to be with his wife.

"Our girl did pretty good for herself didn't she." Quinn says as they watch John disappear.

"Yeah, she did."

"So you heard John, everything is going just fine. So there's no need to worry."

"I guess you're right."

"So grab a magazine and let's just relax. It sounds like we're in for a bit of a wait."

Two Hours Later

"Sweetheart, quit biting your nails." Quinn says as she takes Santana's hand in her own and holds it.

"It's been two hours, what the hell is taking so long?" Santana asks worriedly.

"John said it was going to be a while."

"Yes but she's been in there for four and a half hours now."

"Yes and when I was in labor with her I was in there for nine hours and you, you were 12 hours in before Mary decided to come into this world. Let's just face it, the women of our family take forever to have children." Quinn says with a smile.

"Maybe..." Santana trails off as she continues to stare at the doors, while she taps her foot anxiously.

"Hey babe?" Quinn asks, suddenly having an idea to help calm Santana's nerves.

"Yeah?" Santana asks distractedly.

"Do you want Memaw, Grandma, Grammy, or Nana?"

"Wait what?" Santana asks confused, turning to look at her wife.

"When the baby's born, which name do you want? The kids going to have three grandma's so I'm thinking we need some distinction."

"Well I am certainly not going to be Grandma, I don't look nearly old enough to be a grandma. Shut up." Santana scoffs when she sees Quinn start to smirk at that.

"I don't think Memaw would be too bad but I'm not all that fond of it. I could probably do Nana though."

"That's fine. I can see it, Nana Santana." Quinn chuckles, "Hey that kind of rhymes."

"And what name do you want?" Santana asks.

"Who me, I am quite content to be Grandma Quinn." Quinn says smiling, already imagining a little granddaughter or grandson screaming 'Grandma Quinn, Grandma Quinn!' when they come to visit. She pictures herself picking him or her up in her arms and twirling them around, marveling at the sound of their giggles. No Grandma Quinn suited her just fine.

"Really, you want to be called grandma?"

"Yes really," Quinn smirks at her wife, "I'm not self-conscious about my age."

"I am not self-conscious about my age!" Santana gasps indignantly.

"Uh-huh, sure. Hey is that a grey hair?" Quinn asks and then she starts to giggle when Santana instantly reaches up to touch her hair.

Santana glares at her for a second, "I do not have grey hair." She says huffing, before folding her arms and turning away from her wife.

"I'm sorry I said that." Quinn says smiling, not sorry at all.

"Hmph."

"Oh come on baby, don't be mad. You know I'm just teasing you." Quinn says as she places a hand on Santana's shoulder but Santana just shrugs it off. She's still pouting but Quinn can see the smile that is tugging at her face.

Quinn leans over and wraps her arms around Santana. "C'mon, don't be mad. You know that I think you're still just as sexy as the day we met."

"Really?" Santana says grinning.

"Really. And it's not just me, I saw that cute little nurse looking over here, checking you out."

"Well... you can't blame her for that."

"No I can't." Quinn says kissing her cheek. Santana turns back to face her and just as they're about to share a kiss they hear a voice call out to them.

"Santana! Quinn! Has it happened yet!? Is the baby here, is it healthy!? What about Sarah, how's our girl doing!?" A very anxious Mike Chang calls out to them, and he is all but sprinting towards them. Trailing behind him at a much more leisurely pace is an obviously exasperated Tina.

"No the baby isn't here yet, it's taking its time. And Last time John checked in Sarah was just fine." Quinn answers.

"What but it's been four and half, almost five hours!" Mike exclaims, checking his watch.

"I know right! I was just explaining that to Quinn!" Santana says as she stands up, all of the work that Quinn had done to calm her wife down going straight out the window, and the two of them head off on their own to freak out together while Tina plops down on Santana's vacated seat.

"Hey Quinn."

"Hey Tina, so Mike driving you as crazy as San is me?"

"Oh my God, I'm excited too but goodness, a half an hour into the drive he had convinced himself that terrorists had taken over the hospital and that our grandchild was going to be born in the middle of a fire fight."

Quinn chuckles at that, "Well if it makes you feel any better it's not just him."

"Santana freaking out too."

"Just a little bit."

Quinn and Tina share a smile that only two people who are completely in love with a couple of crazies could understand. A smile that somehow conveys both complete and total devotion to the one they love and also a little bit amazement that they haven't been driven crazy themselves.

"So... what do you think? Boy or girl?" Quinn asks. Their children had decided to keep it a surprise what the gender of the baby was going to be and it had been a hot topic of discussion between the four soon to be grandparents ever since.

"Hmmm, I thinks it's a--"

Late, by wonderlandwaitforme (BlessYourSoul)

Quinn was late. So very, very, *very*, late. Her train was set to leave in four minutes, and unless she magically conjured a vehicle, she was going to miss the train. She ran as fast as she could towards her platform, turning to see that the train was ready to depart in one minute. *I'm screwed.* She was scheduled to head home to Lima to visit her mother for Thanksgiving, seeing as her new job at a publishing agency doesn't allow much time off. Regardless that her and her mother didn't have the best of relationships, she still missed her and was looking forward to the trip.

She finally arrived at the platform, only to hear the loud clanking of the train leaving. Sighing, she turned to take a seat at a bench when someone ran in to her, knocking her to the floor.

"Oh my God! I'm so sorry." Wait, I know that voice. Glancing up, Quinn came face to face with the one and only, Santana Lopez. I haven't seen her since freshmen year of college. She's still as beautiful as ever.

"Santana?" Quinn asked, wearily, frowning at the pain in her back. *Great.* Since her accident, her back has never been how it used to be.

"Fabray." Santana said, stunned. Reaching down she helped Quinn to her feet, the wince on her face when she straightened her back not going unnoticed. "What are you doing here?"

"Well, I was planning on catching a train back to Lima to visit my mom for Thanksgiving, but that's not happening anymore."

"Really? Me too, I haven't seen my abuela in a while. And *you* for that matter." Santana said sternly, HBIC face firmly planted on. Quinn remained silent. "What? Nothing to say? It's been *3 years* Quinn, and not a single word from you."

"I'm sorry Santana, I-"

"You what? Panicked?" Quinn looked down, ashamed, and murmured,

"Yeah." Santana's glare softened. Slightly.

"Do you regret it?" the blonde looked up, alarmed. Shaking her head rapidly, stuttering out a no. "Good, because I don't either. You didn't have to run, you really hurt me Q." Shock was evident on Quinn's face at seeing Santana look and sound so defeated. *This is your fault, idiot.* Softly Quinn said,

"I'm sorry S. When I woke up in the morning and found you next to me I had no idea what to do. I thought you'd regret it, or laugh at me for having a gay panic. I should've known you'd be understanding, and I'm just so, *so*, sorry. Forgive me?" the hopefulness on Quinn's face broke Santana's resolve. Quite literally turning that frown upside down.

"On one condition."

"Anything." Quinn near yelled.

"You better sit next to me on the train back to Lima and tell me everything I've missed, else I'mma go *all Lima Heights* on your skinny white ass."

Every Time I Don't, I Almost Do, by WordsHaveMelodies

From the moment that you first met Santana Lopez, you knew that you'd never love anyone else the way that you loved her.

You also remember when you first realized that what you were feeling for her was more than just 'friendly' feelings and you remember it freaking you out. You were Quinn Fabray, head cheerleader and captain of the celibacy club. You weren't supposed to be having...feelings towards your 'girl' best friend but still, you couldn't stay away. You'd kept it to yourself and you'd pretended to not burn with desire every time that she would touch you, or look at you or even smile at you and you'd been doing a fine job of pretending that you weren't affected, until she kissed you.

You remember how she tasted of cherries and how soft her lips were. You remember her thumb affectionately stroking your jaw and the way her eyes had told you that she wasn't the only one who had been good at pretending. You also remember running your hands through her hair before tilting her chin up and connecting your lips again. You knew then that no one else would ever make you feel like or the things that she did. She completed you and complemented you in a way that no one could ever duplicate.

She agreed to your terms for a relationship and for four years she loved you without question, put up with all of your drama and held onto the sides of her chair to stop herself from killing Finn every time that he put his hands on you. For four years she made love to you in secret and kept all of your secrets but in one moment of rare panic, it was all gone.

"Guess what I got in the mail this morning?"

"I don't know," you close your locker and she falls into step beside you, always right beside you, "Tell me."

"Three acceptance letters," the excitement palpable in her voice even though she tried to downplay it, "One from UCLA, one from NYU and one from my dream school."

"Harvard?" you question.

"Harvard." Her smug answer.

"Well look at you," your shoulder playfully nudging hers, "I think I'm more proud of you than your parents are."

"Speaking of being proud," she says pulling you into an empty classroom, "I was thinking about telling my parents about us."

"You were what?" your hand immediately pulling out of hers, "You can't be serious?"

"Why not?"

"Santana if you tell your parents then they'll tell my parents and if my parents find out, all hell is going to break loose. I'm not so sure that I'm ready for that."

"You were the one who said that we could tell them senior year," her arms folding across her chest, "News flash, we're in senior year Quinn."

"I know that's what I said but why do we have to tell anyone?" her scoff and head shake doing nothing to deter you, "Why can't we just continue being how we are?"

"Because I'm sick and tired of seeing you walk down these fucking halls with Finn Hudson on your arm!" she practically growls.

"I get that but-"

"No you don't get it," and she takes a deep breath to still the tears, "I love you and I want the world to know that. I'm sick and tired of pretending that I don't want to kill everyone that looks at you, I'm sick and tired of pretending that every love song that I sing in glee club is for Sam, god dammit Quinn I'm just sick and tired of pretending that I'm something that I'm not. Aren't you tired?"

"I am but I can't stop-"

"Can't or won't?"

"I love you Santana and I'm sorry but I just can't."

"One day I sincerely hope that you can Quinn," her fingers wiping at the tears on her cheeks, "Because I won't be your dirty little secret anymore."

On the day that Principal Figgins hands you all your diplomas and Mr. Schue sings you one last song, Santana stands before the glee club with Mercedes and Sam holding each of her hands and tells them the truth. Her truth, not yours. Even after you had surely broken her heart she still chose to protect your secret because she knew you weren't ready to tell it. You couldn't have loved her any more in that moment if you tried. You wanted to hug her and congratulate her for as Puck said, 'being a badass and embracing her truth' but you stayed seated and silent.

You find out from Mercedes that she chose UCLA over NYU and Harvard and you know that the reason she decided not to go to her dream school is because of you. You wanted to reach out and tell her to not be an idiot but you don't.

You both leave for separate coasts without saying goodbye.

You come out eventually and the only person who was genuinely clueless turned out to be Finn. Everyone was genuinely clueless however when you started dating Rachel. During one of your trips out to visit her and Kurt for the weekend, she told you that she'd always been in love with you. You'd been single since Santana and when she asked you to give it a try, you said why not. If you couldn't be with the one you love, you'd love the one you were with.

Of course she needed it to be made Facebook official and after one month of her incessant nagging, you give in.

Santana Lopez likes this was not something that you ever expected to see in a million years, but there it was sitting at the top of your notifications. She'd been radio silent with you for two years and the irony that the last time you spoke was about your sexuality isn't lost on you. She liked it because she wanted you to know that she knew and that she was proud of you and you remember then why you loved her, and why you still did. You remember why you always would. She also liked it because she hated Rachel and she wanted you to know that she wasn't too happy that you chose to make that statement with someone who wasn't her. You wanted to send her a message but you had no clue of what to even begin to say, so you don't.

You find out from Mercedes about her and Brittany and it makes you sick, literally. If this is how she felt when she found out about Rachel, you were more than a little sorry that she did. You block all phone calls, only respond to text messages and avoid Facebook for weeks.

You and Rachel break up after two years and it spirals into a horrible fight. The entire glee club gets dragged into it and of course sides are chosen. It's sad and quite frankly, stupid but it is what it is and at least you had Mercedes.

Santana changes her Facebook status three days later to: ***I'd still choose you, every time.***

Everyone likes it. Everyone except you.

Kurt starts dating Blaine junior year, and the hills are alive with the sound of music when everyone finds out that he's your cousin. He posts a picture of the three of you at dinner and the comments start pouring in, but it's not a comment that catches your eye.

Mercedes Jones: You both look so good Kurt! You too Quinn, miss you. : Santana Lopez likes this comment.

You wanted to ask her if she liked the first half or the second half but you refrain.

There's a New Directions reunion the year that you all graduate college, but you don't go to it and according to Mercedes, neither Santana nor Rachel show up to it either. You supposed it was for the best. Santana liking your post to them may seem like support but she'd beat the crap out of Rachel if she ever got the chance. Neither Rachel nor Santana show up to the reunion the year after that either. Rachel comes to the third one but you both ignore each other. There were no longer any sides but you still weren't on each others'.

News of Kurt's engagement makes it way to Facebook and everyone is naturally thrilled.

Kurt Hummel: Hey Santana, engagement party at your Los Angeles estate?

Santana Lopez: You'll find any excuse to come see me won't you Hummel?

Kurt Hummel: Like you don't enjoy my company.

Santana Lopez: You annoy me and yes, you can have your engagement party here.

"Are you coming?" Mercedes asks when she calls.

"Should I?" the invitation still open on your desk, "I mean it's been 6 years of radio silence."

"Why is that?" and you're surprised that she doesn't know, "One minute you two were thick as thieves and then the next thing I know, she's on the west coast and you're on the east."

"She never told you?"

"Are you going to?"

"Do you have wine close by?" there's a yes followed by laughter, "Good. Cause you're going to have to drink for me."

—

"Where do you want these chairs Ms. Lopez?"

"Over there," you direct to the crew worker, "And the fountain goes over there."

You were doing this for Kurt. That's what you had been telling yourself ever since he'd introduced you to Blaine. You told yourself that you were actively trying to be nice and listen to him and not poke fun at his hideous bowties because he was important to Kurt but you knew better, it was about Quinn. Everything was always about Quinn.

The first time that you ever saw her was in church of all places and that moment would forever be ingrained in your mind. She was beautiful without even trying sitting there pretending to be paying attention to whatever the priest had been saying. You hadn't even noticed that you were staring until her eyes found yours from across the pew and she quirked a questioning eyebrow at you. You turned forward so quickly you were surprised that your neck hadn't snapped clean off. Your eyes sought her out again minutes later and you were more than a little surprised that she was already staring back at you. She gave you this look then, like she knew something that you didn't and looking back on it now, you're certain that's the moment when she knew you were in love with her. The moment she knew that you would always be.

You could've stayed with her in the closet and some part of you wished that you had because you'd probably still be together right now but you were tired of living a lie and you just couldn't anymore. You weren't mad that she didn't want to take the leap with you, disappointed? Sure, heartbroken? Obviously, but you weren't mad.

You were pissed as fuck when you found out about her and Rachel however and you liked her post purely for the sake of letting her know that. You were happy that she'd finally embraced her truth but you hadn't been keeping her secret all of those years to have her come clean about it with fucking Rachel Berry. That broke your heart more than losing her ever did. You always

thought that when she was ready to face the world, she'd find you again so you could face it together but she didn't and you didn't know why.

"Are you excited about tonight?" Kurt's excitement clear over the phone, "This is going to be the first time that you've seen Quinn in what?"

"6 years," you breathed, "6 fucking years."

"Why did you shut her out?" he queries, "I mean I thought you two were best friends."

"It's complicated Kurt."

"Friendships get complicated all the time. I mean look at us," he presses on, "Something else happened between you both, what is it?"

"See what I mean about annoying?" you ask already resigning yourself to endure his questions. You'd never told anyone about you and Quinn, not even Brittany or Mercedes.

"Start talking before I come over three hours before schedule," and there's pure delight in his voice, "From the top."

—

"How do I look?" Kurt asks walking into the room.

"You're wearing a bowtie?" you reply while adjusting it slightly, "Did Blaine dress you?"

"He did actually, yes."

"Kurt Hummel letting someone else dress him?" and you poke him in the shoulder, "You really are in love."

"Speaking of love," a smile playing upon his lips, "I spoke to Santana earlier."

"That isn't exactly news Kurt," you glance at him briefly, "I know you love her."

"Do you?"

You don't even have to think about it,

"I never stopped."

"You and Rachel getting together and breaking up makes so much more sense now," he says holding his hand out to you, "Something she still wants to kick Rachel's ass for by the way."

"She told you that?"

"Oh honey, you know as well as I do that she didn't have to say it."

—

She arrived with Kurt and Blaine and you disappeared into the kitchen not long afterwards. For 6 years you'd wondered what you would do if you ever saw her again and for 6 years you convinced yourself that you'd be civil. That however turns out to be a lie. You couldn't even bring yourself to look in her direction. Blaine gave you a soft smile in understanding when you excused

yourself minutes later. Last thing you saw before you disappeared was Mercedes and Kurt sitting down with Quinn.

She looked the same except even more beautiful. Her hair's longer and her eyes seem lighter than you remembered. You wondered if you'd ever get to discover all the ways that her body had changed too.

"Santana," and your breath catches at the voice, "Can we talk for a second?"

"Please," your eyes moving of their own accord to where she stands in the entryway and your heart stops at the sight, "I don't want to yell, or fight, or scream. I just want to talk."

"Talk about what?" you ask as you struggle to regain your composure.

You almost felt pathetic for needing to hear her say it after all this time, for needing her to validate the feelings that you still carried around for her, needing her to put to rest your doubts on whether or not she still felt the same but you couldn't find it in you to care right now. You'd been dying to know for 6 whole years and house filled with people who would all call you one by one within the next couple of days to get the scoop and then call each other afterwards to discuss their findings or not, you wanted to hear her say it.

"Us," Is all she says and the tears spring to your eyes involuntarily, "I want to talk about us."

"There is no us Quinn," you don't mean it but you say it anyway, "There's a you and an I but there is no us."

"You know as well as I do that there would always be an us," she takes one step in your direction, "And I'm sorry that it's taken me this long to say that."

"Why are you saying it now?"

"Because I love you and I want you back," and you're thankful for the chair to your left, "I never stopped loving you and I never stopped wanting you back."

"Is that what Rachel was?" you know that she wants to roll her eyes but she just briefly closes them instead, "Cause I sure as hell felt wanted and loved by that."

"Rachel never should have happened and I'm sorry but you were gone, radio silent and actively ignoring me. Two years Santana, two years I waited for you to just answer one of my phone calls but you never did. I told myself that you didn't feel the same anymore, you made me feel like you didn't feel the same anymore."

"I told you that I wouldn't be your dirty little secret anymore and we both know that if you had asked me to be with you like that again my answer would have been yes. I was giving you space to come to grips with who you were, not to fucking be with Rachel Berry. How could you ever think that I wouldn't feel the same?"

"If you had responded to one of my god damn text messages I would have known!"

She's directly in front of you now but you don't have time to wonder how you both ended up in this position before her lips are on yours and your hands are in her hair. It's nothing at all like

you remembered; it's a whole lot better. It's passionate in a way that it's never been before and your body reacts in the only way it knows how, you want her but it's too much, too soon and you struggle against your heart, mind, and body before going with your mind and pulling away from her. You're both breathing heavily and you can see the pure and unbridled lust in her eyes. It almost makes you kiss her again, almost.

"Why are you doing this Quinn? I was doing fine without you."

"Is fine what Brittany was?" and she does roll her eyes this time, "You deserve so much better than fine don't you think?"

"Quinn-"

"I don't want to spend another minute on 'what if's' Santana. We've wasted enough time already being stupid and avoiding each other but I don't want us to do that anymore," she holds her hand out for yours and you let her take it, "The last time we had a conversation about us I freaked out and I'm sorry but I'm not that scared little girl anymore. I meant what I said Santana; I've never stopped loving you and wanting you back and if I have to move to LA and carry you on dates just to get you to say yes to this, then that's what I'll do."

And she means it, you know that she does and it's exactly what you've been waiting the past 6 years for. Still, you're you and you can't help but give her one last chance at an out. You'd rather be disappointed now than later.

"I love you Quinn and I'm sorry but I just can't."

And she looks exactly like you felt when she had said the exact same thing to you. You want to reach out and stop her from breaking, but you don't.

"One day I sincerely hope that you can Santana," and your heart squeezes at the words, "Because I don't want you to be my dirty little secret anymore."

The doorbell rings then and you slowly disentangle your hand from hers as you walk by and out to answer it.

"Rachel?"

And you pinch yourself because this could not be real life.

"Santana, may I come in?"

Ever since you found out about her and Quinn you wondered what you would do if you ever saw her again and after they broke up you convinced yourself that you'd be civil. That however turns out to be a lie.

She goes down and stays there after your fist connects with her face and you smirk to yourself because you still had it. Lima Heights Adjacent represent.

"Nice hit," and you smile at the sight of Quinn walking towards you with an amused smirk on her face, "How do you feel?"

"Like I'm ready to leave the past in the past and start over," her amusement fades and her surprise appears, "We still have a lot to talk about but I've wanted you back to Quinn."

"And so the lion fell in love with the lamb." Her left hand taking up residence over your beating heart.

"What a stupid lamb." Your fingers interlocking behind her neck.

"What a sick, masochistic lion."

She smiles at you then, a pure carefree smile more mesmerizing than you remembered and it makes you want to lean up and kiss her then, so you do.

Maybe Next Time, by WriteForYou

It was a nice day in New York, it was about 70 degrees out and the sky was clear with the city bustling along as usual. Santana was pacing in front of a store with Rachel watching humorously from the side.

"What if she doesn't like it?" Santana blurts.

Rachel rolls her eyes. "She'll love it, Santana. It's beautiful!" Rachel assures Santana. The two have gotten extremely close ever since their rooming arrangement in New York. They might even call each other best friends, but neither of them will admit it.

Santana stops her pacing and bites her lips. "What if it's too soon?"

Rachel moves to her best friend and looks her in the eyes. "Santana how long have you guys been together?"

"3 years." Santana smiles softly.

"And how long have you've loved her?"

Santana thinks to herself and looks up at Rachel. "Since the moment I met her." Santana grins shyly and Rachel nods her head.

"So what are you waiting for?"

—

Santana walks into their apartment and hears the sound of shower running and notices the floor leading to the restroom littered with her girlfriend's clothes. Santana removes her winter coat and walks toward the restroom to greet her beautiful girlfriend—the girl she was going to ask to marry her.

"Dani? Babe?" Santana pulls the curtain of the shower to see her girlfriend naked with another woman.

"S-santana..." Dani squeaks out. The other naked woman was tall and had red hair. Her body was toned and fair. And her hand was still palming Dani's breast.

Santana sees red and every fiber of her body is burning hot with rage. Her fists are at her side and all she wants to do is kill the bitch in the shower with her girlfriend. All she wants to do is yell and pound her fist against the bitch—pound her fist against anything really. But Santana swallows down the impulse to act on it, because she's older now and mature. She's a changed woman.

Funny how easy it is to revert back.

Santana yells words of profanity and pulls the redhead by her hair and drags her out of the shower. Dani is yelling at Santana to stop but it's too late, Snixx is unleashed.

Santana is digging her nails in the woman's scalp and pulling out a chunk of her hair while the redhead is trying to scratch her way out. The redhead eventually gets out of Santana's grasp by painfully scratching her nails across Santana's cheek. Santana hisses in pain and a little blood trickles down from her cheek. She slaps the redhead. Hard. The redhead falls to her knees in pain and cries a little.

Santana wants to go in for the kill when Dani steps in front. "Stop it, Santana!" Dani looks at Santana with those round eyes of hers and pleads for Santana to calm down.

"How could you?!" Santana spits bitterly at her girlfriend.

"I'm sor—"

"DON'T." Santana barks. "I don't want to hear a fucking apology. I want to know fucking *why*."

Dani stands there speechless in her naked form. "I don't know." She cries.

Santana scoffs. "You don't know? So you just decided to fuck a random slut for the heck of it?"

"Say that again, bitch." The redhead is now standing and angrier than before.

"Santana, stop!" Dani pushes Santana back from the other woman. "You should go..."

Santana's eyes pop out. "*I* should go?" She points her finger at the redhead. "I think it's her who should go and me you should be talking to!"

"She has nowhere to go right now and it's late so..."

"So I'm getting kicked out? Out of my own fucking apartment?!"

"It's technically ours..."

"Seriously?" Santana glares. "You know what, fine." Santana starts walking out the restroom. "I'll leave."

"We'll talk tomorrow I promise." Dani whispers sincerely.

Santana laughs bitterly. "No. Tomorrow you'll pack your fucking bags and leave."

Dani drops her mouth. "Santana, I'm so sorry." She cries.

"You should have thought of that before." Santana puts on her coat. In the pocket of her coat is a small black box. Santana grips onto the tiny box tightly, hoping that if she's strong enough she could crush it. "I want you gone by the time I get back. I don't want anything to do with you."

Santana turns abruptly and slams the door to what she thought was going to be her future forever.

On the streets in front of her building, Santana stands and look up at the apartment window that once used to be her home. Now she doesn't know what to call it anymore. Everything starts to crumble and Santana is unable to hold it in any longer. Tears of betrayal and pain flood down her face.

"Fuck." She cries. "FUCK!" Santana breaks and falls down to her knees.

Santana felt numb and her chest was on fire. Each breath she inhaled felt like a gunshot. It felt like a million stab wounds punctured her heart.

A couple of New York bystanders walk by staring at Santana with a mix of discomfort and sympathy. But neither of them bother to stop and ask her if she was okay. Either way, Santana didn't want anyone to approach her right now.

She didn't want to go to Rachel or Kurt. They would just make her watch musicals or shoot her with a million questions. She needs someone who won't push her for questions right now and just hold her.

"Hey, sweet cheeks..." A sleazy homeless man came up with the foul stench of urine and fish. Without a second to lose, Santana gets up and starts walking towards a place where she know she'll feel safe.

—

"The ring was beautiful, Quinn!" The sound of Rachel voices echoes through the speaker of Quinn's cell phone. Quinn is sitting on her bed in her apartment in New Haven talking to Rachel about how Santana is proposing to Dani.

"The look on Santana's face when she talked about how she'll propose to Dani was adorable." Quinn hums to ensure Rachel that she hasn't drone off. Truth is, Quinn found it hard to say anything about Santana proposing. Her throat was dry and her head was spinning with all these conflicting feelings she was having.

"I can't wait to start planning the wedding!" Rachel squeals. "Do you think she'll ask me to be the maid of honor? Well she could ask you or Brittany but over the years you guys haven't spoken much..." Rachel tells honestly. And it was true. Brittany was off on her dance tour in Europe—she dropped out of MIT to pursue her dancing career. Brittany and Santana talk every month or so but they've lost the personal touch they used to have. While Quinn and Santana haven't talked in over months...maybe a year. Quinn has been busy with Yale and studying for her LSAT while Santana has been busy trying to get in the music industry and focused on her girlfriend. They were never really the type to talk through devices anyway. They were the type of best friends who are able to connect instantly when they meet each other face to face again. That's what Quinn loves about Santana, the simplicity of dropping all her barriers and connecting with just the mere presence of the girl in the room.

"Quinn? Quinn?" Rachel calls her name.

"Sorry. Zoned out." Quinn chuckles.

"Well, it is getting late. I should go to bed now since I have class tomorrow." Quinn nods. She looks at the clock and sees its past midnight. "I'll call you tomorrow and tell you all about Santana's proposal and the details of the wedding!"

Quinn fakes a laugh. "Alright. Well, night Rach."

"Night, Quinn!"

The phone call ends and Quinn tosses her phone on her bed. She stands up and moves towards the restroom to get ready for bed when an abrupt knock on the door startles her.

Strange. Quinn moves hesitantly towards the door and peeks through the peephole. She recognizes the face and, although a little shocked by the sudden appearance, opens the door immediately.

"Santana?"

Santana's make-up is smeared and her mascara is still running. Her eyes are red and puffy and she's shivering in the cold night air.

"C-can I...can I..." Santana struggles with words but the running tears drain her energy.

Quinn heart breaks and she immediately pulls Santana inside her apartment. Santana stands still waiting for Quinn to question her but Quinn doesn't say a word. Instead, Quinn pulls Santana into a bone crushing hug and let the girl release all of her energy and tears into her arms.

—

Quinn wakes up to Santana curled up beside her in bed. It confused Quinn for a moment but then she remembered how Santana came to her crying at her doorsteps. Quinn watches the tenseness in Santana's sleeping form and the dry tears at the corner of her eyes.

Quinn lightly pokes her finger between Santana's eyebrows and watches as the sleeping girl's face slowly relaxes.

She then turns to look at the clock on her drawer to see the clock flashing '6:30 a.m.' in bright red. This was the time Quinn typically gets ready for her 8 a.m. class. But with Santana sleeping next to her and the thought of leaving the girl alone had Quinn reluctant to leave.

Quinn bites her lips and stares longingly at Santana. *What the hell.* Quinn snuggles closer to Santana and drapes her arm around Santana's waist. *Business Calculus is a pain anyway...*

Hours later, Santana eyes flutter open and the first thing she sees is Quinn's flawless features. Santana, startled and slightly confused, stumbles out of the bed onto the floor.

"Ouch." She hisses in pain when her bottom breaks her fall.

Quinn, being a light sleeper, rubs her eyes and sits up. "Santana?"

Santana breathes slowly trying to remember the events of the previous nights. And when she remembers, she wishes she hadn't. Her eyes start to get watery again but she manages to keep them at bay because she doesn't want to cry anymore. It takes too much energy.

"Hey, Quinn..." Santana stands up awkwardly.

"Hey, Santana." Quinn smiles. "Is your ass okay?" Santana chuckles and crawls back into the bed. She lies on her side and looks up to Quinn.

"It's a little, sore. I could use a massage." Santana jests. Quinn rolls her eyes and falls back onto the bed next to Santana.

"I don't see you in over a year and first thing you want is me to grope your ass." Quinn chuckles and shakes her head.

Santana laughs softly and leans closer. "About last night, Quinn I..."

"Do you want waffles?" Quinn cuts Santana off.

Santana is taken aback a little. "What?"

"For breakfast. There's this diner not too far from here that serves amazing waffles and *bacon*..." Quinn zones out a little.

Santana laughs. "You and your obsession with bacon." Quinn smiles innocently and shrugs her shoulder. "I don't have clothes though..."

"It's okay, you can wear something of mine."

Santana groans. "But all you have are dresses."

Rolling her eyes Quinn pushes Santana gently. "That's not my entire wardrobe. I have jeans and a few nice tops."

"Finne. I'll wear your clothes since you really want your bacon." Santana jests.

"I really *really* do." Quinn rolls off the bed. She gets up to rummage through her closet to get clothes for Santana.

"Quinn..." Santana sits up on the bed.

"Yea, San?" Quinn turns around with her arm with a set of clothes.

"Thanks."

Quinn shrugs her shoulders. "It's just a couple of clothes, Santana. Don't get all sentimental on me." Quinn throws the clothes at Santana. Santana understands what Quinn is doing and couldn't be more grateful for it.

"Oh my god." Santana moans. "This is so good." Santana stuffs another piece of waffle in her mouth, chewing it openly.

Quinn is nibbling on a bacon watching Santana in amusement. "Told you!" Santana nods her head vigorously and stuffs her mouth with larger pieces of the waffle. Quinn tries to stifle her laughter but fails. She pulls out her phone and discreetly takes a picture of Santana with her cheeks full of waffle and whip cream.

"Hey!" Santana muffles with her mouth full.

Quinn is laughing with her cheeks tinged pink. "You look like a squirrel!" She laughs out.

Santana swallows down her food and wipes her mouth. "Delete that picture, Fabray!" She points her fork menacingly at Quinn.

Quinn sticks her tongue out. "Not for a million dollars." She saves a copy on her memory card. "That picture is perfect blackmail."

"Not cool, Fabray. Not cool!" Santana sulks in her seat and tries to be grim but her smile breaks the façade. Santana feels lighter, her heart still aches, but the burden of it all is lessened thanks to Quinn.

"So, where do you want to go after this?" Quinn leans forward.

"Don't you have class?"

Quinn shrugs. "I missed like two already, so no point of going to the rest."

Santana smiles. "Fabray playing hooky in college." Quinn rolls her eyes. "Well, what's fun to do here?"

"Well we could go watch a movie, go to the mall, go..."

"Mall!" Santana interjects. "I needs to get out of your clothes, Fabray!"

Quinn mocks offense. "Well!"

They both call for the check and gather their things, prepared to go. Santana looks at the check and notices the price. Santana starts to reach for money when Quinn stops her.

"My treat, S." Quinn drops a \$20 on the table.

"No, at least let me pay my part." Santana reaches through the pocket of her jacket for some loose change but then freezes when she grips a square object.

She pulls out the box slowly and stares at stoically. Quinn notices the box but doesn't say anything about it.

"Santana, it's okay. I'm paying this time." Santana turns to Quinn and doesn't say anything. "You can just treat next time, okay?" Santana nods her head but still has her mouth shut, afraid that if she opened her mouth only her cries will escape.

Quinn stands up and walks over to Santana with her hand out. "Come on, let's go shopping."

Santana eventually gets the feeling back in her body when she enters the mall filled with designer brand stores. Sure, it was nothing compared to New York but it was still impressive.

Santana and Quinn breeze through store to store at least trying on one outfit and only buying from the ones they can afford.

At the moment they were in the dressing room and Santana was putting on a dress show for Quinn. They were having a good time dressing up and posing like runway models, just like how they did in high school.

In the dressing room, Santana shimmied her slim figure into a red princess cut dress that fell about a few inches above her ankles. She smoothed her hand down the fabric and stared into the mirror with glassy eyes.

"I love the color red on you." Dani whispers in Santana's ear while drawing tiny circles in the inside of her thighs.

Santana kisses Dani softly and moans as her girlfriends fingers moving up.

"Promise me when we get married, you'll wear red."

A violent sob overpowers Santana as everything she was trying to lock away while with Quinn came emerging back to the surface.

Hearing the sound of cries, Quinn knocks on the dressing room door telling Santana to open it and let her in. Santana removes the latch of the door and runs into Quinn's arms.

"She...she cheated on me. She cheated on me, Quinn." Santana cries into Quinn's shoulder. "Why would she do that? Everything was going good...why?" Santana cries and Quinn holds onto her tighter.

"Because people don't know how good they have it sometimes." Quinn tries to console. "They don't see that they have the most beautiful thing in their hands and they let it all slip away by acting on impulse."

Santana grips onto Quinn, afraid that if she let go to the one thing that's keeping her standing, she'll never be able to get back up.

—

Santana and Quinn are in the living room of Quinn's apartment sitting on the couch eating a tub of ice cream while watching 'Mean Girl's'. Santana has her head placed comfortably on Quinn's shoulder while Quinn had her arm draped over Santana's.

In the middle of Jingle Bell Rock, Quinn notices a tiny wet spot on her shoulder. She looks down to see Santana lightly drooling.

Quinn silently laughs. "If you weren't so cute while sleeping I would be mad at you for drooling on me." She whispers and kisses Santana on her temples.

Quinn carefully moves and settles Santana laying down on the couch. She then gets a blanket from the closet and drapes it over her. Quinn kneels down and brushes the falling raven locks from Santana's sleeping face.

"She's an idiot, Santana." Quinn exhales softly. "Dani is an idiot for letting someone as beautiful and amazing as you go." Quinn ghosts her fingers over Santana's lips. "You deserve someone you can love and trust. Someone who will never leave your side. You deserve someone who will love you as much as you love them. Someone who will know you better than anyone else." Quinn bites her lips and slowly moves away from her. Afraid that her suddenly increasing affection towards her best friend will cause her to do something too soon.

Quinn moves into her bedroom and closes the door shut quietly.

Santana eyes flutter open and she stares hazily into space. She brings her finger up to her lips where Quinn smoothed her fingers over and a single tear falls down.

The next morning was a Saturday and Santana was the first to wake up. She decided to make breakfast for Quinn in appreciation for all she's done for the past two days. Santana placed a toast of bread and three pieces of bacon on a plate and grabbed a mug of coffee as she made her way to Quinn's room. Opening the door, Santana notices Quinn wrapped up in her sheets curled into a ball.

Santana steps closer to see Quinn's long hair flowed all over the pillow and her lips slightly parted. *Cute*. Santana muses as she watches the girl sleep. It's rare to see Quinn sleep since she's such a light sleeper. Even during their sleepovers she never got to see the former Cheerio captain sleeping.

Before Santana could have fun waking the girl, Quinn's nose wrinkles and her eyes shoot open at the scent of bacon. Hazel eyes look up at Santana who is smiling bashfully.

"Brought you breakfast." Santana blushes. *Why the hell am I blushing?*

Quinn heart warms at Santana bringing her breakfast in bed. She sits up and pats the bed for Santana to sit. Quinn grabs the plate and the mug of coffee gratefully.

"Santana Lopez bringing me breakfast in bed. I must be dreaming." Quinn bites on her toast and smirks at a tomato-faced Santana.

"Don't get used to it, Fabray. This is only going to happen this one time." Santana swings her legs back and forth and steals a piece of bacon.

"Hey!" Quinn pouts.

"So...about yesterday..."

Quinn pauses and swallows. "You don't have to talk about it if you—"

"I want to. I *need* to." Santana breathes heavily. Quinn nods in understanding and scoots over to give more room on the bed for Santana. Santana moves next to Quinn and stretches her leg down the bed. "I just got back to work and when I walked into the apartment...I heard the shower running and clothes littered on the ground. I didn't think much of it...I should have picked up on what was happening at the moment. I'm so stupid." Santana shakes her head.

"When I walked into the restroom, I pulled the shower curtain and...and..." Santana chokes on her tears.

"And I saw this redhead bitch with her hands on Dani..." Santana hiccups and wipes her tears furiously. "After that, all I saw was red. I pulled the bitch from the shower and started ripping the hair from her scalp."

Quinn touches the faint scratch on Santana's cheek. "Did she do this to you?" Quinn, slightly angry, asks.

"Yea...her nails were super long. I slapped the bitch, though."

Quinn smirks. "Good. Your slaps are very effective."

"I learned from the best." Santana laughs softly. She then exhales shakily and twists the fabric of her shirt.

"We...we've been together for 3 years and I thought we were doing well. Everything was great." Santana drops her head. "Maybe I was moving too fast and it scared her. Maybe that's why she cheated."

Quinn shakes her head. "That's no excuse for cheating."

"I know. I just...it makes me so angry and sad. And confused." Santana starts tearing up. "I just don't get why." She whispers brokenly. "I was going to ask her to marry me, Q."

"I know."

"I was going to take her to her favorite restaurant and ask her to marry me with her favorite song playing in the background. I was going to beg my father and mother to help pay for the wedding because I know she wants a big one. I was going to have a family with her and spend the rest of my life with her." Santana confesses. Quinn is surprised at the confession, only because she never in a years would thought that Santana Lopez, the slightly sadistic and closed-off girl, thought of these things.

"I don't even know if I can go back there, Q. What if she's still at the apartment waiting for me? Waiting to beg me for forgiveness and take her back?"

"Do you want to take her back?" Quinn peers into Santana.

Santana is silent for a few moments and thinks about the matter. "I..." She stammers. "I don't know."

Quinn heart falls a little as she was expecting something else. "You still want her back after she cheated on you?"

Santana shakes her head. "You don't get it."

Quinn scoffs. "I don't get it. Need I tell you about all my high school relationships?"

Santana sighs. "Sorry." She hits her head on the headboard. "Dani...she's the only thing that really made New York home to me. I mean, the hobbit and Porcelain and Bowtie are great to be

around..." Santana turns to Quinn quickly. "And if you tell them I said that I'll lie with a straight face." Quinn jokingly salutes.

"But Dani made me feel like my life wasn't a complete disaster. She didn't make me feel like the failure that I am."

"You're not a failure." Quinn replies instantly.

Santana waves her hand in the air. "I am, Quinn. I'm not even close to my dream job and I'm working at a bar at night still and at a café in the day. I'm still struggling my way through college, which by the way I'm a year or two behind from graduating like everyone else does at my age." Santana groans.

"Santana, you're the most successful person I know."

"Quinn..."

"Listen to me." Quinn holds up her hand. "You moved all the way to New York to chase after your dreams with not even a lot of money in your bank account. You managed to pay part of the expensive rent in New York while living with Kurt and Rachel on tips from working at the bar. Then you managed to get back into college, and not just any college, but NYADA. Then you took on more than one job and an internship at a music studio all the while paying rent and tuition. You eventually got your own apartment, without your parents lending you money, and managed not to get kicked out by the landlord." Santana grins and shoves Quinn playfully. "Santana Lopez, you are the most successful, driven, and independent person that I know."

"Dani was a fool to let you go. I'm not telling you to take her back or to ditch her because that's your decision. But honestly, Santana, I think you can find a better a girl."

Santana looks at Quinn thoughtfully. "But what if there's no one else like her. I mean, seriously, who would love someone like me?"

"There's someone out there for you Santana. Someone who will love you and all the baggage that you come with." Quinn pokes Santana. "I mean I love you, so that means you're pretty likeable."

Santana goes quiet. "You love me?"

Quinn stares at Santana and holds her breath before responding. "Yea, I do." Quinn breathes out.

Santana shifts uncomfortably. "Oh. Cool." She looks away for a moment. "I love you too, Q"

"You're blushing." Quinn teases.

Santana growls and hits Quinn with a pillow. "Shut up!" Quinn grabs a pillow and whacks Santana with it. They continue to throw pillows at each other while laughing freely and rolling on the bed. Santana manages to pin Quinn down while straddling her.

Santana is breathing heavily and her cheeks are red. "You tired already, Santana? You must be losing your touch." Quinn quips. Just when Santana was about to make a witty reply her cell phone goes off.

Santana was afraid to look at who was calling. She wasn't ready to face the music, she just wanted to stay in the bubble that she and Quinn have created. Quinn notices Santana's frozen state and proceeds to grab the phone off the desk to look at the caller ID.

Quinn smiles when she looks at the picture of the caller ID. "It's Rachel." Santana breathes a sigh of relief.

Quinn picks up the call and suddenly a frantic voice is heard. "Santana? Santana, where are you?! I found out about what happened! I was on your way to your place when I saw Dani and this redhead Amazonian woman leave the apartment with all of Dani's things! Santana? Are you there?"

Santana moves off of Quinn and walks out of the bedroom.

"Santana? Santana, answer me please! I need to know you're safe and not on the side of the street with a bottle of vodka!"

Quinn shakes her head at Rachel's exaggeration. "She's safe Rachel." Quinn replies.

"Quinn?" Rachel squeaks. "Why are you answering Santana's phone?"

"She came to me the night it happened."

"Why would she go to you and not me? I mean no offense..."

"Offense taken." Quinn quips. "Look, she's safe, not fine, but safe." She assures Rachel.

"Do you think...?"

"She'll ever get back together with Dani? I don't know." Quinn sits up. "But Santana is a strong and smart girl. She'll do what's best for her."

Rachel hums in agreement. Quinn says her goodbyes to Rachel as she was concerned about Santana at the moment. Setting the phone down, Quinn got out of the bed and out of the bedroom to find Santana leaning against the kitchen counter with a pensive expression.

"She left." Santana states. "With the other girl." Santana starts to cry. "She didn't even try to fight for me back. She just *left*."

Not really knowing what to say, Quinn pulled Santana in for a hug.

It was Sunday afternoon and Santana and Quinn were waiting at the train station. Santana knew she had to go back and deal with everything because she couldn't keep hiding inside Quinn's apartment—no matter how much she wanted to stay. Santana was going to miss having Quinn there to hold her when she wants to break and hold her tight at night. Now Santana has to go back to New York to her empty apartment.

Quinn wasn't exactly thrilled Santana was leaving either. She got used to waking up next to the girl and eating breakfast in bed with her. But she knew it was time for Santana to go. Not because of her work or class schedule. But because of her growing feelings for her best friend. Quinn can't stand being in the same bed with Santana without the urge of re-visiting what happened on Mr. Schue's wedding.

The intercom announced that the train to New York would be arriving in 5 minutes. Santana stood up with her things and Quinn followed.

"Well, guess this is me." Santana exhales. She turns and looks at the same hazel eyes that she's been waking up to for the past few days. "I know I don't say this often, but thanks Quinn." Santana pulls Quinn into a warm embrace and kisses her cheek.

Quinn shivers at the touch and holds onto Santana tighter. "Call me as soon as you get to New York."

"I will."

They pull away slowly and the train arrives and whistles loudly. Quinn and Santana stand in the middle of the station gazing at each other, unwilling to completely rip away from the embrace. Santana lightly pecks the corner of Quinn's lips.

Their faces are close and lips inches apart from each other. Quinn's heart is beating erratically and her face flushed. Clouded with desire, she closes the distance between Santana and her.

Santana stands frozen and shocked for the first few seconds of the kiss. But when she feels the tremble of Quinn's arm around her and soft lips slowly pulling away, Santana pulls Quinn back in.

Both girls move their lips slowly, savoring the sweet taste of each other's lips. The whistle to train goes off again calling for passengers to board before departure. Santana pulls away and turns to the train to see more passengers boarding on. Quinn opens her eyes and stares at Santana as if in a daze.

Santana looks back at Quinn and smiles at the far-off look on the blonde's facial features. "Was I that good, Fabray?" Santana jokes.

Quinn reels back to reality and looks at Santana with seriousness. "Santana, what are we?"

Santana chuckles. "I don't know Quinn." Santana runs her thumb on Quinn's smooth lips. "All I know is that I want to do that again sometime."

Quinn sighs into Santana's touch. "Me too."

"But I'm going to be honest with you, Q." Santana pulls out of the embrace. "I don't want to start anything right now because I need to clear the air with Dani first and get back on my feet. I don't want you to think you're a rebound or anything, Q." Santana tells Quinn honestly. "I want to be with you completely."

Quinn blushes. "I want to be with you too San. But I don't want to start anything right now either. I need to focus on school and I need to sort out my feelings for you before jumping in too soon."

Santana nods her head in understanding. "But we'll keep in touch right?"

Quinn moves to peck Santana's softly on the cheek. "Definitely." Santana tries to lean in for more but Quinn won't have it even if she really wants it. "You're going to miss the train."

Santana pouts. "Fine."

Quinn laughs. "Next time, when we're both ready, you can try again." Santana lights up and smiles as she slowly walks backwards to the train. "And maybe, if you're lucky, next time we meet it will become a three time thing." Santana stumbles and almost trips.

"What?" Santana blushes furiously.

"Bye, Santana!" Quinn starts to walk away and laughs when she hears Santana calling her name out from a distance.

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Won't make the same mistake twice, by

Brittanyisimyunicorn

Santana's P.O.V.

This party is going to be fucking awesome. I have everything set up and hopefully no one dies by the end of the night. My 18th birthday is going to be super unforgettable. The theme is masquerade, sexy right? I love the whole mysterious thing but since I know almost everyone...I'm sure it won't be hard to figure it out. It's a more modern take on a masquerade ball. I don't want people dressing like lady gaga or anything but dresses, suits and masks. The mask can be as crazy as people want though. I can't wait for it start. I invited the whole school, literally. I announced it over the PA system at school. This party is a birthday party and a graduation party since we seniors graduate in a week...well two since we have one more week of actual school then it's graduation rehearsal or something.

"This is gonna be awesome!" Brittany says from my right. We're both in the mirror in my bedroom fixing our hair. Everything is set up for the party so now it's just time to get ready.

"I know. This party will go down in history along with our names for being the most bad ass bitches to ever walk the halls of that lame school." I say and Brittany chuckles.

Britts and I have been bff since we were in diapers and I love her like a sister. I love her to pieces and when we graduate, we're going to travel together, We're going to Europe for a year then decide what else we want to do.

"What is taking you guys so long? I've been ready for almost an hour." Rachel says as she walks into my room. Rachel is the third to part to this bad ass trio. Britt and I met her in the second grade and though she annoyed me, B loved her so I accepted her and oddly I started to like her. In middle school we had to stop her from becoming a loser but other than that, Rachel is like my other sister. We ran that school together. I'm head cheerleader and captain of the swim team, Rachel is captain of the debate team and Britt...well Britt is just loveable Britt. Everyone likes her and together we sat on the very top of the social pyramid. Rachel isn't going to stay with us in Europe though, She got into Harvard and she's going in the fall but we're spending the summer together.

"We have to look hot Rachel, that takes time." I say and I see her roll her eyes through the mirror. Rachel walks over to my bed and sits down.

"So is mystery girl going to make an appearance tonight?" Rachel asks me and I spin my chair around to look at her.

"She still hasn't given me an answer so I don't know." I tell her. 'Mystery Girl' is a girl I met online. It was a complete accident actually. I was trying to send an email but typed the address

wrong. She emailed me back and we kind of ended up talking and we've been talking for about six months now. The crazy part is that I don't know her real name or what she looks like. I just know she's my age and lives close.

"I'm still scared she's really some forty year old dude." I say.

"I doubt it because only an idiot would show up to high school party. Even with a mask they wouldn't blend in." Rachel says and I roll my eyes.

"How haven't you guys exchanged numbers or even found out each others names yet?" Rachel asks.

"We don't...we don't talk about simple stuff like that I guess...we just talk about our likes, hobbies, life...deep shit." I tell her.

"Well hopefully you can find all this out tonight, if she comes."

"I hope she comes." Brittany says.

"Why?" I ask.

"Because you like her and she makes you happy and hopefully you guys can be together."

"Well...I hope so too I guess. Hand me my mask behind you." Brittany tosses me my mask and I turn back to the mirror to put it on.

"I don't think she's coming though." I say as I adjust the feathers on my mask. The mask is red with black feathers to match my red dress and covers my forehead down to my nose. My dress is a form fitting strapless dress that stops at my thighs. There's black lining around the bust until it gets to the black jewels that stop half way on my stomach. It also has this red see through train in the back. As I fix my hair around the mask I hear my phone chime. I get up and grab it from the bed. It's an email from her.

"She's coming."

I'm so fucking nervous. I really do like her but...god please let her be a woman. I'm so nervous because I think she's not real. This person I've gotten so close to and shared so many things with...she could be a huge lie and I don't know how I would recover from that. I just need her to be real. I go to the kitchen and pour myself a shot to calm my nerves. I'm supposed to meet her in the hall under the stairs...like right now. Okay, I can do this. I take another shot before walking to the hall and waiting against the wall. I'm surprised there isn't that many people in this hall. My house is huge so the party is both on the main floor and in the basement, both levels are packed full of people and the music is blasting from every crevice. I close my eyes until a light pressure on my hand. I open them to see a blonde standing in front of me in a blue dress with a black mask. Her mask covers as much of her face as mine does but parts of her mask go up so it covers most of her forehead. The dress is sort of...the classic masquerade ball wear, where it's just big at the bottom for no reason but fitting at the top.

"Waiting for someone?" She says leaning into me, in a smooth voice.

"Are you...you?" I say and she chuckles.

"I think so. Don't think I can be anyone else."

"You know what I mean." I say and she nods.

"It's me." I can't help the smile that breaks free on my face but I don't care. My smile promoted the smile currently on her face and I'm sure I've never seen anything else so beautiful...other than her eyes.

"You want to go somewhere? It's pretty loud." She nods her head and I walk past her and the other few people in the hall. I lead her upstairs and walk to the end room. I open the door and let her walk in before me. I turn on the light and close the door as I walk inside.

"This is my dad's office. It's sound proofed, I don't know why but it's quiet in here." I tell her and she nods her head as she walks over to my father's leather couch.

"He's a psychologist, I told you that right?" I ask and she nods again as she sits down. I walk to the couch and sit next to her but not very close.

"This is your house?" She asks and I nod my head.

"Yeah. How long have you been here?" I ask and she shrugs.

"About an hour maybe."

"Enjoying the party?" I ask.

"Yeah, I brought some friends just in case this went wrong. That was them in the hall, that's how I knew to go up to you." She says and I nod my head. Smart girl. I lost Rachel and Brittany a long time ago.

"I was afraid you weren't real." I say and she chuckles lightly.

"So was I but luckily you are because I didn't want to have to kick your ass if you were some guy." She says and I laugh.

"Kick my ass? You couldn't beat me in thumb wrestling." I say and she laughs now.

"Bring it." She holds her hand out to me and I take it. Her hands are so soft. I knew I had feelings for this girl but I just...I didn't expect this. Just holding her hand made my breath hitch. We ended up playing that game like nine times because I won first then she won then I won again. I feel so comfortable around her because...she already knows me. I don't have to be anyone but myself around her. I don't have to be school Santana where I'm a huge bitch, I can just be myself. I'm only ever like this with Britt and Rachel. We made our way outside and into the backyard where we're walking through my mothers garden.

"Why has it taken so long for us to meet?" I ask her as we walk.

"I was kind of afraid." She says as she looks at flowers.

"Meeting you would actually make this real and...I wasn't sure I was ready for that." She says as we stop walking.

"Make what real?" I ask.

"My feelings..." I move closer to her but she takes a step back.

"I have to go." She says. What?

"What? Why do you have to go now?" I say but she keeps walking backwards to get away from me.

"I'm sorry." She says then she starts running towards the house. I follow her but once I get in the house, I lose her. What the fuck just happened?

"San cheer up." Brittany says as she taps my hand. I keep playing with the food on my tray and sigh. How could I be such a fucking idiot? I still don't know her fucking name, have her number...anything...but if I did, what good would that do? She won't return my emails. She's not interested...I'm just so confused.

"Britt it's only been a week, San needs time." Rachel says from her seat at our lunch table.

"I just don't get it..." I say with a sigh.

"You'll be alright, just give it some time." Rachel says and I sigh then stand.

"I'll see you guys later." I grab my tray and throw it away before I leave the cafeteria. I walk to the auditorium and sit in one of the seats in the back, by the wall. I always come here to be alone when I'm in an emotionally fucked up place. The only people who come in here is the drama club and I don't think they'll be here today. I put my feet up on the seat in front of me and stare at the ceiling. The one time I actually get feelings for someone and this happens...fuck my life. I close my eyes but open them quickly as I hear foot steps and mumbled talking. I guess the drama club did decide to come in here. I watch as they appear on stage and some people walk past my row of seats to get to the stage. I guess they have a production coming up. I get up from my seat since I know they're probably going to want me to leave. I walk down the row of seats and to the aisle. As I walk up to the door I grab my phone from my pocket and look at it for the time when someone bumps into me.

"Watch it." I say glaring at the blonde in front of me with the...her eyes...they made my breath hitch like...

"It's you." She's caught and she knows it. I can tell from her facial expression but she hasn't said a word.

"Can I talk to you?" I ask her. She bites her lip but nods and turns to walk back to the door she just came through. I follow and once we're in the hall I start talking.

"Why have you been ignoring me? What's up with you?" I ask and she shrugs.

"Talk to me." I say and she sighs.

"You really don't remember me do you?" She says and I furrow my eyebrows.

"What are you talking about?" She sighs and runs a hand threw her hair.

"Santana I've been in at least one of your classes since middle school. Imagine me shorter with acne, braces, huge glasses and about thirty pounds heavier." What...wait...shit.

"Ringing some bells?" She says and I sigh.

"Quinn." She nods her head and crosses her arms over her chest. I was a huge bully in middle school and a little of freshman year but I stopped. I targeted almost everyone but there were only a few I did horrible things to...and Quinn was one of them.

"I didn't...I...I don't even know how where to begin to apologize." I say and Quinn shakes her head.

"When you emailed me...I already knew it was you. I hated you for so long Santana but I hated myself more for letting you push me around and not standing up for myself. So when I got that email, I saw it as an opportunity to get back at you. I wanted to crush you and I figured the easiest way would be to humiliate you...I was going to completely expose you to the entire school, every dirty little secret you have."

"Why didn't you?" I ask. I want to be mad but...I can't. Not after the way I treated her.

"I fell for you...and I just couldn't hurt you like that."

"I'm sorry for what I did to you Quinn. I mean it." She nods her head.

"I know."

"I know I fucked up but...if you're willing to forgive me, I still want to see where this could go."

"Even after you know what I was going to do to you?" She asks and I shrug.

"I would have deserved it." Quinn nods and moves closer to me.

"You would have but...I do want to give you the chance to redeem yourself." She says with a smirk.

"So we're trying this?" I ask and Quinn nods then pulls me into a hug. I hold her close and bury my head into hair inhaling a sweet vanilla, my new favorite scent.

"I have to get to rehearsal." She says as she pulls back from our hug. I pull away but take her hand in mine.

"Let's go." I say.

"You can't be in there." She says and I shrug my shoulders.

"I don't care. I'll hide or something." Quinn shakes her head.

"No but you can meet me when it's over." I sigh but nod my head. I finally get her number then kiss her cheek before I leave. I may have hurt her in the past but there's no way in hell I'd make the same mistake twice.

NSA, by buffy46143

Santana Lopez was an entry-level analyst. Her job was tedious at best. She was supposed to get promoted 6 months ago to field work, but the obnoxious, brown noser Quinn Fabray got the job over her. There were rumors that she got it because she was doing the boss, but Santana thought she was too much of a goody-goody for that to actually be true.

Santana knew Quinn had scored higher on the various aptitude tests you have to take to work at the NSA in their department, but Santana had scored higher on the field related tests so she was leaning back on that rumor maybe being true after all.

This analysis work required her to listen in on people's private conversations for hours on end. At first, she thought it was kind of exciting getting to hear how people talk to each other and what they talk about. Things like picking up milk for the kids seemed to come up a lot she noticed and added to her reports mostly because she liked being a smart ass and she knew her boss would hate having to go through all those boring details while they're trying to search for possible security threats and terrorists.

The truth was that Santana was bored and she was considering a transfer to another division of the US government all together. She came to the NSA with hopes of tracking down terrorists and so far all she had heard was one guy who passed along confidential information in a voicemail. He was CIA though so that was a big no no and Santana had to report it. He lost his job of course and she moved onto the next call.

Today, was one of those days. Listen. Record. Listen. Record. Type a report that contained very little information of note and move on to the next. Just as she was about to click on the next audio file, she noticed Quinn Fabray walk into the office and she peered over her cubicle to see her walking into the boss's office. She was constantly looking to see if there was anything between them she could tell with body language through the glass of the office walls. She had originally studied behavior and planned to be an FBI profiler so she was good at picking up on those subtle body and tone cues that most people miss.

Quinn walked in and sat down in the chair opposite the desk. It appeared she was talking. She had her back to Santana though so Santana stood and grabbed her coffee mug; walking it over to the coffee pot that rested on a table next to the office. She eyed the stale donuts and crinkled her nose at the sweet smell of the glaze. She had given up both carbs and sugar and was seriously craving something sweet even if that was a two-day old donut. She looked over at Quinn who was leaning back in the chair with her arms just resting nonchalantly in her lap. It was neither closed off leave me alone body language but nor was it open and come over to my lap body language. This girl was good. Santana caught herself staring when Quinn's eyes met her own and she wrinkled her brow.

While the two had had very little outside the office contact, they had come up through the agency together and had to work on a couple of classified ops and work late nights. It was during the second one of those ops that Santana had noticed how hot Quinn was. She had just gotten

her hair cut shorter and those blonde locks now barely covered her neck. Santana had caught herself staring at the neck several times that late night at the office while Quinn was leaning over the table staring at her computer.

Quinn's eyes went back to the big boss and Santana took the coffee she wouldn't actually drink back to her desk. She noticed Quinn stand and leave the office and she averted her glance as she watched Quinn approach her cubicle. Her eyes were glued to her computer and her hand was stiff on the mouse gripping it tightly with the nerves she was constantly fighting around this girl.

"Hey, have you listened to that potential FBI candidate yet?" She asked while leaning lazily over the short cubicle wall. Santana once again had to avert her eyes because Quinn's shirt was a low-cut one today.

"Not yet, why?" Santana had been about to click that audio file and put her headphones on just as Quinn had arrived.

"Because I'm supposed to listen to it with you."

"Why? It's just a standard, enhanced background check?"

"I don't know, Santana. I was just told to do it and when I'm asked to do things, I do."

"Why are you getting all pissy with me right now? I'm just asking you a question. You're field certified now. Shouldn't you be in the field?"

"I'm not getting pissy. I'm supposed to listen in on all possible FBI Academy attendees now. It's a part of the promotion they failed to mention to me before. Can we just do it? It's already 5 and I want to get out of here at some point tonight."

She went to pull a chair from her cubicle and drag it over. She sat it next to Santana while Santana pulled out another set of standard issue NSA analyst headphones and sat them next to her keyboard for Quinn. When Quinn went to grab them, their hands touched only momentarily, but it was enough to send shockwaves through Santana's body. She regained her composure and plugged in the extra set to her computer while Quinn put the headphones around her neck awaiting the start of the audio file. Sure, she could send Quinn the file and they could listen to it separately, but if the boss insisted they listen to it like this, who was she to argue?

"Got a hot date tonight or something Fabray?"

"Yeah, with my bathtub, Lopez. Maybe some wine and some music and a candle or two." She grabbed a pen and a notebook from Santana's stockpile on her desk. "I'm exhausted. The flight back from New York was bumpy and long and I had to sit behind someone who put the seat back as far as they could and then proceeded to move around so much that the tray table with my laptop on it would move every time I went to add something to my report."

"The promotion's not all it's cracked up to be it sounds."

"It's fine. I'm just tired. Can we get started?"

"Fine, blondie."

Santana found the audio file named Forbes_5.1.14 and clicked on it to begin. They both put their headphones on. Part of being an entry-level analyst required Santana to listen to phone calls of potential government employees for certain divisions. This was not something that was shared with the general public, nor was it shared with the people they were spying on. This file was an incoming call from a Judy McLachlan to a potential FBI Academy candidate named Veronica Forbes. The FBI had tagged this candidate because they are seeking to grant her higher security clearance so she can work at the Behavioral Analysis Unit in Quantico and handle serial cases overseas for other law enforcement agencies like Interpol. Santana had already listened to one of her benign calls to a Sarah Whitaker where they talked about a trip they were thinking about taking with their significant others and mentioned Russia and more specifically, Putin. This sounded like two friends just planning a trip, but because of the topic and the times, Santana's boss wanted her to listen in on one more call to see if anything comes of it. Santana thought a trip to France or Italy would be much smarter for Americans given the current climate, but it's not like she can participate in the calls. She just listens. This should be the last call for this Forbes character and then she'll file the report and move onto the next unsuspecting American.

The call started off slowly at first. It seemed like to people talking about their days. Quinn's pen sat upright as she waited for something to write down, but there didn't appear to be anything interesting they needed to record. Santana could smell her Calvin Klein perfume as she leaned further over their now shared desk and she could also see the back of that neck she longed to touch. Just as she tried to snap herself out of it, the topic of the conversation changed. Quinn's eyes got big and Santana looked over at her to check her reaction.

They could both tell that these two were a couple from the beginning, but it was now more than evident that they were about to engage in phone sex and Santana had yet to have to listen in on one of these types of calls and she didn't know if she should stop it or keep it playing. She looked to Quinn for some sort of sign of what to do given that now she is at least in some ways her superior, but Quinn seemed to be immersed in the caller's conversation so Santana just decided to focus too.

"I think I want to start how I did last night when I went down to bite the inside of your thigh. Do you want me to lick it after?" Santana recognized that voice as Forbes's.

"Yes, baby. Please."

"Okay. I'll lick it with my tongue and then move further away and do it again before moving back up."

"Yes!"

Santana was starting to get turned on just by listening to the heavy breathing being exchanged between the two. She tried to keep her eyes on her screen where she was supposed to be typing any details to report, but she couldn't help but give a sideways glance when she noticed Quinn begin to move a little in her chair. Santana hadn't thought to ask about Quinn's sexual preference in the few personal conversations they've actually had, but it appeared listening to this

was either getting her turned on or making her uncomfortable. Santana decided to take full advantage.

"You alright there, Fabray? Need some water or something?"

Quinn glared at her.

"I'm fine." She retorted and stared back down at her notebook.

Santana couldn't help but notice that Quinn's legs were a little more clenched than they were before and she smirked as she returned her eyes to the computer and her ears to the call.

"Fuck baby! Cum for me!"

Santana could feel herself getting wet and having Quinn sit so close to her was just making it worse. She felt her thighs tighten as she tried to move in her chair to get more comfortable.

"Have you ever listened to something like this before?" Quinn finally asked in a shy, hushed voice that Santana couldn't determine if it was from awkwardness or just trying to keep her voice low so she could listen to the call.

"Like this? No." Santana answered while shifting again in her chair and noticing Quinn do the same thing. "Are you... I mean, do you want me to turn it off?"

"No!" It was a half shout that made Santana smirk again.

"Okay."

"I think I have the perfect thing to make you cum again, baby! I remember something from earlier where I mentioned you being between my legs and me coming in your mouth!"

"Fuck!" McLachlan was clearly near the edge and Forbes was doing all the right things to get her there.

Santana looked back over at Quinn who now had her legs spread even wider and was leaning back with her eyes closed. Santana could feel herself get wetter at that site because Fabray always wore skirts when she was in the office. Her long legs were bare and exposed and Santana's hand started to move from the keyboard on its own. She stopped it momentarily to look around the office. Everyone had left at 5. They were alone in only a semi-lit room. Should she risk it or just live with the throbbing that had started between her legs?

"God baby, I want to fuck you so hard. I want to put that dildo inside you and slide on top of you so I can use my hips to push it in as far as it will go!"

"Jesus!" Quinn exclaimed still with her eyes closed.

Santana couldn't hold back any longer. She had wanted this girl for so long now and the ache she inside her was telling her, "Fuck her already!"

Her hand slid slowly across to Quinn's thigh resting on top of her skirt. Quinn's eyes popped open and she turned to look into Santana's hungry eyes. Santana could see how turned on Quinn

was and she wanted to feel it too. She slid her hand under the skirt allowing it to bunch up around Quinn's upper thigh.

"Fuck Santana!" Quinn exclaimed still with the headphones over her ears.

"Do you want me to stop?" Santana asked even though she didn't really want to ask.

"No."

Her fingers slid to Quinn's center where she could feel through her underwear how wet she was and Quinn's legs opened even wider as her eyes closed awaiting what was to come next. Santana rubbed up and down over the sheer material, but she wanted more.

She heard McLachlan cum through her headphones while Forbes was still moaning and she could feel her clit get harder from the sounds. She needed more of Quinn.

She jerked off the headphones and pushed Quinn's rolling chair backwards causing her eyes to jut open at both the movement and the loss of Santana's fingers.

Santana moved to a kneeling position and pulled the chair back toward her spreading those legs around her head while moving the skirt even further up.

"God Fabray, you're fucking wet as hell right now!" She used her fingers to pull down the underwear that were really destroyed and tossed them under the desk as she pulled herself in closer to Quinn's center.

"Take care of it." Quinn rolled her head back after she said it and Santana looked up at the girl she had wanted for months as those hazel eyes closed again.

"I plan to."

Her mouth went to Quinn's clit and Quinn's hips bucked in reaction. Santana couldn't hear the call through her own headphones anymore, but Quinn had removed her headphones leaving them around her neck. She had also apparently unplugged both sets from the computer because the whole room was filled with the sounds of Forbes moaning as McLachlan continued to tell her what she was going to do to her.

"I'm going to use my thumb on your clit while my fingers are buried inside you."

Santana sucked on Quinn's clit harder when she heard that and Quinn's moans started to meet the others and the sound was like nothing else she had ever heard before. She was about to cum while just kneeling there. Her tongue jutted out and started pulsing against Quinn's clit as it swelled against her. She moaned when Quinn moaned and Quinn felt it as her hand moved to the back of Santana's hand.

"God, that feels good!" She said even though Santana already knew she was making her feel good.

Santana's hands went to Quinn's bucking hips to try to hold them down so she could keep doing what she was doing. Her tongue moved down toward Quinn's entrance and the angle was off a little, but she was able to push it inside and Quinn's body twitched from the pleasure of it all

while Santana moved one hand so she could use her fingers to play with the clit she had just left alone.

"Fuck Fabray! Cum for me already." She said into her clit when her tongue replaced her fingers after a few minutes.

"Use your fingers, Lopez!" Quinn demanded.

Santana didn't need any more encouragement as two fingers slid inside Quinn and Quinn's body went basically limp against the ergonomically designed chairs. She pushed her fingers in deep while still using her tongue against her. She went in and out and in and out and in and out and Quinn seemed like she was about to fall out of her chair so Santana's other arm was across her body to prevent that because despite the pain in her knees from the thin, uncomfortable carpet they were resting on, she was not yet done with this experience and didn't want to get up. Her fingers moved inside Quinn's body and Santana could tell by her moans and screams that she was getting close.

"I haven't even cum yet, baby!" Santana heard Forbes say to McLachlan in between loud moans and expletives.

"Oh baby, you sound so good right now," McLachlan replied in a hushed voice.

Santana decided to encourage Quinn's sounds too.

"God Fabray, you sound fucking hot right now!"

That was enough. Quinn's body couldn't take anymore and Santana heard her scream her name while her fingers continued to move inside her. She slowed her pace a little and flicked her clit one last time. She stayed down there while Quinn came down and finally leaned back and closed Quinn's legs feeling her shudder when they came together.

"How long have you wanted to do that?" Quinn asked her when she was finally able to open her eyes and stare down at her.

"Since you got that haircut."

"Really?"

"Yeah. You?"

"Since I found out from the boss that you'd be into it."

"What?" Santana exclaimed and stood. Quinn leaned forward and started unbuttoning her black pants. Her eyes were glued to what her hands were doing.

"Yeah, she knows I'm gay. We've actually gone to a couple of bars together. She told me you were too."

"She did?"

Quinn's hands moved to slide the pants off of Santana's legs and encouraged her to step out of them, which she did. Quinn's hands went to Santana's ass and her eyes went to the wet spot on her panties.

"She said you got drunk at the holiday party last year and told her. I wasn't really sure you'd be into this until she told me that. Now, I definitely know you're into it." She flicked her glance at the panties and up to Santana's eyes.

"Just fuck me already, Fabray."

Quinn's eyes darkened and she pulled the panties down so Santana could step out and then ended up on the floor somewhere next to hers from earlier. Santana straddled her on the sturdy chair and Quinn's fingers immediately went inside her while her thumb went directly to her clit.

"I see you're already almost there." She commented while Santana's hips began to rock against her body and Quinn used her other arm to hold her close.

It didn't take long for Santana to cum against her fingers and when she was finished, her head was resting against Quinn's shoulder.

"Did you do the boss too, Fabray?" Santana finally came down enough to ask between breaths.

Quinn laughed and Santana could feel it through her body.

"No. I wanted you, not her. I do think she wants me though so if you're looking for a promotion, you might not want to mention this little encounter to her."

It was Santana's turn to laugh. She leaned back so she could meet Quinn's eyes.

"That was the best call I've ever had to listen to. I guess this job isn't as boring as I thought after all."

Quinn laughed again as Santana stood in front of her and began grabbing the clothing they had discarded.

"Do you want this to happen again?" Quinn asked while pulling on her underwear.

"Do you?"

"I asked you first."

"Fucking mature, Quinn."

Quinn shook her head.

"Yes, I want this to happen again, but not in the office. At least not tonight. I want you to fuck me in my bed tonight." They were both standing. Santana's back was against the desk and Quinn was leaning over her with her hands on either side of her body against the desk.

"What about that relaxing bath you were going to take?"

Quinn leaned into her ear to whisper while her finger dragged up Santana's arm slowly.

"I want you to fuck me from behind with my strap-on, Santana."

Santana's eyes got wide with that. She always assumed that Quinn was a shy somewhat prudish girl. Little did she know, she was a lady in the streets, but a freak in the bed.

"Let's get the fuck out of here, Fabray."

And to think this whole thing all started by listening to two people get each other off. Santana wasn't going to put that in her report, but she was definitely going to approve Forbes for the FBI.

They drove separately because neither of them really knew what was going to happen after the promised sex. Santana was nervous as she drove to Quinn's apartment. It didn't make sense because she had already made her scream her name earlier. This was just round two, but there was something in Quinn's confidence at the office that made her want her even more and Santana wasn't accustomed to wanting girls this way. She was the one girls usually wanted like this while she was only mildly amused with them in return.

Quinn was different though and she wondered if she was different for Quinn in the same way. She gripped the steering wheel tighter until her knuckles whitened at the thought of Quinn going down on her. She cursed herself for not wearing a skirt today, but she had been running late this morning and just grabbed the same pair of pants she had worn the day before from the floor where she had left them. The reason she was running late though is now entirely relevant because she spent time lying in bed with her fingers pressed against her clit while she thought of fucking Quinn with those same fingers. It took her a while to get herself off because when she's doing it herself, she likes to drag it out. It's become her daily ritual when there's not a one-night stand lying next to her. Wake up early with the idea of reading a report before work so she can try to get ahead and maybe get the next promotion, but then her thoughts drift to Quinn taking a morning shower and her lifting her leg slightly so she can reach her calves as she uses a loofa to apply her Moonlight Path body wash that Santana recognized and maybe also bought for herself once or twice.

Those thoughts cause her to get wet and then her fingers move into her underwear and she just has to take her time as she fantasizes about what it would be like to be in that shower with Quinn. Her fingers always start slowly and they usually begin lower at her entrance while she circles it and tries to get herself going.

Her knuckles grew even whiter on the steering wheel as she thought about her earlier fantasy. Just then, she heard her text notification. She let go of the wheel for a second to pull her phone out of her purse to see a text from Quinn.

Fabray: I want your clothes off as soon as the door is closed and I want you fucking me seconds later.

"Jesus fucking Christ!" Santana exclaimed while she set the phone in the cup holder and kept a hard grip on the wheel with the other hand.

Another message.

Fabray: I already took my underwear off. They're sitting on the passenger seat.

That was all she could take. Santana's hand went to her pants so she could undo the buttons again and her hand wasted no time sliding in. She knew she wouldn't get off like this, but her body needed someone or something to be touching it right now.

She was still wet from earlier. Now that she was thinking about it, she'd pretty much been wet all day. From the moment she thought of Quinn in that shower to the moment she noticed her empty desk at work and thought about fucking her on it to the moment at lunch when she made her way to the bathroom and thought about fucking her in there to the moment Quinn showed up and went into the office to talk with their boss and she glanced her way to the moment when she heard the first moans from that call they were supposed to be documenting to right now as her finger danced around her clit because she knew if she touched it directly, she'd probably come undone despite the awkward angle and the trying to focus on driving.

Fabray: 2 minutes and we'll be there. When you're done, I want you to sit on my face so I can eat you out.

Santana had to pull out her fingers because she knew she was almost there and she wanted Quinn to get her the rest of the way. Her breathing was already labored.

She watched Quinn pull her car into the apartment complex and she pulled up behind her. Quinn wasted no time in grabbing her bag from the car and walking to her front door, which luckily for both of them was only a few steps away. She didn't even turn around to see if Santana was behind her. She unlocked it and walked in immediately pulling off her shirt with the door still wide open. Santana glanced around and saw the place was pretty much deserted so she pulled her shirt off on the front steps and threw it inside the apartment along with her purse. She walked right through the front door and slammed it behind her while she watched Quinn unzip her skirt and let it fall to the ground. Santana's hands were on her in an instant with her lips meeting Quinn's for the first time. Damn that girl could kiss. Her tongue met Quinn's and she couldn't wait to see what it would do to the rest of her body later. Quinn pulled her mouth away and stood in front of Santana flushed.

"Pants off, Santana." She ordered. Santana was getting so hot just seeing this side of the girl who sits pretty much silently at work unless prodded to participate.

Santana pulled her pants down and took her underwear with them. Quinn started to walk toward what Santana assumed had to be the bedroom. She'd either get the full tour late or she wouldn't. She didn't really fucking care right now.

Quinn's bra was on the living room floor and Santana tossed hers next to it as she walked past it. Quinn started rifling through a drawer in her dresser. Santana walked quickly over to Quinn wrapping her arms around her waist while her left hand drifted downward. Her lips met Quinn's shoulder blade and then her teeth followed. Quinn jumped a little as she found what she had been searching for and pulled it out. Santana's finger slowly moved toward her clit, but Quinn's hand met it and stopped it.

"With this. Now." She turned in Santana's arms and shoved her strap-on into Santana's chest.

"What the fuck is going on with you tonight, Fabray? Where is this horny girl at work every day?"

"You must just bring it out in me."

With that, a very naked and wet Quinn Fabray took her position on all fours on her bed that was still made from her not sleeping in it the night before. Santana hustled to get herself strapped into a harness that she wasn't familiar with and hopped onto the bed behind Quinn who was turned to look back at her.

"You ready?" Santana asked her with her hand on her back.

"Put it in."

Santana leaned forward and took hold. She moved the tip of the dildo to Quinn's entrance and felt her move beneath her as it touched her sensitive spots. She pushed it inside and felt Quinn's body lurch forward slightly.

"God, that feels good," Santana announced while her hips began to move forward to push it further into Quinn, but she was feeling something on her clit too because of the work she had done earlier.

"Hard, Santana. I don't have all fucking night."

"Damn it, Fabray! Shut the hell up and let me fuck you how I want too!"

Santana gripped Quinn's hips and pushed herself inside her while Quinn gasped at how good it felt. Santana started a fast rhythm because as much as she'd like to hear Quinn beg for it, she really just wanted to get her off and she needed to get herself off too and with each thrust, her clit was throbbing more and more begging for its own release.

"Fuck! Don't stop!" Quinn's hips began to move in time with Santana's so that when she moved back, Santana moved forward at the same time and Quinn was already practically screaming, but Santana wasn't done yet. She quickly reached around and found Quinn's clit. "Yeah, like that!" Quinn moaned while Santana started pressing her fingers into her front while she was riding her with the strap on from behind. Quinn moved one of her arms to Santana's hand to show her where she wanted it while the other arm strained to hold up her body. Once Santana was where she wanted her, she kept her hand there to mimic the movements on top of it and it didn't take long for the dildo to hit her right inside and Santana's fingers to hit her right on the outside. "Yes, God! Fuck!" Santana pulled her fingers away and Quinn kept working while her arms went back around her hips to keep pushing hard inside her so she could ride out her orgasm for as long as possible.

When she could feel Quinn come down, she pulled back and out. Her clit felt like it was about to explode and she wanted to keep going just to get herself where Quinn was, but she really wanted to do what Quinn had suggested earlier so she worked quickly to take the harness off her body and toss it off to the side, but still on the bed in case they needed it later. Quinn had fallen onto her stomach after Santana had pulled out and was just starting to turn herself over. It

was then that Santana really saw her full frontal naked form for the first time and she smirked at the sight while she went to crawl on top of her.

"Eager, are we?" Quinn teased while wrapping her arms around Santana's neck and pulling her down for a heated and thorough kiss. Santana's hips moved down so their bodies could meet and she began moving them against Quinn's body. Quinn moved her arms down to Santana's hips and even though she wanted those movements to continue, she really wanted to taste the girl on top of her so she used her hands to stop Santana's movements again.

"Fuck Quinn! Let me get off already." Santana's sexual frustration had been building all the way over here and she was so ready to just let go, she couldn't contain it.

"I don't know if you deserve it after that comment." She leaned up pretending like she was going to kiss her again, but pulled back before their lips met. "Beg me, Lopez."

Santana squinted her eyes. Never in her life had she begged for sex. It was always readily available. Anytime she wanted to get laid, she only needed to go to a bar and find some girl and they'd be naked within an hour, but there was something about Quinn telling her to beg for it that got her even hotter.

"This better be fucking good, Fabray."

"Oh, it will be."

"Then fucking fuck me already."

"Say it, Santana."

Santana considered this for a moment before relenting. She'd deal with the consequences of letting Quinn dominate her like this tomorrow.

"Please fuck me, Quinn."

"How?" Quinn asked while she started to shimmy her body underneath Santana.

"With your tongue." Santana was barely able to get that out because Quinn was moving down her body leaving little kisses and bites on various parts as she went. She made her way to Santana's wet center and pulled hard on her hips to get her right where she wanted her.

"Stay quiet or I'll stop." She ordered as she lightly brushed her tongue against Santana's clit.

"What?" Santana questioned.

"I want you to stay quiet while you cum this time." She licked her bottom to top.

"God, I don't think I can."

"Then, I'll stop."

Quinn gripped Santana's ass and dug her fingers into it. Santana's whole body clenched and she noticed her knuckles whiten again as they gripped the sheets and mattress from her all fours position.

"You have to really start before you stop, Fabray. Fuck me and I'll try to stay quiet."

"Or else?" Quinn teased again while using her teeth gently on Santana's clit.

"Or else you'll stop. I get it. Please, just..."

Quinn's mouth was attacking her all over. Her tongue was moving down and sliding in and out of her body before moving back up to her clit again. Her hands were now on her back and her short nails were scraping Santana in the best way possible. She knew there would be a mark there tomorrow, but she'd deal with that then just like everything else. She was doing what she could to be quiet, but a few whimpers came out every now and then. Finally, she couldn't hold it in anymore and she let out a deep moan. Quinn's tongue pulled out and Santana continued to move her hips against her face still seeking her release, but Quinn pushed her up slightly so she was hovering above.

"What did I say, Lopez?"

"Fuck Quinn! I'm so close. Just keep going."

"What did I say?"

"I'll be quiet. I'm sorry. Just don't stop."

Quinn squinted at her from her position and smirked a wicked smirk before moving her hand between her face and Santana's hovering center. She slowly pushed a digit inside her while Santana lowered slightly so it could have room to pull in and out. Quinn's tongue went back to work slowly on her clit. Santana knew she had to earn the fast pace again so she stayed quiet as her hips moved with the finger inside her. Quinn removed it and replaced it with her tongue again and once it was inside her, Santana's body froze in place and it took everything in her not to scream out. Her breath caught in her body and her mouth shaped like an O as if she were screaming while Quinn slowed down and moved her hands back to her ass to squeeze it one last time.

Santana's body fell backwards on the bed almost on top of Quinn's legs, which Quinn quickly moved so that they were more on top of Santana and spread out. They both stayed in their horizontal positions while they gathered their breath again.

"Now what?" Santana asked after she felt like she could speak words again.

"Now we do that again, but this time I'll let you scream."

Santana got wet again and despite being slightly exhausted, she knew she wouldn't be sleeping tonight.

Santana woke up to an empty bed. She rolled over to find Quinn had left the bed and it appeared; the apartment as well. Santana looked at the alarm clock to see that it was 6:30.

"Shit." She sprang up reluctantly feeling pain all over her body from the soreness that resulted from Quinn doing all sort of things to her she had either never done or hadn't done in a long time.

She raced to pick up her scattered clothes and check for Quinn in the bathroom, but she wasn't there. She grabbed her bag off the floor and walked toward the front door to see a note plastered there.

"Gym. Lock up when you leave."

Santana tore the note off the door and stuffed it in her pocket, locking the door behind her as she rushed to her car. She made it home in time to change her clothes, but not shower. She kind of liked it that way though because it meant she still smelled like Quinn. No time to stop for coffee so the crap at the office would have to do.

She pulled into the parking garage and swiped her level 6 security badge before opening the door and heading toward the elevator. Each security clearance level had their assigned bank of elevators based on the floor they worked on. Santana's bank was located to the left and she made it just in time to Quinn rush through the doors.

"Hey Fabray, hold up!" She shouted and noticed Quinn's arm jut out to hold the door for her. She ran in clutching her bag to her chest and the door closed, leaving them standing next to each other with Santana breathing heavy. "Thanks," Santana delivered.

"You're welcome," Quinn replied plainly without looking in Santana's direction.

"Is this how it's going to be now?" Santana asked a little pissed off.

"What do you mean?" Quinn pressed the button to their floor and returned to her standing next to Santana position still without looking at her.

"We fuck each other all night and now you can't even look at me?"

"Did you want something else?"

"What the hell does that mean?"

"It means I know you get around and you're not the relationship type. I wanted to sleep with you, Santana. I did. Now, I want to get back to work."

The elevator door opened and Quinn walked out toward her desk with Santana following behind with contempt and squinted eyes.

"You barely know me, Fabray. How the hell do you know what I want?"

Quinn turned to face her.

"This is not the time or place, *Lopez*." She emphasized her last name.

Santana tossed her bag on her desk and grabbed Quinn's hand pulling her toward the back of the office where the door led to the stairs that no one ever uses because Americans are lazy. "Santana, let go."

People watched them as she hurriedly walked, but no one made a move to stop them or ask what was going on. Santana shoved the door open and pulled Quinn through it. It closed on its own behind them and Quinn looked around to notice the stairs going up and down and the

flickering light that provided barely enough light to see Santana who was a couple of feet in front of her.

"Is this better?" Santana half-snarled and watched closely for Quinn's facial expressions to give her away. Quinn was stone faced for a moment before she let out a mischievous smile.

"You know there are no cameras out here. It's one of the only places in the building that's not covered. Budget cuts, I guess. They removed them a while ago."

"What? What are you talking about?" Santana queried. Quinn took a step toward her. "You want to... here?"

"Why not?" Quinn took the final step toward her and leaned in to bite Santana's ear lobe hard.

"Jesus Fabray! Two minutes ago you didn't even want to look at me and now you want me to fuck you in a stair well."

"Don't act like you don't want to." Quinn's hands moved to Santana's shirt, which was tucked into her pants. Santana felt Quinn's hands on her skin for only a second and she was thoroughly wet and regretting wearing pants again.

"Why did you assume I would want a one-night stand?" Quinn's hands went under her shirt and she felt goose bumps everywhere they touched.

"Because I understand you," she whispered into Santana's ear before sliding her tongue down her neck causing her to shudder.

Santana pushed Quinn backwards lightly.

"Explain," she ordered.

Quinn smiled that smile again and went to unbutton and unzip Santana's pants slowly.

"You don't want to get close. You don't want to fall in love. At least not yet. You want to work and have sex and get ahead. You don't want the white picket fence." Her hand slid inside Santana's pants as she moved toward her. "The good news for you is that you and I are on the same page."

"Fuck!" Santana whispered as Quinn's hands rubbed her through her underwear feeling how wet she was already. Santana wanted nothing more than to slam Quinn back against the wall and fuck her like crazy, but she wasn't used to giving up this much control and she wasn't sure how she felt about it long term, but she knew she wanted to take some back in this moment despite how much her body seemed to want Quinn rubbing against it. She pushed Quinn back harder this time so she'd have to pull her hand out. Santana backed her against the far wall and watched as Quinn smirked knowing what was coming next.

"I want you to fuck me with your tongue," she began.

"Fuck what you want." Santana interjected as she stood up against Quinn's body and watched her react to that statement. "If you want this, you don't always get to be in control,

Fabray." Santana's hand went to cup Quinn's center over her pants and Quinn's breath hitched. "I'm not fucking you in a disgusting stair well. So, move your ass or go back to your desk unfuckingsatisfied," she barked while removing her hand.

She turned and walked toward the door, pulling it open and walking through it. It only took a few steps before she made it back to her desk to grab something. She turned to see Quinn walk back through the door looking confused. She pointed at Quinn to walk back through the door and Quinn turned back. Santana followed. They proceeded in silence down the three flights of stairs and into the parking garage. Santana clicked the button on her keys and her car lights flicked on twice.

"Your car, huh?" Quinn questioned walking a few steps behind Santana who was speeding toward her vehicle in hopes that Quinn's fingers or tongue would quell the throbbing and burning her body was feeling.

"Just get in the back seat and shut the hell up. I have a report I need to turn in at 9:30." Santana opened the backdoor and Quinn slid in and immediately laid back. Santana climbed on top of her and in that moment she was glad she had bought an SUV because while it was uncomfortable, it wasn't terrible.

She tore at Quinn's shirt buttons until Quinn pushed her hands away to do it herself because she needed to actually wear that shirt for the rest of the day. Santana used her own hands to peel her shirt off and tossed it somewhere in the front seat while Quinn's hands finished and opened her shirt revealing a red lace bra. Santana smirked when she noticed it had a front clasp and with a flick, she was staring at Quinn's breasts and specifically at one spot where she had left teeth marks. She leaned in and met that spot with her teeth and gave it a light bite before she felt Quinn's arms around her back pulling at her bra clasp. Santana sat back up and pulled it off for her hastily and as she did, she looked out the windshield to see their boss making his way toward the elevators with his Starbucks in hand. She fell on top of Quinn immediately.

"What the hell?"

"Shhhhhh...." Santana whispered into Quinn's ear.

"What? Am I supposed to be quiet this time?" She whispered back while moving her hands back to Santana's pants and immediately inside them to cup her ass through her underwear. Santana's hips reacted to the touch and moved down against Quinn's. Santana took a quick glance to see that the coast was clear and jumped back slightly so she could kiss Quinn hard as she felt those hands continue to push her down. It was clear Quinn was ready for some serious friction, but Santana wanted something else.

"Put your damn fingers inside, Quinn."

Quinn's hand moved around Santana's body and slid into her underwear.

"Fuck Santana!"

Santana was so wet and she didn't care that Quinn knew it was all for her. She just wanted Quinn's fingers inside her body, which Quinn offered quickly and without objection. Once again, they were left with an awkward angle, but Quinn went to work anyway as Santana half sat up and starting moving her body against Quinn's fingers. She put her hands over Quinn's breasts and began massaging them trying to get Quinn worked up quickly since they didn't have much time and she knew she'd have to get Quinn off before they left this car.

"Curl them, Q"

"Q?"

"Just curl them!" Her head was slightly rolling back while her eyes were closed when she felt Quinn curl her fingers inside and then straighten them out again to push them in further before curling them a second time.

"Shit! That feels good."

"Play with my nipples, Santana."

Santana twisted Quinn's nipples with her fingers and earned a moan in response. She began moving her hips faster and more into Quinn's body than before. The change in pace and angle meant an even better feeling inside with Quinn's fingers still working and her thumb moving to Santana's clit to flick it back and forth.

"Yeah! Right there! Don't stop!"

"Santana, I'm about to cum!"

"What?" Santana stopped moving and stared down at Quinn. Quinn's body reacted to the lack of friction and her hips jutted upwards.

"Fuck Santana! Why'd you stop? I'm trying to get off here."

"I don't want you to cum yet."

Santana leaned down and grazed her lips against Quinn's.

"Why not?"

"Because I want to make you cum with me fingers; not just because I'm rubbing against you."

"I can't help it, Santana."

Santana leaned back up and put her hand on top of Quinn's, pulling her fingers out reluctantly. She regretted it instantly, but knew she was trying to prove a point here so it would have to be worth it. She put Quinn's fingers into her mouth and sucked on them. The look on Quinn's face told her she really was about to cum. She did her best to half stand in between the back seat and the passenger's seat so she could slide her pants and underwear down her body. She straddled Quinn again and moved her body up to Quinn's face while Quinn smirked beneath her.

"Now make me cum and then I might help you do the same."

"Might?"

"Yeah, I might. Depends on how long you take, Fabray." Quinn's tongue met her clit and flicked it and Santana almost came immediately, but she held it back because she didn't want Quinn to know that she had been so close before that it only took one flick of her tongue to make her come undone. Santana's hips moved against her mouth and Quinn's hands went back to hold them in place as her tongue moved to Santana's entrance. She pushed it inside and Santana's head rolled to the side since there wasn't enough space in the car for it to roll backwards in ecstasy like last night when Quinn's tongue was in the same position. "God, yes! Fuck me!" Santana felt the rush coming and she knew she was trembling more and more with each thrust of Quinn's tongue. Just as Quinn pulled it out and went back to her clit, Santana came and her hips pushed forcefully down into Quinn's face. "Fuck yes! Don't stop!" The order came and Quinn's hands squeezed Santana's ass hard as she sucked on her clit again trying to help her ride out her orgasm while Santana's sounds were making her feel like she was almost there already without even being touched herself.

Santana finally stopped moving and Quinn knew she was going to be extra sore for the rest of the day, but she didn't care. Santana tasted so good, she knew the pain would be worth it. Santana slid her body back and her fingers immediately slid inside Quinn's pants.

"Jesus!" Quinn wasn't expecting that, which only got Santana hotter.

"What are your plans for tonight?" Santana asked her while her fingers slid against Quinn's wet clit.

"What?" Quinn asked between heated breaths.

"Tonight? What are you doing?" Santana knew she was distracting her from what she was feeling by making her think, but she wanted this to last despite the fact that she could tell the woman beneath her was so close.

"Santana! Just fuck me!"

Santana's hand stopped moving.

"What are you doing tonight?" Santana's lips met Quinn's collarbone and bit down hard.

"Fuck! Do that again."

"Answer my question." Santana's lips grazed the spot she had just bitten.

"Stakeout."

"Alone?" Santana bit down lightly this time and used slow circles on Quinn's clit.

"Yes, alone. Spying on congressman. Hotel." Quinn could only get out short sentences due to the building pleasure Santana was providing with just basic movements. The fingers sped up again before diving inside and Quinn's hips moved as high into the air as they could get in the small space.

"Good. I'll meet you there and while you're looking at some congressman, I'll be buried between your legs."

"Yes!" Quinn nearly shouted as Santana's fingers were thrusting in and out fast. She could feel Quinn's muscles clench.

"I wasn't asking a question, Fabray. I was *telling* you that I will be eating you out tonight while you work."

With that, Quinn came against her fingers and Santana leaned down to kiss her and bite her lower lip.

When she finally came down, Santana pulled out her fingers and licked them clean.

"You can't come tonight."

"I just told you I wasn't giving you the option, Fabray."

Santana moved off her so Quinn could sit up and they both started getting dressed while looking everywhere except for at each other.

"I'm working, Santana. I can't very well be watching someone if you're eating me out."

"Because your eyes will be closed and your head will be rolled back?" Santana smirked out the windshield.

"Something like that."

Quinn's shirt was back on and Santana was dressed and opening the door. She hopped out and Quinn slid out after her. They stood in front of each other with Quinn leaning back against the door. Santana took a look around before leaning into whisper in her ear; something she decided she really enjoyed doing.

"If you want this to continue, which I know you do because you nearly got off just lying under me... you'll let me fuck you tonight while you work."

She leaned back.

"You're saying that if I don't let you come tonight, we're not doing this again?"

"You're the one who pointed out that I love sex and that I want it all the time. I like fucking you and you like fucking me, but I know you're not going to be able to sleep tonight unless we do this again."

"Fuck you, Santana!"

Quinn went to walk off, but Santana took her arm and pulled her back while she laughed.

"Oh, you will... tonight."

Santana let go of Quinn's arm and started walking back toward the elevators continuing her laughter.

It was around 9 when Santana left her apartment. She finally felt like she was dressed appropriately for the occasion. She was wearing a button down shirt that if Quinn tore the buttons off in a heated moment, she wouldn't care about tossing in the trash or even giving Quinn as a souvenir. She also had a balled up t-shirt in her purse to wear home if that happened. She normally wore tight dresses or skirts when she hit the clubs hoping to bring someone home for the night. Tonight though, wanting to be as accessible as possible, she wore a school girl skirt she wore to a Halloween party and no undies.

Quinn had given her the address of the hotel she was staying at across the street from the congressman. The NSA was normally more of a desk work agency. Listen to some wire taps, file reports, etc, but Quinn Fabray made it into the field because of their partnership with the CIA. The CIA cannot investigate domestically. The FBI can, but the CIA hates the FBI. So, they partnered with the NSA and created a joint task force of NSA agents who went through CIA training to work in the field domestically. If anyone asked, Quinn and the other agents were NSA all the way, giving the CIA plausible deniability.

Santana rolled up to the pricy location and valeted her car, bringing her oversized purse with her. She figured Quinn wouldn't be prepared since she was technically on the job, but she brought some toys from her own stash just in case she saw an opportunity. She knocked on door 1103 and waited. She knocked again. Nothing.

"Fabray, if you're waiting on a damn password, you're not getting one."

The door opened and Quinn stood there holding up one of her fingers. She had wireless headphones on and appeared to be listening intently. She opened the door enough for Santana to enter and then walked back toward the window where she had her spy gear all setup. She typed something on her computer and Santana closed the door and took a look around. She'd been to this hotel before, but never this high up. This wasn't exactly the executive suite floor. She knew the agency wouldn't spring for that, but there were two rooms in the place. She could see the bedroom to her right and the living room area had a nice sofa and chair set and a big screen TV that Quinn had apparently hooked up to the video camera aimed into the hotel room across the street. Santana could see a man in a suit talking on the hotel room phone. He was either ordering room service or he was up to something shady. No congressman would use the hotel room phone otherwise.

Quinn seemed engrossed in her work and even though Santana wanted nothing more than to disturb her, she also wanted Quinn to stick around at the agency and if there really was something going on and Quinn missed it, she'd be out in a minute. She sat her purse down on the sofa and walked to the bedroom. It's not like Quinn was really staying the night here. She was working a shift. The bed would need to remain kept in pristine condition for the next agent who showed up to take her place so it wasn't an option. Santana Lopez was not about to make a hotel room bed.

She walked back out to the living room and sat on the sofa. She watched the man on the screen as he hung up the phone and looked over at Quinn who took off her headphones, typed some more and turned around to see Santana sitting there, patiently waiting.

"I thought you were going to eat me out while I worked."

"I thought you'd at least greet me with a hello before I fucked you, but since you brought it up..." She spread her legs wide open and she watched as Quinn's eyes drifted down. "Why don't you make it up to me?" She leaned against the back of the sofa and her arms draped over the back in a welcoming position.

Quinn stood and walked slowly over toward the sofa.

"The congressman just ordered a hooker. So, in about an hour we'll have a show to watch if you're interested."

"I'm only interested in getting off and getting you off and then I'm outta here. Get busy, Q."

"What's with you calling me Q?" She arrived at the sofa and unbuttoned her white blouse slowly. Santana grew wetter in anticipation.

"You wanna call me S?" She watched as nimble fingers finished on the last button and Quinn slid her shirt off her shoulders and tossed it on the chair before stepping in between Santana's wide legs.

"I guess it's better than you yelling Fabray outside my damn stakeout room for everyone to hear. Nice and convert." She looked down. "Pants."

That was all she needed to say. Santana leaned forward and unzipped and unbuttoned Quinn's black pants before sliding them down her legs.

"Anything else?" Santana asked with her fingers on Quinn's panties.

"Not yet. I want you to pull them off with your teeth later."

Santana's eyes got huge. She looked up and watched as Quinn took off her own bra and tossed it aside before kneeling down in front of her and spreading her legs even wider. Quinn's head disappeared under her skirt and she felt her lips suck on her clit first.

"Fuck!"

"I like your skirt. Did you wear it just for me?" Quinn asked from that position between sucking and licking.

"You wish. Stop talking and fuck me, Quinn!"

Santana's hand went over her skirt onto Quinn's head, which was bobbing around. She thought it was even hotter watching her doing this without even actually seeing her do it. She felt Quinn's hands on her thighs and knew when she felt the right one move where it was going.

"I'm glad you stopped by. Seems you really needed me." Quinn disobeyed and then shoved two fingers inside.

Santana's head went back and she slid down on the sofa so Quinn could reach further inside. She was breathing hard.

"God, I'm almost- I'm cum-" She tried to get out. Quinn stopped everything and lifted her head out from under her skirt. "What the fuck! Quinn, why'd you stop? I'm like right there."

"Did you bring it?" She asked while wiping her mouth.

"What?" Santana thought for a second. "Oh yeah. It's in my purse, but get me off first." She ordered.

Quinn stood and walked over to Santana's bag.

"I told you earlier I wanted to use one of these the next time I got you off." She pulled out a vibrator and walked back over before kneeling in her earlier position. "I meant it." She looked at the vibrator they had discussed earlier in the day once Quinn finally just accepted that she wanted Santana to fuck her while she was on shift. "This is perfect." It was a purple vibrator designed for the clit. It had a nice, soft end that could be placed gently or in Quinn's mind with a lot of pressure against Santana's clit. She wanted her to feel the vibrations in her toes.

"Fucking hell, Fabray!"

Quinn smirked and turned it on.

"How high do you want to go, S?"

"How high do you think?"

Quinn laughed, which got Santana even wetter. She turned it on to the highest speed and placed it roughly against Santana's clit. Santana's head snapped back and her mouth hung open.

"I think you like it."

"Fuck! Oh my God!"

Quinn lowered her head under the skirt and held the vibrator in place. She could just manage to get her tongue around Santana's entrance and started moving it in circles there before flicking it faster and faster. Before she knew it, Santana was shouting Spanish curse words and her hips were going crazy. She kept the vibrator in place, but lifted herself out from under the skirt because she wanted to see this. The skirt has a side zipper. She quickly pulled it down and slid the skirt onto the floor. Santana was in complete orgasm mode. It seemed to continue on and on while the vibrator was in place.

"Lie down." Quinn ordered.

"What? God, it's still-"

"Lie down! I want to be on top of you."

Santana put her hand over Quinn's on the vibrator to keep it in place. She was coming down, but she could feel another one close behind. Quinn slid on top of her and moved Santana's hand away. Quinn's fingers went inside while the vibrator continued on the fastest speed.

"Jesus! Again?" Santana was almost protesting. She wasn't sure her body could take anymore. This was her vibrator. She'd used it a thousand times, but it had never felt this good before. She wasn't sure if it was because Quinn's fingers seemed to be constantly searching for a new spot inside her to flick in just the right way, but she came again and then again until she needed a break and grabbed the vibrator from Quinn and turned it off.

"I wasn't finished with you, Santana." Quinn told her, leaned back for leverage and she began rapidly fucking Santana with her fingers, reaching further and further back as she did. The movement was enough to throw Santana over the edge again.

"Oh my fucking God!" Santana yelled into the air. Quinn pulled her fingers out and stood up. She walked, half-naked over to her folding chair that was in front of the wide set of windows aimed outside. She checked her monitors. "Where the fuck are you going?" Santana asked her.

Quinn turned only her head and stood in front of the chair.

"Get over here and keep your fucking promise, Santana." Another order was barked and Santana stood, barely able because she was still shaking from the incredibly long, intense orgasm Quinn had just helped to provide. She walked over to where Quinn was standing and knelt down on the floor. She'd done this before obviously, but never when given an order. She was starting to like this trade off of giving and taking orders with Quinn. "He's suspected of doing favors for the Russians." Quinn told her just as Santana's teeth made it to the waistband of her panties and started to pull down.

"What?" She mumbled between her teeth. Pulling panties down with one's teeth is harder than she would have thought.

"The congressman. That's why I'm here."

Santana got them down enough to use her hands to pull them the rest of the way. Quinn didn't seem to care. She continued to stare out the window at the room of the congressman.

"You're fucking wet, Quinn." She stared at her before moving her tongue to lick her up and down once. Quinn twitched and then looked down at her.

"When I'm in the chair." She explained and moved around Santana to sit. Santana stood, moved around the chair and knelt back down. She placed her head between Quinn's legs and spread them even further. "Now."

She fucked Quinn with her tongue and her fingers while Quinn watched the congressman get fucked by the escort he had hired. She screamed and came twice before they slid the chair across the room and ended up on the floor. Santana had packed her own strap-on in that oversized purse. She had Quinn on all fours and got her off again and again. Quinn returned in kind and they both dressed a couple of hours later.

"So, what are you doing tomorrow night?" Santana asked Quinn, this time more as a joke than anything. She figured they'd end up with a repeat performance of tonight either at her place or at Quinn's.

"It's almost midnight. Walters will be here soon. You should go. I've got to clean up."

"Walters is probably a freak in the bedroom and would love hearing about our sexcapades, Fabray."

"Santana, I had a good time tonight, but I really don't want anyone at any agency finding out that I fucked you and got fucked by you while I was supposed to be on a stakeout... alone."

Santana smirked and approached Quinn. She wrapped her arms around her waist and pulled her in. She kissed her quickly and pulled back before going back in to kiss her more deeply. Quinn reciprocated and it grew heated. Santana's whole body was sore, but her hormones didn't seem to care and she was once again getting wet. Quinn slammed her back against the door of the room and kissed her neck, sliding her hand down Santana's leg to pull up her skirt. Her index finger grazed Santana's clit and she jumped slightly. Quinn pulled her lips away and looked at her.

"Until next time..." She smiled. Kissed her on the lips and grabbed the door handle, turning it to open until Santana moved away from the door. She smiled at Quinn and shook her head. She grabbed her purse off the table and left. On her way home, she couldn't help but think about what their next encounter would bring.

Santana showed up at work the next morning exhausted, but it was a good kind of exhaustion. She was sore all over, but it was a good kind of sore. She waited for Quinn at the elevator bank thinking she'd show up at around the same time, but she was a no show. She kept looking over her cubicle wall waiting for her to walk into the office, but nothing. By lunch, she was growing concerned. Quinn had worked late the night before, but she should have been in by lunchtime.

"Hey, anyone have a location or ETA on Fabray?" She asked her cube mates.

None of them knew anything. She went to the cafeteria and grabbed a sandwich. As she sat, she sent Quinn a couple of texts. One was dirty just to see if she'd respond. The other was more "check in please" kind of desperate just to make sure she was okay. She waited for a response while she finished her lunch, but nothing came. She walked back up to the office and checked for her again. Before returning to her desk, she went to the boss's office.

"I need to talk to Fabray about something. Is she coming in today? I haven't seen her." She leaned against the door.

"She's on assignment."

"The congressman?" Santana asked and earned a glare. "She mentioned she had a stakeout last night."

"No. It's long-term and in the field. That's all I know."

"But you're her-"

"That's all I know, Lopez."

That meant that Quinn was working with the CIA and her boss wasn't cleared to know what the assignment was. All Santana knew was that it was long-term, but not how long-term. She didn't like the idea of not knowing where Quinn was. She sat back down and sent another text to Quinn before deciding just to call her.

"Quinn, it's me. I know you're on assignment and you can't tell me about it, but just let me know you're okay."

She hung up and went about the rest of her day with Quinn never really leaving her mind.

When she got home that night, it was as if she had entered stage 1 of a process not knowing how many stages there would be. Stage 1 was what you might call the ghosting stage. She could still feel Quinn on her body. The sensations were still there. The fingers, the tongue, the light touches, the ones that were rougher, she could feel her eyes on her as she watched her cum, she could still sense the rush of the orgasms she felt. She could even feel Quinn's arms around her as she fell asleep.

Stage 1 was, unfortunately, a brief stage. She felt Quinn's ghost touch on her body during different times of the work day. When she was at her desk, sometimes she'd replay the call that they first listened to together. It would get her wet and then she'd go into the bathroom that was a single so she'd have privacy, but on another floor and get herself off.

About a week later, she had moved into Stage 2: Same old, same old. This was the stage where she tried to convince herself she didn't really care about Quinn or her safety or location or return date. She had a job to do and she wanted a promotion one day soon so she needed to focus. Her focus became work. She pushed Quinn out of her mind whenever images of her body or face entered her brain. She went to the gym nightly to work off some of the sexual tension. She went to a couple of clubs to try to find some one-night stands, but her mojo was off. The girls weren't flocking to her like they usually did. She drank a little more than was the norm and slept as much as she could.

Stage 3 was like a return for Santana and took control of her around the end of the first month of Quinn's absence. It was the intense masturbation stage. Every morning, every night and sometimes while at work, she'd get herself off. Sometimes, she'd use her hand, sometimes her dildo and sometimes the vibrator. She kept hoping it would feel the way it did when Quinn held it to her clit, but while the orgasms were usually good, they never quite felt the same. Her body felt raw most of the time, but she couldn't get enough and every image she used to get herself there was of something Quinn had either done to her or she had done to Quinn.

Stage 4 was almost the exact opposite and was probably brought on more out of necessity than anything. Her body needed a break. This was her mushy stage.

"Hey, what do you guys think it's like out there?" She asked one of the girls she was sharing lunch with in the cafeteria.

"Out where?"

"You know, in the field?" She took a bite of her salad. "I'm just curious."

"You mean for Fabray?" The girl smirked at her and took a drink of her water.

"I mean in general. Why'd you bring up her?"

"Because you bring her up all the time. I wonder when she's getting back.

Have you guys heard anything? Do you think there's something the boss isn't telling us?' Everyone knows you've got a hard on for that girl, Santana."

"She works with us. I'm just making sure she's alright. Damn! I guess I should just ignore the fact that she basically disappeared and none of us know anything or when she's coming back or if she's hurt."

The girl laughed and picked up her water and the trash from her lunch.

"Whatever, Santana. Keep thinking that. I'll see you back upstairs."

"I think it's just need to know and we don't need to know." Another girl at the table joined in.

"Well, I need to fucking know, okay?" Santana snarled before realizing this poor girl had nothing to do with Quinn leaving. "I'm sorry."

After everyone went home for the day, she walked over to Quinn's desk and sat in her chair. There was a picture of Quinn with a woman Santana guessed was her mother. They were at Quinn's college graduation from Yale. Quinn had a huge smile on her face. Santana picked up the frame and held it in her hands. She stoked the image of Quinn with her finger, stared a little longer and replaced it. She looked at Quinn's coffee mug, which sat untouched and gathering dust. She looked at the post-it notes on the computer in Quinn's handwriting. One said, "Buy milk." Santana pulled it down and stuffed it in her pocket. She didn't think Quinn would mind. She couldn't turn her computer on. The cameras would catch that and wonder what she was doing. Plus, she didn't know Quinn's password.

She went home and poured herself a Cougar *Town* style glass of red wine and grabbed a pint of ice cream from her freezer and decided to wallow by watching romantic comedies all night. She missed Quinn. She didn't just miss fucking Quinn or Quinn fucking her. She missed Quinn.

Stage 4 seemed to never end. It wasn't until Quinn had been gone for over 2 months that Stage 5 reared its ugly head. This was the "fuck her to oblivion" stage. It wasn't about getting herself off. She wanted to fuck Quinn. It was like this urge inside her to be inside Quinn. All of her parts missed all of Quinn's parts. She needed this woman like she'd never needed anyone else before. She started replaying a couple of voicemails Quinn had left her that one day in the office before the stakeout.

"I want you to fuck me from behind hard. I want your hands digging into my hips. I want to be able to see sweat on your body because you worked so hard to make me cum. I want you to smack my ass while you do it."

She'd gotten herself off to that one at least a hundred times.

"Bring a vibrator. I'm going to fuck you with it. You'll feel it everywhere. Make sure it's powerful. I want you to scream my name when you cum and then I'll make you cum again. When you say you can't take it anymore, I'll make you go one more round and I'll get so wet listening to you moan."

That message caused about a thousand orgasms in Santana's body. She actually started playing them on a loop and wished she had others to add to it, but their affair had been so brief. She loved that girl's voice. It's deep, husky sound caused her to get wet every time she heard it. She wondered if when Quinn returned, it would still have the same effect.

92 days. It had been 92 days. Santana was still in the "fuck her to oblivion" stage. Her work had started to suffer. Her boss had noticed and brought her into the office. Her reports were not as detailed. She wasn't keeping up with deadlines. She wasn't participating in meetings. If she wanted a field job, she wasn't going to get one now. It would take a lot of brown nosing, Fabray style to get back in her supervisor's good graces.

It was 10am according to the clock on her computer. Time for her 15 minute break. She started taking these breaks a while ago. She'd go down the stairs to the single stall bathroom and get off quickly before returning. She had a break at 2pm and she'd do the same thing if she was able. It was like her body had this ache, this thirst it couldn't quench no matter how hard she tried.

She made her way to the bathroom, but it was occupied with one person in line before her. She only had 12 minutes left. She couldn't waste that time waiting. She walked briskly back up to her own floor and into the bathroom with multiple stalls. It appeared empty, but she would be quiet as she got off just in case.

She approached the stall on the end and heard the door of the bathroom open behind her. She didn't even have time to turn around to show her disappointment before she was shoved into the tiny supply closet in the bathroom. The door was closed behind her and the light bulb with the string for a switch was turned on and she saw Quinn Fabray's face illuminated.

Quinn's lips were attacking her lips. Her hand was reaching down to Santana's pants and she didn't even try to unbutton them. She just shoved her hand down.

"Fuck! You're not wearing any underwear!" Quinn exclaimed before finding Santana's clit. "And you're so fucking wet, Lopez."

"Just fuck me, Fabray!" Santana reached down to undo her pants herself so Quinn could have more room to move. She couldn't believe this was happening. She'd dreamed of Quinn fucking her a million times. Her clit was sore from her own touches, but Quinn made it feel renewed and she rubbed up and down harder and harder. Santana pulled her close and had her mouth by Quinn's earlobe. She almost tipped backwards, but she pulled Quinn with her and they were fucking against a shelf of supplies. She could hear things falling behind her, but she didn't care. She just lifted one of her legs on another shelf next to them. "Inside!" She demanded and Quinn pushed her fingers deep inside, keeping her thumb active against the clit because she could tell Santana was almost there.

"God, I missed this." Quinn told the room.

Quinn's other hand reached up under Santana's shirt. She had long ago stopped dressing up for work. She was wearing a t-shirt with jeans today. They weren't required to dress up since all they did was listen to recordings and file reports, but Santana used to take pride in her appearance. That changed when she hit the 3rd stage. Quinn hand cupped her breast over her bra and Santana felt as she twisted her nipple hard and she yelled out in pleasure/pain. She came just as Quinn flicked her fingers inside and her thumb outside and before she knew it, Quinn had pulled out, grabbed her leg, set it back on the floor and pulled her pants the rest of the way down. She knelt in front of her and began sucking on her clit.

"Fuck! God, that feels so fucking good! Don't you dare stop!" She lifted her leg again to give Quinn more access and felt her lick her up and down before flicking her clit with her tongue. Quinn's fingers went back inside, but only seconds later, Santana felt she had just been fucked to oblivion and came.

She bent down to pull Quinn up and without even trying to mess with her own pants, she slammed Quinn against the door behind her.

"I want your mouth first." Quinn ordered. She'd started removing her own pants.

Santana knelt down and pulled them the rest of the way. Quinn's panties went down with them and Santana could see how wet she was.

"Jesus, Quinn!"

"Eat me out, Santana!" She commanded.

Santana granted her wish and started sucking the way she remembered Quinn liked.

"God, you taste good." She commented before starting to move her tongue up and down.

"I've missed that tongue."

Santana put her hands on Quinn's ass to pull her closer and continued with her tongue until she could tell by Quinn's reactions she was almost there. She moved her fingers to Quinn's entrance and shoved them inside.

"You feel so good."

"I've missed those fingers too."

Santana fucked her in that position for another minute before standing up. She looked at Quinn and could tell she was disappointed that her tongue wasn't on her clit, but Santana turned her around and had her up against the door. Her arm was wrapped around her. Her fingers started rubbing Quinn's clit harder and harder while she clamped her teeth onto Quinn's shoulder as she pulled her shirt over for access.

"Fuuuccckkk!" Quinn came and slammed her forehead against the door. "Oh my God! I needed that!"

Santana smirked as Quinn turned around to face her.

"Me too."

"Wanna go again?" Quinn asked leaning in for a kiss.

"Fuck!" Santana exclaimed.

"Yeah, that's the idea."

"No, I mean I'm fucked. My break is over. I'm late." She started to put her clothes back on.

"Why does that even matter?"

"Because I'm on fucking probation, Fabray." She gathered herself and pushed past Quinn to open the door slightly to see that they were alone. She opened it the rest of the way and stepped out suddenly realizing that the tiny room they'd just occupied was sweltering.

"What?"

"Yeah, it's a long story. You've been gone forever. A lot has changed."

"I was on assignment."

"I know. Look, I've got to get back to my damn desk before the she devil of a boss I have notices."

"She's not that bad."

"You don't even know, do you?"

"Know what?" Quinn was trying to gather herself in the mirror.

"New boss. The old one got promoted. The new one hates me and doesn't even know you. Gotta go." She tried to make her way out of the bathroom.

"Santana! Wait!" Quinn implored walking over to her and holding the door closed.

"What?"

"I've been gone for like 3 months. We just fucked in the closet. Don't you think we should talk about it? I want to catch up." She looked at Santana like she meant that and not in a sexual way. Her eyes told her she wanted to actually catch up with her.

"Look Quinn, I understand you. You don't want to get close. You don't want to fall in love. At least not yet. You want to work and have sex and get ahead. You don't want the white picket fence."

"Ha! This is you quoting me back to me. Nice, Santana. You forgot the part of saying you're on the same page though."

Santana leaned in and kissed her gently on the lips. She could tell Quinn wanted more, but she wasn't going to give it to her.

"I didn't forget it, Fabray. I told you a lot has changed."

She opened the bathroom door and walked out. She could tell Quinn hadn't followed behind her. She didn't even realize what she was saying at the time, but she said it. She didn't just want to fuck, Quinn anymore.

She sat at her desk for about an hour just staring at her computer screen with her headphones safely against her ears. She wasn't listening to anything, but it was message to others to leave her alone. She watched as Quinn walked in and everyone greeted her with hugs and smiles. Quinn smiled back and Santana stared back down at her screen.

After a meeting with the new boss, Quinn made her way over to her desk and turned on her computer. She hadn't looked over at Santana at all as far as Santana could tell. Her phone buzzed in her desk drawer. She opened it and looked down at the screen.

Fabray: We should talk.

She pulled out her phone.

Santana: We don't really talk.

Fabray: We should. Don't be like this.

Santana: Like what? I'm just giving you what you want.

Fabray: Stairwell.

Santana looked up and saw Quinn walk toward the stairwell. She looked up to see her boss was occupied. She didn't want to follow her out. She wanted to sit and do her work and stop thinking about her, but she stood and followed anyway.

"I'm not fucking you in this stairwell, Quinn." She told her when the door closed behind her.

"I couldn't call you. I didn't even get to take my phone with me."

"I get it, Fabray."

"I wanted to though. Okay? I thought about you a lot."

Santana wasn't expecting that.

"About fucking me?"

Santana leaned back against the door. Quinn took a step toward her.

"Yes, I was alone most of the time. I can't tell you about it, but it was lonely and yeah, there were nights when I got off just thinking about the last time we were together, but there were nights when I just thought about you too. Things happened over there."

Santana perked up.

"Are you...? Did someone...?"

"No, I'm fine." Quinn interjected. "Not like that. I just saw some things I wish I didn't have to see. I actually got back yesterday. I just needed a day to decompress. I thought about calling you,

but I needed to be alone. When I got in today, I saw you and I followed you into the bathroom. I had every intention of just talking, but you're so fucking hot, Santana. I just couldn't stop myself."

"I thought about us doing that since you left. I've been like craving it."

Quinn took another step and wrapped her arms around Santana's waist. "You've got it bad, Lopez." She smiled and leaned in to kiss her on the neck.

"Please! Don't get all mushy on me now, Fabray. I like you alright, but I still want us to fuck each other's brains out later."

Quinn laughed against her neck and then pulled back.

"Later?"

"Yes, while you soak up all the glory, I have to get back to work."

"What are you doing tonight?"

"You."

Later that night, Santana arrived at Quinn's front door and rang the bell. This was different than the first visit where she rushed in behind Quinn. The door opened and Quinn stood in front of her.

"Oh my God!"

"That was the reaction I was hoping for. Get in here." A very naked Quinn pulled Santana into her apartment. "What the hell?" She asked when she noticed Santana was carrying something other than just her purse.

Santana held up a half gallon of milk.

"You had a post-it on your computer saying 'buy milk' so I brought you milk. I didn't expect you to greet me like that." Her eyes drifted down Quinn's body. Quinn smiled at her and took the milk, setting it on the table and pulling Santana into her. "You planning on going on another 3 month trip? If so, drink it before you go or you'll have a nasty surprise when you return."

"Is that your way of asking me if I'm sticking around for a while?"

"Why are we still talking? You are naked!" Her arms moved around Quinn's neck and she pulled her in.

"Bedroom?" Quinn placed her lips a few millimeters from Santana's.

"Yes." She whispered.

"Tomorrow night, I want to go to your place."

She kissed her before pulling back.

"Fine."

"And I want to make you dinner." She tried to kiss her, but Santana pulled back.

"What?"

"Let me make you dinner, Lopez. You can do whatever you want to me after."

Santana smirked and her eyes went wide.

"Fine, but you're staying the night and the next morning, I'm fucking you in the shower."

Quinn leaned in and kissed her, using her lips to start pulling Santana toward her bedroom. Not that she needed to. Santana was addicted to the feeling of Quinn's body against her own as well as the way her voice sounds and the way her smile lights up a room. Quinn separated their mouths and pulled Santana by the arms into the room. Santana looked up and down Quinn's amazing body and then back up and into her eyes.

"Well fuck." She said it under her breath more to herself than Quinn. Luckily for her, Quinn didn't seem to hear it as her hands were actually trying to get Santana's clothes off. The 'well fuck' Santana had just expressed was due to the realization that she'd been falling for Quinn Fabray all along.

(I've seen fire) and I've seen rain, by
emilystark21barelylegal (breakingatthecracks)

Maddie walks to the front and stands behind the platform. She looks around her and sees her classmates looking at her, anticipating her speech. It's their second meeting for this class and they all have a task to complete today.

Think of one moment in your history that would have changed everything—that one pivotal moment that sent you here.

The people before her—Matt, Ashley, Catherine—they all spoke about how they came up with the decision to take Philosophy as their major. There's one kid—Andrew—who told the story of how he ended up in Columbia. None of them seemed to have impressed Professor Carlisle—and frankly, none of them have impressed Maddie either.

Her mom always told her, *don't be like the rest of them*. And she won't be.

Maddie clears her throat, briefly looks around, and then starts, "I'm Madison Nicole Lopez. I was named after a TV show character and a Greek word that means, *victory of the people*. I have two moms who think I'm their victory. So, basically, my name means *Madison is the Victory of the People*."

The class laughs for some reason and she smiles, too. She sees Professor Carlisle perk up on his seat. She's got his attention now.

Her Mommy is right, *make them laugh first and then talk their ear off with your intelligence*.

She takes a deep breath and releases it before confidently pushing through with her speech, "They say that the biggest moments that shift our lives happen in an instant—a twist in time, a missed minute; or a half an hour stuck in traffic could alter our lives forever. I'm Madison Nicole and I'm here today because of things that didn't happen."

(Just yesterday morning, they let me know that you were gone.)

The silence is deafening.

No one is moving.

The doctor's words struck them all like lightning: *we did everything we can, I'm sorry*.

Santana's father is a doctor. She knows what it means. She knows *exactly* what it means when doctors say they did everything they can. She knows what it means and yet she doesn't understand it.

It doesn't make sense.

The first sound anyone hears is the sound of Judy's sobbing. She breaks down on the floor with her hands on her face, her shoulders are shaking. She mumbles words like *I'm sorry* and *I'm so sorry*.

Santana feels her heart hammer in sheer anger.

Puck punches the wall, multiple times, and Mr. Schue runs to stop him. He breaks down, too. He cries and Santana hears him mutter things like *I'm sorry* and *I should've been a better man*.

Santana feels like punching him.

Brittany runs to Judy to hug her, her silent tears falling, too. She tells Judy it's okay. She tells Judy that there are places than this. She tells Judy that Quinn is okay.

Santana feels like yelling because *how about the people she left behind? How about her? How about this world she left behind? How about Santana's world? How about that big gaping hole she emptied?*

Rachel starts crying, too. Her wedding dress is all ruined now—a constant reminder that this should have been a good day. None of them was supposed to be here. She mumbles *I'm sorry* and *It's all my fault*.

Santana feels like slapping her—and all the hypocrisy in her body. Rachel Berry is so selfish and she hates her because if it wasn't for her cowardice to face the possibility of not getting into NYADA, they wouldn't be here. Quinn will be here, alive and whole.

When the doctor leaves, Santana realizes she doesn't feel anything at all. She doesn't cry because she can't.

When everybody is saying *I'm sorry*, Santana just wanted to say *I love you*.

(THERE'S HOURS OF TIME ON THE TELEPHONE LINE TO TALK ABOUT THINGS TO COME.)

On the third night of Quinn's wake, Santana still hasn't cried—or said anything, or talked to anyone.

When Quinn died, it's like Santana left with her.

Santana just feels like she's in a different world, the one without Quinn; the one without the only person she trusted with her life. She's in a world without the only person who gets her. She's in a world without the only person who loved her despite it all.

And Santana has imagined lifetimes and futures, and an alternate universe where people had special abilities. Santana has imagined her second life.

Santana has imagined heaven and hell.

But she has never imagined a life or a world without Quinn.

This is her world now.

And it feels like she doesn't know how to be here.

It's like she doesn't belong here, like this world exists somewhere but it's not her world.

It's not.

Because Quinn's not here.

(I'VE SEEN LONELY TIMES WHEN I COULD NOT FIND A FRIEND.)

They say we die two times—one is when we stop breathing and the other one comes a bit later, when somebody says our name for the last time.

"Goodbye, Quinn," Santana hears Tina say in between sobs.

Santana just stares blankly as they lower Quinn's casket to the ground.

She still hasn't cried.

She still thinks she'd wake up and she'd laugh at herself for dreaming of something as horrible as this. Santana has prepared herself for so many things like unwanted pregnancy or college or supporting Brittany's kid from another man. But Santana's never thought of preparing herself for Quinn's death.

Or Quinn not being there when she needs her.

And somehow, out of all the many thoughts circling in her head, this one is the scariest.

How does one go on after a thing like this happens? How does one wake up the next morning and go to school knowing that their best friend will not be there that day, or ever?

Santana doesn't say goodbye to Quinn.

She can't.

She doesn't think she ever will.

(BEEN WALKING MY MIND TO AN EASY TIME.)

It's funny how the mind works. It can make you believe in things that don't exist and it can make you deny the things that do.

Santana goes on like nothing happened. She throws everyone insults like she always does. She attends regular Cheerios practice. She attends all of her classes. She attends Glee and even sings a song to Quinn.

She still hasn't cried. She still hasn't mourned. She still hasn't let go.

When the school pays tribute to the *youngest Head Cheerio* in McKinley history, Santana doesn't attend the ceremony. She spends the whole time sitting by Quinn's grave. She reads the engraved epitaph:

Our story has no words in it but it's ours.

It's the first line of Quinn's unfinished poem—the last one she wrote; the one Judy found scribbled in Quinn's notebook.

Judy decided to let that be Quinn's epitaph. She knows Quinn would have finished it if she had the chance.

(SWEET DREAMS AND FLYING MACHINES IN PIECES ON THE GROUND.)

The New Directions lose Nationals, so does the Cheerios. Santana breaks up with Brittany and barely graduates.

Finn gets into college. Puck starts his own business. Judy gets back together with Russell. Russell runs for Congress, uses *texting and driving* as his main agenda.

Santana knows he never visited Quinn even once.

Rachel heads to New York and so does Santana. She waits tables and sings at bars—and most days, life just passes her by.

In all of the special nights, she'd sing Phoenix's "1901". It's Quinn's favorite song and sometimes, when she sings, she'd see Quinn in the crowd. It's in those moments Santana knows she's there—and for some weird reason, Santana finds comfort in that.

(I WALKED OUT THIS MORNING AND I WROTE DOWN THIS SONG. I JUST CAN'T REMEMBER WHO TO SEND IT TO.)

A year after Quinn's death, the truth hits Santana hardest.

She wakes up that morning just like every morning since Quinn left.

She pulls out her phone and types: *Happy birthday, Q*

It's when she's scrolling through her contacts does Santana realize it.

She cries for the first time.

(YOU'VE JUST GOT TO SEE ME THROUGH ANOTHER DAY.)

It takes Santana seven years to accept that Quinn is gone.

She visits Quinn's grave one day and talks about her new tattoo—a cursive handwriting that says, *Lucy*.

"You're such a bitch," Santana says, her tears falling down her cheeks.

A voice then speaks, "I think your friend will not be amused."

Santana looks up and sees a girl about her age—blonde hair, sweet smile.

Santana wipes her tears and chuckles, "This bitch is laughing at me right now for being so soft."

"Probably but she'd appreciate you being here," the girl says.

"How'd you know?"

The girl smiles at her as she puts flowers on top of the grave that sits a couple of feet away from Quinn's, "I don't. I mean, I haven't died yet or anything. Just a guess."

Santana laughs and the girl does, too.

When the laughter subsides, the other girl extends her hand and introduces herself, "Hey, new girl. I'm Elise."

And Santana is instantly reminded of the first day of cheer camp.

Santana raises an eyebrow, "New girl?"

"I've come here at least twice a week for the past two years and I've never seen you once. You must be new."

Santana nods, "It's only the third time I visited."

"That's okay."

"I'm Santana."

Elise nods and they shake hands.

And Santana feels something again for the first time.

Santana thinks this is Quinn telling her it's time.

This is her world now—a world without Quinn but it's the world that will forever hold Quinn in it.

It's time.

—

"Did Santana and Elise end up together?" one of her classmates asks.

Maddie smiles, "They didn't. I'm right here, aren't I?"

The class laughs along with a round of applause. They bought her story and for the first time since the class started, Maddie sees Professor Carlisle nod in understanding. Maddie knows she's impressed.

Maddie also knows he gets it.

—

"Ms. Lopez," Professor Carlisle calls her name as she was heading out.

"Sir?"

The 50-something professor walks to her and gives her a small smile.

"How are you coping?"

And it still hurts when someone asks her that.

"Barely but it gets easier."

"And your mom?"

"She's gonna be fine," Maddie says with a heavy sigh. "Life keeps on going, doesn't it?"

The professor nods, "And your baby sister?"

Maddie smiles, "Mom's always had complications with giving birth but Elise is very healthy."

"I'm glad to hear that. It's gonna get easier, Madison. You have your mom's strength."

Maddie takes another deep breath, "Nah, mom was a lot stronger than I am. But yeah, she always told me life gets easier by the day."

Professor Carlisle only nods as Maddie walks toward the door. Before she exits the room, Maddie turns around and looks at the professor, "Uncle Oliver?"

The guy looks up at her.

"The pre-school is giving mom a tribute on Sunday. You should be there."

"Is Santana going to be there?"

"She wouldn't miss it for the world. Mommy's been strong. It's the last thing Mom asked of her," she finishes and then walks out the door.

The moment she reaches her car, Maddie breaks down in tears. Out of habit, her fingers find that spot in her wrist where her new tattoo rests.

Lucy.

This is her world now.

A world without Quinn but will forever hold Quinn in it.

The One Where Quinn Finds Out, by empresskris

"I say don't worry about it." Puck knocks back the last of his drink and motions the waitress over for another. "You waited a year. Why not wait another?"

"If you're serious about this girl then you need to tell her," Artie disagrees. "The fact that you've kept it from her for this long is pretty bad."

"I just don't know how to tell her. It never seems like a good time," Santana says with a frown.

Puck shakes his head. "No way. Girls tend to freak."

Kitty snaps her head in his direction, her nose wrinkled in disgust at his assessment. "What? No they don't. What's wrong with you?"

"Are you serious about her?" Artie asks focusing Santana's attention back on him from across the table.

"Yes, I love her. I'm in love with her," Santana confirms as she cradles her still full beer glass in her hands.

"Then you need to tell her before it's too late," Artie says pointedly.

Puck snorts and reaches out to grab Santana's beer while he waits for his own. "It's already too late. You missed your window," he says before chugging Santana's beer. "It's warm!" he chokes.

Santana sighs.

Kitty looks at her sympathetically. "I think if you're honest with her now then it will turn out okay."

Puck takes another large gulp of Santana's lukewarm beer. "She's gonna freak," he insists.

Artie rolls his eyes but ignores Puck. "You should tell her, Santana. Soon."

"I agree. You need to tell her," Kitty nods.

Santana looks between her friends knowing they're right. The waitress places another beer in front of her. With another heavy sigh, Santana reaches out and takes a long sip.

After the mission. As soon as this mission is over she'll tell her. For real this time.

"Come on, Quinn. Open the door." Santana presses her forehead to the doorframe and closes her eyes. "Please? I really think we should talk about this." When there's no response from the other side of their bedroom door Santana tries the knob again. Still locked. Puck was right. She's definitely freaking. "Quinn, can we please just talk?"

Santana's eyes open at finally hearing the sound of movement from inside the room. Despite hearing heavy stomping towards the door, Santana is still startled with the door suddenly flies open. Taking a step back, she winces as Quinn shoots her a scathing look.

"What's there to talk about? You lied to me, Santana!"

"I had to," Santana says calmly.

Quinn shakes her head. "I get it, okay? I'm not *that* unreasonable. I know you couldn't have just walked up to me the night we met and said, 'Hi, I'm Santana Lopez, I'm a super sexy spy for the United States Government.' I get it. I even understand you not telling me after two months, three months. Hell, even after six months. But a year? A *year*?!"

Quinn stares at her for a moment before turning away and walking further into their bedroom, disgusted.

"Quinn," Santana sighed but remains standing in the doorway.

Quinn spins around angrily. "We've been together for a year! Fourteen months actually! I moved out of my apartment and turned down a job in Boston to be with you!"

Santana winces. "Low blow, Quinn," she says as though she'd been visibly struck.

The soft spoken comment gives Quinn pause, her expression softening. But only briefly. Her eyes harden and she continues her tirade. "You didn't even have the decency to tell me the truth!"

"Well I'm telling you now!" Santana snaps.

"Because you had to! You come home with a broken arm and looking like you've been hit by a truck," Quinn's argument falls short when Santana breaks eye contact with her. This isn't the first time Santana has come home injured. But it's by far the worse she's ever looked. Quinn's stomach tightens and her eyes widen. "Oh my God, *were* you hit by a truck?"

Santana runs her hand through her hair and adjusts her broken arm within its sling. "Not exactly," she says uncomfortably. She chooses not to point out that it was a car that struck her, not a truck.

Quinn feels as though she's going to be sick. She turns away from Santana and crosses her arms over her chest. "I don't even know what to think," she says softly. "The fact that you don't trust me, even after a year -"

"It's not that I don't trust you," Santana sighs.

Quinn's eyes meet hers. "Everything, this whole... relationship... has it been a lie?"

"No! Quinn that is *not* true!" Santana protests as she finally steps into their bedroom.

"Every time you came home with a bruise or a cut or stitches and you told me it was a hazard from work," Quinn muses. "The refreshment cart on the airplane bumping into you, falling off a motorcycle while riding with a client..."

"Technically that one was true," Santana points out.

"I believed you! I honestly believed you sold life insurance!" Quinn shouts. "But a Special Task Force for the C.I.A.? How stupid am I?"

"Quinn, would you just let me explain?" Santana pleads. Quinn opens her mouth to protest but Santana takes another step closer and continues before Quinn can tell her no. "This is the longest relationship I've ever been in. Ever. I've never done this before. I've never been in the

situation of having to tell someone I love what I do because I've never stuck around long enough to *have* to tell them. Everyone I care about is gone or...." She sighs. "I have no family Quinn. *You* are my family." Quinn looks away. "And it's not like I can just walk around shouting what I do to people I just met."

"You've kept this for over a year, Santana," Quinn interrupts exasperated. "It really hurts that you would do that."

"I know," Santana continues patiently. "And that's why I'm being honest with you now. Ask me anything."

Quinn stares at her warily not quite convinced that Santana will be as open as she is insisting. But Santana waits. Her eyes shining and her walls down. She doesn't push and she doesn't force. She just... waits.

Quinn feels her throat tighten as her head swirls with questions she's not entirely sure she wants to hear the answers to. Suddenly, she goes from confident and angry to insecure and worried. "Were you ever planning on telling me?"

"I've been trying to figure out a way to tell you for months. At dinner, in bed, in the car, on vacation last month," she admits. "I just could never find the right words to say. They just seemed like poison and if I brought them up then the moment would be ruined. And I'd see the hurt look on your face, not unlike the one you have now, and I just... couldn't do it."

The tears in Quinn's eyes are back and she wipes at them before they can fall. She's hurt and angry. And she refuses to give into Santana despite her honest expression and puppy eyes. "When you leave and go on these missions, are they always dangerous?"

Santana suppresses the urge to smile at Quinn's use of the word 'mission'. "Sometimes," she admits. She starts to take a step forward, her hand lifting from her side to reach out to Quinn. It breaks her heart to see how upset she is. And it downright shatters it to know she's the reason behind it.

But Quinn flinches at the movement so Santana stops, continuing to give the girl space.

Quinn wraps her arms around herself, her eyes flicking up hesitantly to Santana. "Are there... people after you? Like right now?"

Santana shakes her head. "No."

"Were you even *in* Mexico?"

"Yes."

"Did you have anything to do what's happening in Mexico City?"

"Yes."

"Does anyone outside of the C.I.A. know who you work for?"

"Just you."

"Are Puck, Artie and Kitty apart of your team?"

"Yes."

"Am I in danger now that I know you work for the C.I.A.?"

"No."

"What exactly do you do?"

"I can't tell you that," Santana says regrettably. She knew that question was coming. And she dreaded it. Two steps forward. Three steps back. Quinn's face falls. "Quinn, you're not in danger *because* you don't know. I promise I'll be as honest as I can, but there *are* some things I can't tell you. And trust me, there are things you don't want to know."

Quinn stares at her for a moment, letting the words sink in. The rational part of her knows Santana is right. That she's lucky she's being as honest as she is. But the girlfriend part of her feels betrayed. Her eyes fall from Santana's black eye to her sling. "All those injuries," she says trailing off as she thinks back to the numerous times Santana came home banged up. Then it hits her. "Your scar..." Her eyes drift to Santana's ribcage.

Santana tenses, her lips pursing together as flashes of one of her first assignments comes rushing back. "A jagged piece of glass." Quinn meets her gaze. "It was my third assignment. I was arrogant, careless and reckless. I had taken off my vest to go drinking with Puck. We were wasted. Completely trashed. We were celebrating our victory. But there was someone in my hotel room, waiting." Santana looks at Quinn seriously. "I haven't been careless since."

And that's why Puck and I don't drink to our victory until after we're home, she thinks to herself.

Quinn feels as though she might be sick. For over a year she's wondered about that scar. And now that she knows... No wonder Santana never mentioned it.

"Hey," Santana says closing the remaining distance between them. "Look at me." She waits until Quinn's eyes meet hers once more. "I'm okay. And I'm so sorry you had to find out this way instead of us sitting down and talking about it. I should've done that a long time ago. And that's on me. But I never lied about where I was. And I never lied about my feelings for you. Ever."

"I just never thought that every time you left you were putting your life in danger," Quinn admits with a crack to her voice. "This changes... everything."

"Nothing. It changes nothing," Santana says firmly. "Quinn, I love you. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I would do *anything* for you."

"Would you stop putting your life in danger? Would you stop going on missions?" Quinn challenges.

Santana was taken back. "Quinn," she says unsure of how to respond. Quinn's walls immediately go back up. She purses her lips and nods. "Quinn please," Santana pleads. Leaving the C.I.A. just isn't an option. But neither is losing Quinn. "Just tell me we're going to be okay. That's all I want to know. Tell me what you want me to do."

Quinn turns away from Santana and reaches for a pillow. "I want you to sleep in the guest room for starters."

Santana can barely grab the pillow thrust into her chest with her good arm. "Are you serious?" Santana calls out to Quinn as she makes her way to the master bathroom.

She stops in the doorway and pins Santana with a serious look. "I need to think about this. And I'm angry and hurt. So yes, I'm serious."

"But my - " But Quinn slams the bathroom door. "Arm is broken." Santana looks down at the pillow with a frown before heading towards the door. She glances at Rufus on the way out. "You coming?" He doesn't even bother to lift his head. "Didn't think so."

The pain in Santana's arm wakes her. She shifts uncomfortably and reaches for her pain killers resting on the nightstand but as she stretches, her foot connects with a squishy lump at the end of the bed. She lifts her head and looks down at Rufus sprawled out near her feet.

A soft sigh distracts her from his sleeping form and she looks towards the sound. Her eyes land on Quinn sleeping peacefully beside her.

A small smile tugs at her lips.

Kingdom Come, by ilse151

"Quinn, you're pressing the wrong pedal."

"No, I'm not, Finn, I'm doing exactly what you told me."

The truck swerves across the driveway, past their house, towards a tree. Quinn can't seem to stop it.

"It's the left pedal."

"That's what I'm doing!"

Finn calmly pries her terrified fingers from the wheel and steers it in the other direction, then brings one hand down to her left thigh. "Left, Quinn. Left."

She looks down at his hand and giggles, because he's right. He turns off the ignition, his booming laugh filling the car and her heart for the thousandth time since they got married.

"You wanna call it a day?"

Quinn nods. "I don't wanna crash your SUV."

Finn kisses the top of her head. "*Our* SUV. And I don't care if you do. As long as you're OK."

Mr. and Mrs. Hudson walk hand in hand into the three story house they bought just five years ago. It still smells like new.

Quinn's busy cooking up a feast when her mother calls.

"Hudson residence."

"Quinn?"

"Yeah."

"Are you watching the game?"

She glances at the clock. She completely forgot.

"Uh, yeah." She races to the living room and digs under the plush cushions of their leather couch. Under the last one, amidst some stale chips, she finds the remote. She points it at the TV. Dora the Explorer, loud as can be. Wincing, she flips through the channels until she catches a glimpse of her husband in his uniform. 29. The day they went on their first date. She smiles involuntarily, until she hears her Judy's voice, icy on the phone.

"Today's trade deadline. I'm hoping you haven't forgotten *that*."

"No, mamma, I haven't."

What she really wants to say is "If you knew anything about football, you would know no one important gets traded on trade deadline." Or, "Finn's not gonna get traded, he's too good." Or maybe, "It's none of your business."

At exactly five o'clock, the doorbell rings. She opens the door gallantly and the girls come in, carrying bottles of wine and pots with flowers. They fawn over the remodeled dining room like they haven't seen hundreds identical and pretend to enjoy the food they only eat in morsels as they watch the last minutes of the game. No one says anything about the deadline, even though it's on all their minds. Instead, they talk about what they will wear to the charity gala and tear apart the new teacher at St. Paul's.

"Her skirts are so short."

"I know, completely inappropriate."

Quinn, in particular, doesn't take kindly to newcomers. "I'm telling you girls, we need to push for those uniforms at the next PTA meeting."

Bree laughs. "God, Quinn, you're ruthless."

"I'm sorry, I can't have my children around *that*."

After the party, she waits up until twelve for a call from Finn, but it never comes. She climbs onto their huge bed and snuggles into it contentedly. He's safe.

The next day, she picks up her children at her mother's, painfully aware her vacation's over. Willow slides into the backseat and slams the door in her face. She goes around and straps Daisy into her car seat, then heads to the passenger seat only to find out Elliott's already taken it. She maneuvers herself into the empty spot between Willow and Daisy, which, being tiny, doesn't present a problem. Her parents' chauffeur, Puck, glances at them through the rear-view mirror. He's her age, and she's known him for so long he could be a friend, and yet he is but a stranger. "Everything all right back there?"

She nods, feeling like a little girl, seated between her daughters. "Perfect."

Puck nods and gets on the road. On her right, Willow pretends to be asleep.

She tosses and turns on nights when Finn's not home. Even though they have an alarm system and every burglar protection known to mankind, she's afraid without him. During the day, too, afraid of not being able to be mother and father, or even just mother, without her husband. Sometimes, she douses herself in sleeping drops, others, she's too petrified to do even that. Tonight, she lays in bed staring at the ceiling, when she hears soft, carpeted footsteps outside her door.

"Mommy?"

She sighs. "Come in, Elliott."

He's seven, but looks about four in the powder blue footed pajamas he insists on wearing even though they're too small. He climbs into bed with her. She buries her nose in his hair and inhales her husband's shampoo.

"When is daddy coming home?"

"In, like, two days."

"That's a long time."

"Not really. Did you have a nice time at grandma's?"

"Yeah. She let me sleep with Daisy."

Oh, so that's what this is about. "Elliott, Daddy talked to you about this. There's nothing to be afraid of."

"But he's not here."

Ever since he was a toddler, it had been difficult to get Elliott to sleep in his own room, unlike Willow, who couldn't wait to get away from her, or Daisy, who was complacent even as a newborn.

It had hurt Quinn to hear her son cry himself to sleep, but Finn had insisted. Elliott had gotten used to it, even though he had nightmares regularly, especially when his father wasn't home.

"Did Willow see you come in here?"

"No."

"Are you sure? Because if she did, she's gonna tell Daddy and he's gonna be upset with both of us."

"She didn't, I swear."

Quinn nods. "OK. You can stay. But just for tonight."

He falls asleep right away, a pleasant little smile on his face that's much nicer to stare at than the ceiling.

—

She spends the morning before Finn comes home at the country club, talking numbers with the girls. They're having brunch out in the garden, their children playing somewhere, though she can spot Elliott alone under a tree. Judy is watching him, too.

"You need to do something about that child."

"I don't know what else I can do, mamma."

"He should be playing with the other children."

"I can't force him to. Finn says to just leave him alone. He says he was like that when he was a kid."

"Was he?"

Quinn shrugs. Although it seems impossible to believe she hasn't known Finn all her life, they met in high school. By then, he was already Finn. It's hard to imagine he was once like her son.

On the other side of the table, they can hear Kitty's voice rising above the rest. "At least part of the money from the gala has to go to the pro-life campaign, you wouldn't believe how much money those people on the other side are raising-"

Quinn cuts in solemnly. "I think all of the money should go to the campaign." She glances at Elliott, who is now lying on his back, looking up at the sky. "I don't get it. How can they just get rid of a baby like that?"

"Because they're cold, heartless people, Quinn." It's nothing she hasn't heard before.

Her mother pats her leg soothingly. "I think Quinn's right. We need to make the campaign a priority this year."

The women around the table, old and young, nod emphatically and Quinn smiles. At least she's doing something right.

—

By the time Finn gets home, she's already asleep. She doesn't hear him come in the room or slip into bed, but in the morning, she finds herself trapped under a heavy arm. She slides it down her body carefully and gets up without waking him. She pulls on a robe and goes to knock on Willow's door.

"Willow. Get up."

"What do you want?"

"I have your dress for church."

Even though Willow is still in her Hello Kitty pajamas and there is black makeup smeared all over her face, Quinn feels like she is looking at herself.

It seems Willow knows it too, because she has tried everything to look as different from her mother as possible. Her hair is dyed hot pink and cut short, and causes Quinn to remember, with a pang, the little girl with the long, blond curls who was her spitting image just a few years ago. They're about the same height now, and Quinn's afraid of her daughter, who is only four years younger than she was when she had her.

She got her a pale yellow dress with a high neckline. It will clash horribly with her hair, but what won't? Willow stares at it the way one would at a dead animal, and Quinn shrugs. "I told you to come with me."

Willow sets Finn's blue eyes on her with tremendous coolness. "You really hate me, don't you?"

Quinn shuts her eyes for a second and then opens them again, her fake eyelashes flickering like feathers on a bird. "Willow, please. I'm begging you."

They hear Finn's voice coming from the other end of the hall. "Quinn? Where are you?"

Willow snatches the dress from her and retreats into her room. Quinn hurries back and meets Finn in the kitchen. He picks her up and she buries her face in the crook of his neck.

"I'm so glad you're back."

He puts her down and looks at her with an odd little smile. "Willow giving you trouble?"

Quinn shakes her head and grabs his hand. "We have to get ready for church." He laces their fingers together and follows meekly.

—

Finn sets Daisy on the kitchen counter as he laces up the ballet slippers she wears everywhere to perfection, then pours two cups of hot chocolate and hands one to Elliott, who takes it with a smile. Finn brings the other to his lips just as Quinn comes in the room, wearing heels and his favorite tight, little white dress. He whistles. "Wow."

He puts the cup down and spins her around, and then they hear Willow's voice, sharp like Judy's. "No way."

Even Finn has to admit she looks ridiculous in that pink dress.

"So that's what you're wearing, and I have to wear this?"

Quinn sighs.

"Cause I have a dress just like that one that I can wear."

Quinn's eyebrows fly up in alarm. "You wouldn't!"

"Oh, so you can go to church looking like a hooker, but I can't?"

Finn speaks up in warning. "Willow."

Quinn turns on her daughter. "I am a married woman, Willow. I can wear whatever I please. You, on the other hand, are not. When you have a husband—"

Finn lays a hand on Quinn's shoulder. "It's OK. Willow, go change into some jeans on something."

Willow throws her dad a grateful glance and storms off. Quinn tilts her head back to look at her husband, whose head is practically level with the chandelier in their kitchen.

"Finn, the whole reason I got her a dress was so she wouldn't wear jeans to church."

Finn wraps his arms around her. "I know. And I'm sure y'all can try again next week."

Quinn sighs resignedly and burrows into her husband's arms.

It is a few minutes until the end of service, and everyone is doing exactly the same thing they were doing all service long. Willow is texting, Quinn is wishing she could slap the phone out of her hands, Elliott is leaning against Finn's shoulder, fast asleep, and Daisy is on his lap, placidly listening to the sermon with a serene expression on her face that matches father's exactly.

On their way out, several people stop to greet Finn, to pat him on the back and say they're glad he's back. As if he had been going somewhere, Quinn thinks. Their lack of faith in him irritates her, and also, she doesn't like sharing her husband. She hurries the children along to the car, and by the time she has them all inside and strapped up, Finn has managed to free himself from the crowd.

They head over to her mother's for brunch. The food is rich and heavy, and Quinn can't find anything to eat in the house except for carrot juice and a couple of celery stalks. Finn shoots her a sympathetic glance as he piles up sausages, grits and hash-browns on his plate.

They sit around the table. Quinn's father, Russel, casts his eye upon them proudly, and Quinn feels proud too.

"So, Finn, anything interesting happen on the deadline?"

It's just like Judy, to bring up something no one wants to talk about. Finn shakes his head as he gulps down the food in his mouth with a wash of soda, and then he turns to Quinn.

"Actually, yeah. You remember my friend Sam?"

"From college? I think so." She does, vaguely, from the one time Finn brought over his frat brothers.

"Well, he got traded into the team."

"I didn't know he was still playing." She can feel her father's eyes on her, like when she was a little girl and said something she wasn't supposed to. Finn frowns. "I thought I told you."

"I remember everything you say, Finn." It's true, and he knows it.

Her mother passes around a large bowl. "Mashed potatoes, Quinn?"

"No, thank you." But she grabs the bowl anyway.

Her father coughs loudly. "Sam Evans, right? Played for the Eagles?"

Finn's face lights up. "Yeah. That's him."

Quinn scoops up a large serving of mashed potatoes onto Daisy's plate. Willow dips her finger into the bowl and sucks it into her mouth as she speaks. "He was on the bench a lot."

Her grandfather nods. "Yeah. But he did some interesting things last season."

"Enough to get him noticed?"

"Yeah. He's moving into the Rosewood estate with his family next week."

Finn laughs at the pinched look on Quinn's face. "You'll like them, I promise. They have a kid who's Elliott's age."

He ruffles his son's hair fondly and Quinn smiles, mollified.

Note: continued on <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10315133/>

Parallel Love (5), by ive-gotta-gay-go-go-ive-gotta-go

(FabrayQS)

December 30th, 2018

Quinn's POV

I grip my jacket closer to my torso, warding off the freezing snow. I opened Frannie's building door, throwing off the snowflakes in my hair. The date with Santana went perfectly. I could talk to her about everything, simple things, like the weather and our conversations will be full of joy, not monotone. Still, I could not shake the pictures away from my head. I have to find options, to find out if my sister can help me understand all of this.

Nothing make sense. Why would I be spending my teenage days with Santana and don't remember any of it? Its funny, I've read every book about time and Quantum theories. What I saw yesterday means only one thing, there must be an alternate universe in which Santana and I met. A universe where my parents are alive and happy. There was no other explanation and I was going to find it.

Once upstairs, I knocked on the door, three times. I looked the time on my watch, its three forty-four in the morning. I just could not keep this hidden anymore. I need to speak with someone about it.

Frannie opens the door alarmed. "Quinn? It's almost four in the morning, it's everything okay?" I stood there and shook my head. "Come in."

"I am sorry to come this late, but-

"Is everything okay with Santana? Did you close the portal?"

"No, she is fine. I just need your help." She nodded, sitting on the couch. I sat opposite her, bringing my hands to my mouth and warming them with my breath.

"Yesterday after work, I entered the decompression room to deposit the energy." I said looking at my hands. "I stole two flasks of energy."

"Quinn-

"I went to see the future, Frann."

"You did what?"

"I needed to see if Santana and I were possible." I lower my gaze. "I needed to pick up on something that could guide me to what will take place next." Frannie crosses her arms shifting on the sofa uncomfortable.

"What are your plans?" She said taking deep breaths, as if she was examining every word coming out of her lips. "You are not thinking about crossing her over here."

I scrunch my nose and shook my head. "No. That's not a possibility. Her family in the past will lose her."

"Not to mention that you'll have two Santana's in this time." She said shaking her head. "This is *not* how it works, they cannot meet. What if they found each other?" I looked at her, lowering my gaze one more time. "You'll have to make sure *your* Santana never meets *herself* in this time."

"What if I stay in her past?"

She was silent. Her fingers began tapping the armrest of the sofa. "Same thing." She said after taking a few breaths. "You'll have to move, because Quinn in the past will come here and stay in her apartment. You need to avoid getting ahead of *yourself*. You know we cannot decide what will happen if-

"I know." I slipped my hand through my hair. "It's hard. I also can't leave you alone at this time. You are my only family and I –I can't leave you alone here." I fastened my eyes with hers. "I can't ask you to come with me, because Jennifer, her family, everything. I just – it's not an option."

"Luce." She stated gently. "I know how deeply you feel for her. If you actually want to blend in and stay with her in the past," She gulped. "Go. There's nothing I can do. I will miss you." She chuckled, her eyes watering. "I can always open a portal and visit you back in time."

"It doesn't work like that, Frannie." I said shaking my head.

"Why are you complicating all of this?" She pronounced a little louder, bringing up her hands in the air.

"Because I want to keep her memories."

"Then keep your memories to *yourself*. Go and find her at this time. You can forge new memories and live with her happily." She stated firmly. "Trust *me*; look for her at this time, Quinn."

"I think," I said slowly, dragging my words. "There's an alternate universe. One we don't know. One *no one* knows about it."

I looked over my hands. The silence grew in the living room. I pulled in a deep breath and took the photos out of my jacket. I placed them neatly on the coffee table and sat back on the sofa.

She leaned over taking the pictures in her hands. Her eyes diverted from the photos to mine. I could see mixed emotions in her expression. She stood abruptly and placed the picture on top of the coffee table.

"Quinn. There's no alternate universe." Frannie said, closing her eyes and sliding her hand through blonde hair. "What did you see?" She was acting strange, I've never seen her acting so shady.

"You *know* about this?" I could see the guilt all over her face. She was shaking her head constantly. She was scared.

"What did you see?" She yelled. I looked over at her, dumbfounded. I've never seen her like this before. She stands looking over her shoulder. It took her a few seconds to calm herself. She sat back in the sofa and repeats the question, this time more calmed. "What did you *see*?"

"I –I... the loft was empty. I didn't find myself or Santana in there. I went to the room and found the closet and the photos on the wall." She nodded. "I saw," I stopped for a second, taking deep breaths. "I saw my life with Santana in photos. I cannot distinguish to you what year I was in, or why, according to the photos, I passed my teenage years with her. Everything seems blurry, I can't decipher why there's these pictures. Photos of us years before this date." I shook my head. "So can you please explain to me why are you behaving like this?" Frannie just buried her face in her hands. "Do you know why Santana is in this photo with our parents?" I pointed to the picture in front of her. "Do you know something I don't?" By now my tone was higher and raspier.

She nodded imploringly. "Yes." She starts. "Think back two years ago when we traveled back in time to keep our parents alive." I nodded. "Remember, no matter what we did, no matter how we attempted to salvage them, at the close of the daylight they were back in the car." She looks out to the rampart. "Remember how we always received the call from the police?"

I nodded. Tears began forming in my eyes. "We tried everything, Luce. We even tried to go with them in the car because we knew we would be okay." I nodded. Tears falling down my face. "Do you remember when I asked you to go again?"

"I said no." I whispered. "I couldn't watch them die anymore."

"And I don't blame you." She shakes her head. "But what you don't know it's what truly occurred. When you went with me, it wasn't the first time you have gone with me in the past. In reality it was the *ffth*."

"What?"

"I made you believe whatever I desired. I didn't want to watch you suffer." She looks at me, cleaning her cheeks. "You have met Santana before." She said cleaning her running nose with her sleeve. "You went to school with her in Lima, you had common friends," She took a deep breath. "You were happy with her." I started crying. I couldn't believe what she was saying. "Santana was my best friend." She said cleaning her cheeks.

"Why are you speaking in past tense?"

"She was in the car with Mom and Dad the day of the accident." Her words echoed in my mind repeatedly. "We received a call, eight o' five in the evening." I covered my mouth, remembering the exact hour of the call. "The police said there were no survivors." I was shaking along with her. My heart was rushing along. "I wasn't strong enough, you were so destroyed. After the three of them passed away, I held you every night until you dropped asleep. You woke up screaming every morning. I didn't know what should I say to you. I lost my parents and my best friend; still I had to be strong for you because you lost your *parents* and your *girlfriend*."

"I tried living with you like that, but I couldn't. I couldn't see you so miserable *every single day*. You stopped eating, you didn't want to see your friends, and you were crying all day, all night. I stopped being strong for you." She shrugs. "I knew one day I couldn't be strong for you. There was moment when I just couldn't handle things anymore. That's when I started in this job, I urge you, so you could help me change the past. Our primary ground was trying to prevent that accident, go back in time." She said taking deep breaths.

"Have a second chance." I whispered.

"I tried alone. Try to find another way of preventing the accident without Santana. For some reason the accident always happened. No matter how hard I tried, we ended up receiving the call at eight o' five. I did what I thought was best. The next time I traveled backwards in time, I force you to not meet Santana. I wanted to see if our parents would have the accident as well. We were supposed to be stationed in Lima. I changed the military orders; however, our parents died again at eight o' five in a different state. That's what you should remember. That trip I made with you, the one we tried to save them, in Boston."

"How... how is Santana at this time, now?" I said dragging my words.

"I tracked her from the past." She smiled, her face red from all the crying. "I followed her through the years. I kept a close eye on her. I knew she was staying in that loft with her friends. A few months ago, Santana bought the loft in her building. I needed a way for you to meet." She raises her legs, pressing them to her chest and wraps her arms around her knees. "I bought her loft for you to live, not the company. I never closed the portal in Mrs. Susan's house on Monday. If you go there now, you could see machines running, creating energy. Maintaining the merge."

"This is real? All of this is real?"

She nodded. "I'm sorry. I –I couldn't survive with you wretched. It hasn't been easy for me. I've had to keep this a secret, spend long hours in the office mixing energy and looking for a way to make this possible." She smiles. "Everything was paid off when I saw Santana in your loft. I missed her so much. I missed both of you, together." She smiled, pointing to my necklace. "She gave you that necklace a few years ago. I almost blew my cover when I saw it yesterday. Everything was to happen. You guys were crazy in love. This is everything I planned.

"Quinn you can't go to the past and you can't go to the future. The future has a miserable you. Those images you envisioned, they were real, but it's not the life you will live with her. In the future, you sleep in that closet every night. Gazing at her pictures. Thinking of changing something, I *changed* already. You have to live this moment. Santana is okay, she is still in the past, but she is a year behind. Our parents are dead at her time. She didn't meet you. I saved her. The Santana that lives in your place is real. You need to find her here, at this time. You need to build new memories. You need to start all over again." She took a deep breath. Her eyes red from all the crying.

Everything make sense now.

I didn't quite know what to say. My emotions were uncontrolled. I felt goosebumps forming on my skin. I don't know what to feel or what should I do. Everything was confusing. I was still repeating my sister's words in my head. My nose was red from all the crying, my eyes puffy and my face felt warm.

"Please say something."

"I don't know what to say." I stood from the couch and slowly walked over her. I cleaned her tears and squeezed her close.

"I'm sorry, Luce. I've tried it. I did everything I could."

"Thank you."

"You are not mad?"

"W –Why? Because you saved the woman, I love? Never." I took a deep breath. I didn't think of the last words I said. I was truly falling in love with Santana.

"Maybe mom and dad's death was intended to go on. I honestly don't know. Nevertheless, Santana wasn't. You have another chance, Luce."

"I love you." I said.

"I love you more."

I kiss the top of her head. I couldn't believe she did all of this for me. How could I ever repay her? "Hey, tell me something." I smiled at her, finding a silly way to dissipate the tense topic. "Did mom like her? Did *Judy Fabray* like Santana?"

She scoffs. "She loved her. More than us, I think." We laughed until silence made its show in the living room.

"Thank you, Frannie." I said, caressing her hair. "Now I know why I had this pull toward her. I know why I feel so deeply about a stranger in just five days. Thank you so much for saving her. Thank you for granting me a second chance."

"Don't thank me. Just be happy. That will be the greatest reward." She embraces me softly.

I nodded. "I will close the portal and find her." I kissed her cheek and stood up from the sofa. "Thank you." I said, walking over to the door. "Tomorrow you will explain those photos. Oh, and you need to tell me who got me pregnant." She laughed and I opened the door.

"I will, but please stay here. It's snowing and it's almost five in the morning."

I shook my head. "I can't stay. My lady awaits me at home."

—

I took off my scarf and jacket placing them on the couch. The pastel color of the dawn enters the window delicately while the snow still swung in the air. I removed my jeans and boots and walked over the room.

I saw silver circles on the floor and I tiptoed to my bed when I found her silhouette had formed under the bed sheets. I pull her near to me and she stiffens her body.

She growls softly. "Go away, you are cold." I wrapped my legs around hers and she shifted uncomfortably. She was here, alive, with me. "Quinn where were you?" She said yawning. "You are freezing." I hug her and she kisses my head. "Okay... I'll keep you warm." She said, rubbing her hand along my back.

"Santana?" I stated, resting my head along her breast, holding her still. Tears forming in my eyes, happy tears forming in my eyes.

"Yes." She mumbled.

"Do you believe in second chances?"

"You are my second change."

I shut my eyes, feeling amazing in her arms. I couldn't be happier or more grateful.

I will form new memories with her.

I will close the portal and look for her at this time.

However, not today.

A Broken Ass, by KatieMacLove

"Alright, I'll see you later, Santana!" Vicky yells as we split off in the parking lot.

"Try to get laid tonight!" I yell! She flips me off and I laugh and wave. "Love you, Vic!" Today has been a long but good day. Now all I need is a hot bubble bath and a glass of wine.... Okay, maybe a bottle of wine.

I click my keys to find my car and out of nowhere, a big ass SUV backs into me with the bumper ramming into my stomach, landing my on my ass. The car stops and I'm rolling on the ground in exaggerated pain because I'm nothing but an assistant and I don't get paid that well. Hopefully it's one of the assholes of the building and I can sue the shit out of this man.

"MY ASS! MY ASS! YOU BROKE MY ASS!"

Unfortunately, the driver just sits there for a full minute and I stop rolling around but keep the tears rolling while wondering if he's contemplating finishing the job of running me over or if he doesn't understand what just happened. Slowly- and I mean fucking slow- the driver opens the door and sticks out a head of blonde curls. Turns out it's a woman. More sympathy points if it's a male judge.

I start rolling on my stomach and clutch my booty cheeks. "Ohhh, my God! I wonder if I'm still pregnant! I doubt I'll be able to shit again!" I whimper when I feel a tentative shadow loom over me.

"OH MY FUCKING GOD! I HIT YOU!" A woman yells in a husky voice. *No shit, Sherlock.*

"NO SHIT, SHERLOCK!" I yell, not knowing what else to say. I look up at her and am so shocked at the beauty, I stop rolling for a few second. She has long blonde hair flows out her beanie, accenting her perfect cheekbones and facial structure. She wears a blue sundress that's painted on to her curves and she has an air to her that makes her seem sexy without even trying. Her worried and panicked expression is so cute. I should get up and say hi.

'Wait! I need money!' Snixx, my alter ego, reminds me. I start to sob and feel around my body and start saying a prayer, knowing full well that I haven't prayed since I was twelve. "Father God, please let me live to see my Abuela before she dies on her cancer bed. Lord, allow me to see my children grow to be good men in society. Allow the opportunity to teach my kids to drive and not deprive anyone the chance of shitting again, Lord. In your name, Amen."

I keep my eyes closed as I hear her whimpering and pacing around. "Do you work here?"

"Yeah."

"Okay, I'm a photographer here, I work on the sixth floor under Ms. Sylvester."

"Well take a picture of this, bitch! Twitter update!" She glares at me before she lets out a broken sob. I feel bad, but I have to keep going. "Schuster and Sylvester's employee can't go to work because of broken ass due to malicious attack as photographer runs over Santana Lopez

while the victim was unaware. Employers think this was a plotted attack against the company. Poor Santana Lopez just happened to be in the middle of the crossfire."

She goes pale, then red, and pale again as I continue. I'm seriously worried about her blood circulation. "Please don't tell me you're high up in this building. I just finished art school and I'm trying to apply to the paper as a photographer! I'm barely even an intern! I don't even work here yet! I can't pay for a *new ass*!" She rambles hysterically.

'She's broke... Abort mission.' Snixx sighs.

I frown and let out a heavy sighs and get to my feet and dust myself off. The blonde looks at me in wonder and confusion written all over her puffy, red-eyed face. "What the hell?! Why are you standing, your ass is broken!" She turns me around and feels all over my ass.

"Not that I don't enjoy this- and I'm guessing you do too-, but it's not broken. I was hoping you were one of the assholes in the building with money so I could sue you so bad you have to eat Ramen until you're ninety but you probably already do since you're broke so it's no point of exaggerating the truth." I tell her.

She stops mid-grope and her hand is squeezing piece of my butt so I swat her hand away with a chuckle. She has her mouth gaping open dry tear tracks on her cheeks. "So you're not important?"

"I would like to think I am but I guess not now! Thanks for boosting my confidence." I say dryly.

"You don't have kids and you're not pregnant either?" She asks with a confused and hopeful pout.

"Not unless my ex grew a dick." I smirk.

At this, she looks at me for a moment until it dawns on her. She shakes her head and chuckles. "We should start over." She sticks her hand out. "Hi, I'm Quinn Fabray. I'm twenty-two years old, just graduated with an art degree from NYU, and I just hit you with my car. Nice to meet you."

In spite of myself, I laugh and shake her hand. "I'm Santana Lopez; I have a business degree from NYU and am a twenty-two year old, non-important assistant to one of the biggest dicks at Schuester, got hit by you, and am single."

She beams the most beautiful smile I've ever seen and lets out an adorable laugh. "Well, Santana, I think I should make it up to you. How about we swap numbers and I can take you out for a beer or something sometime soon?"

I smile. "I'd like that."

Slave to the Games (5), by lacksubstance

Quinn's P.O.V.

I rose at dawn when Santana still slept when her dreams no longer haunted her. I am not certain of what she possibly discovered in her slumber; however, it terrified her enough to awake me from my own dreams. I retreated back to the villa as intended and got myself bathed. I could not allow my mother and father to bear witness just how filthy I was due to the sand that clouds in Santana's cell.

Even though I could not stay to see her awake for her day of training, the night prior will forever be within my memories. She took such care of my needs and desires to make certain I would not feel any pain when she made love to me.

For now, I stand upon my father's balcony as it overlooks the city of Naples with Vesuvius towering in its stature. In these moments, I tend to just sit upon this very spot to recollect my thoughts, which have contained the fear champion of Naples as of late. I place my hands upon my belly, rubbing it gently at the memory of Santana attentively laying her lips upon it so lovingly.

The wind casts in front of me, freely allowing my hair to move as it may as my thoughts seek possibility among many of how I can be allowed to love Santana so freely. I know it is of the forbidden, but perhaps when she gains freedom she may be more accepting in the Empire.

I sigh deeply, feeling the faint pain sitting within my head when I hear the clear of a throat and footsteps approaching me slowly. "Your thoughts cloud you," my father's voice is a welcoming sound, for I know I will not learn of answers without his guidance.

"Perhaps," I whisper as I continue to rub my stomach as the constant memory resurfaces in my mind. He turns his head to face me as I look down upon the stone distantly.

"Speak what is on your tongue," he states as I finally greet his concerned gaze. I stare upon my father with great admiration and yet I fear that if I learn the truth of consequences that come with laying with a slave out of love, then my admiration will turn to something far darker.

"What is of Roman law between a noble and slave?" I question curiously without placing any meaning as such. It will sound as if I am not aware of the ruling, though I am for certain that if Santana can receive freedom, then she can be a citizen under the rule of the Roman Empire—living in Rome, I searched for such answers; however, I question where my father lies on the matter.

He sighs, shrugging his shoulders as such. "A slave is at the will of his Dominus, no matter what command lies within," he says and I continue to look on at his beliefs. We have slaves, but most of which have been freed—we are among a small number of nobles that does for ourselves. We only keep but two or three at most, though I've never understood why since every other one of my friends' homes have at least ten or more.

"How do you fair on such conditions?" I ask of him and he welcomes me with another sigh, too turning back to the mountain that lies beyond the land, looking down upon the city I call home like it's the Gods himself.

"You question this as if you are not aware," he says quietly, not meeting my gaze. "I hold but two in order to keep appearance. I invade others' lands by order, not by my own free will," he soon faces me and I am left confused by the admission. I had many speculations of the sort, but I was not aware of such honesty.

"Do you recall a time when I ever favored the games prior to three years pass?" He blinds me with such a question that I am left but to shake my head. "Not since Santana has grazed the sands of Naples have I not attended such an event," he speaks as if reminiscing of the pasted, but he holds me by ears because he never speaks of such degree about his pasted with I nor anyone.

He glances at me as if to seek if I am attending to his words, then returns his gaze to the city. "You were all but seven when I became Head General, my first task at hand was to invade a village and to kill any citizen in our wake if they chose to defy our orders," he speaks so solemnly as if this part of his life haunts him to this very day and from the looks of such—it does and this bears meaning to him. "All of those people died that day—all—but—one," he finally turns to me with glazed eyes, holding his finger up to place emphasis on his words.

"I stood before her as she looked upon me—she all but challenged me with her eyes. She watched her family parish, but she did not fight, she did not cry—she just stood there with fire blazing in her eyes, so I spared her," he says and I look down upon to the stones of the balcony again to remove my gaze from him. He placed a blade within the hearts of her mother and father while she stood there, watching their lives be ripped from their bodies; she stood there watching their hearts beat no more and the mere thought makes me ill.

"What prevented you of allowing her to suffer the same fate?" I find myself growing disgusted with the man before me, though I am internally grateful that he kept her heart beating. Had he not, her arms would not hold such memory to me, her lips would not have grazed my skin, her memory of her making love to be will have been nonexistent.

"I knew she held the will of fighting with cause and purpose," he states with such conviction and pride. "I pray to the Gods that she is freed each day, whether it'd be by blood or by will," I look at him in disbelief that he believes that condemning her to slavery was saving her life. He may beg the Gods for her freedom, but he is not helping her to reach it—just watching her go through hardships till her fate is truly decided.

"You condemned her to a honorable death," I whisper, but he stares upon me in disbelief that I would talk so out of turn. He walks towards me and kneels, but there is no venom nor anger within his eyes—only deep sorrow and regret.

"I hold my own actions at the mercy of the Gods, but I don't need my own blood to tell me of such," he says quietly, then he continues to linger as if he is starting to realize as such. "Your eyes tell me this bears deeper meaning," he says to only my ears and I look down fearing he will discover my affair with Santana.

"Whatever truly hides among your breasts, I will see only but your happiness," he stands up shortly after his admission, then departs from the balcony. I sigh a shaky breath, turning to where he left, knowing I must visit Santana. I need her words. I need her guidance. I need her love.

I walk into the ludus, welcomed by a surprised Alba. I know I didn't make it known that I would be returning so soon, but she is always far welcoming when I make my presence known; she's a dear friend. "I must ask of you something that ponders my thoughts?" I ask as we walk out to the ludus balcony. Antonius is in the town attending to business, which only leaves her and I among her house slaves. My eyes linger on Dani, who holds true loyalty to her Domina, but I am struck ill when my memories are haunted of her and Santana sharing their intimate moment together.

"Speak thy haunted thoughts," Alba says concerned as we watch their Gladiators train. I spark notice upon Santana who wields two swords, not yet noticing my presences. She seems higher than normal and when she asks of four men to spar alongside her, I am left forgetting Alba's presences all together.

She allows each of them to charge at her as she uses both swords to block one, splitting the pair to block another's attack. She breaks the defense, flipping one over her back as she punches the other in the gut. She coaxes another with her fingers, almost taunting him and he does so as she blocks him, pushing him away then charges at him spinning her wooden blades in hand towards his face as he turns out of their wake, only to stop abruptly in front of him and swipe her foot underneath his legs to have him land on the ground. She holds her sword to his throat as he holds his two fingers up, then turns back to the other three who have risen.

She allows two of them to charge at her, blocking them both at the same time. They use a great deal of force only to be pushed back, her foot kicking one to the ground. Her muscles pulse exposing just how much strength she holds as she jumps on top of the one on the ground, kneeling before him with her blade at his face. He too places his fingers up and she's left with two.

She breathes heavily as they both charge at her in unison as she blocks yet again, pulling back to have them tumble forward. One quickly recovers and charges at her as she uses both blades to knock back at him. He bears his teeth to her as he charges at her again. She spins around in a deflect hitting the back of his head with the hilt of the sword. He turns around with anger visible, but the other soon comes back into the fight. He goes to punch her, but she ducks out of his attack. I am left with fear that she will draw blood as my heart races at an unimaginable rate.

She punches him in the ribs and flips him over her, before landing her elbow into his chest. The last man stands and charges at her as she lays on the ground, but she kicks him in the abdomen, grabs both swords free of the sands and holds them down to both men's necks, ending the fight.

"My Santana is getting even more skilled than we imagined," Alba says with a proud smile grazing her lips. "Perhaps she should get her cock wet more frequently," she laughs and I too return the same, only to hide such distaste for the idea of her with anyone else.

"Now what was it that you spoke of?" She returns us to the matter at hand prior to Santana's sparring and I finally meet her gaze with curiosity.

"I just questioned the matter of a potential freedom in order for Santana. She all, but fights with such purpose that I wonder if her skill should be more suitable for a greater degree, like say by my father's side?" I ask even though the matter holds falsity within it. I do not wish for my lover to be standing by my father's side as a soldier of war. If my father bears truth to his words, he is no more than a slave to the Empire and I cannot bear the idea of condemning her to another form of slavery—she's had enough.

Alba narrows her eyes with a glint. "Antonius and I have exchanged words of such careful thoughts. She's been with us for eleven years hence, serving us with loyalty in many aspects. We did come to the conclusion of allowing as such after the games in Rome, if she proves victorious," she reveals and my heart swells at the thought of having her free of these walls—free of fighting for her life.

"I see something within your eyes that tells me her freedom isn't all you seek from her," she suggests and I all but blush at the statement. I wish for much from Santana and if it means I can do so under the roof of my friend who allows me to fulfill my desires then so be it.

"I wish for my desires to be filled as you once spoke of allowing," I say and she nods with a smirk that holds more than just friendship.

"I will see her bathed then," she makes motion with her hand towards a guard, then points to Santana. He makes moves towards her and I place my hand upon her shoulder lightly, stopping her.

"I will have her as is," I speak as she stares in shock. "Something allures me at the filth of the sands laying upon her sweaty frame," I add as she nods, guiding me to one of the rooms to have me wait for Santana to come.

It isn't long before the doors open and shackles are being removed behind me. The doors shut and I'm left in the room alone with the woman I've grown to adore. "Domina says you wish to fulfill your desires," I listen to the sadness in her voice and it breaks my heart because she has yet to bear witness just who it is that stands with her in this room.

"I would hope you are more enthusiastic to be buried within me soon," I turn around to reveal my face and her eyes light up, breathing a sigh of relief. She walks over to me and takes me in her arms, kissing me passionately. I accept it openly as she breathes deeply into my lips then guides us till my back hits the wall. She turns me around, allowing her lips to splay down my neck, removing my dress to kiss upon my shoulder, allowing the fabric to fall to the floor. Her hands wrap around my front to cup my breasts as I turn my head completely to kiss those lips that I have grown addicted to.

She turns me back around and lowers them to my breasts, sucking eagerly upon them as I thread my hands through her hair. I groan as I bring my hips forward to beg for such friction. She lowers even further to her knees, lifting me up so my legs are over her shoulders as my back

stays against the wall. I marvel at her true strength as I fall prisoner to her mouth upon my womanhood. I moan as she sucks eagerly upon me, earning several tugs of her hair. She groans into me as her tongue dances around my clit feverishly.

"Santana—fuck," I breathe out as she slides her tongue inside me allowing me to fuck myself upon it. I find myself working my hips diligently as my lower abdomen seizes and soon I'm coming undone under her will.

I love you.

She slows her ministrations down to allow me to run the course of my release, when I open my eyes to see her staring back at me. I have always seen the fire within them long before my father mentioned of such, but now I see just how prominent it truly is, that is until I fully comprehended the words I spoke as I released my in ambitions

"I have longed for you to say such words," she whispers, standing enough to place my feet back on the floor. I lay my hand upon her dirt covered cheek and kiss her slowly, lowering her robe down to lay next to my dress. Her cock already stands as I walk her to the bed that sits inside the room.

She lays down upon it as I swing my legs on top of her. She strokes my thighs softly as I lean forward to kiss her lips again. She holds firmly to my thighs as I let my tongue slip into her mouth, eagerly searching for hers. I place my hands upon her breasts, grabbing them to massage them. She moans softly into my mouth, before slipping one hand between us to slide her cock against me. I gasp pulling away from her eager mouth as she guides the head against my clit. I groan as I move my hips against her. I need her inside me desperately.

As if she step into my mind and knew of my thoughts, she slips it in with ease. She and I both gasp at the lack of tightness as I start to circle my hips on her. She groans closing her eyes as her hands return to my thighs as if searching for anything to hold on to. She begins to lift her hips into me and I'm left to meet her thrusts. I begin to moan her name loudly till finally were both fucking faster and harder.

She sits up and tugs my lips back to hers as she keeps thrusting deeper into me, grabbing my hip with one hand so she can had more force to her thrusts. Soon I am left feeling like I will fall into a deep abyss when my release begins to expose itself. It throws me over the edge with such force that my body begins to tremble in her arms as she follows behind. She slows her thrusts down till they eventually cease and I am left feeling spent.

She lays down, pulling me with her to lay upon her chest. "I love you too," she whispers, placing a chaste kiss upon my lips and I couldn't help the smile that followed such honesty.

"I bear good news," I whisper to her as I trace a circle around her nipple lazily. She hums her response to me, so she doesn't have to speak. Her eyes have closed and she draws circles on my back with her fingertips. "If victorious in Rome, Antonius and Alba are said to offer you freedom," I tell her as the news is welcomed enough to have her open her eyes to stare back at me.

"Are you certain?" She asks almost not believing it to be true; however, I nod as such.

"I would not tell you false words," I reply and she smiles wider than I have ever seen her before. She bears such happiness at the thought of no longer having to serve anybody else but herself. I too am experiencing great joy in the news myself, but then her smile fades.

"What of us?" She asks with fear laced within. Since I know the story of my father sparring Santana's life only to condemn her to a life of slavery, I fear she remembers him but more so that she holds vengeance within her heart. I cannot bear the thought of my love trying to strike down my own blood.

"My father only seeks my happiness," I tell her quietly, placing a kiss upon her chest to assure her otherwise. "I do know the story of how you came to be here," I extend further and she watches me curiously, pondering if she should answer or if I have more words to speak. "Do you seek vengeance?" I ask the question that plagues my thoughts.

She looks down almost pondering the thought, before meeting my eyes again. "I once held bitterness for what fate your father's men condemned my mother and father to, but he spared me and for that I will be indebted to him; however, I do not seek to see his bloodshed when I know of him just following orders," she explains and I'm left in awe of her, finding myself falling deeper into her.

"I wish he would have turned down his position," I whisper to her, laying my head upon her chest as to hear her heart beating against my ear. She runs her hand through my hair tentatively as she sighs.

"He only did what he thought was right for his family. Without the status, you wouldn't be held at such acclaim as you are today," she says as I find myself drifting away into a dream that I can only focus on her tone. "I would do the same if you were to ever bear my children," she murmurs into my ear and I cannot help the smile that forms upon my lips as I wrap my arms tightly around her frame.

"You survive in Rome and I will make certain to bear your children," I say tiredly as she chuckles softly.

"For all you know, you could already be with child and not yet be aware," she says, kissing the top of my head and as I slowly drift to sleep, my last thought contains the dream of bearing her child and that is enough for me to hope that she survives the games.

A Proposal in Echo Village, by LazyWriterGirl

Echo Village isn't exactly as prosperous as Will is always telling her it was in his day, but each time they speak and she sees how proud he has become of her Santana knows that she's on the right track. There are certainly many, many more people living in the town now, as she's completed three of Will's town restoration plans already. Santana turns her head, staring at the clock on her bedside table. It's 5:59; she doesn't see the sense in 'sleeping' for an extra minute, and so with a heaving sigh she hits the snooze on her alarm and rises, shaking her hair from her shoulders. It's dark in her farmhouse, but Santana doesn't care enough to get the lights. Instead, she throws open the window, glad to see the top of the sun beginning to peek over the rocky alcove surrounding her property.

"What to wear?" she wonders aloud, to nobody in particular. Casting a glance at the far corner of the room as she thinks, she's surprised to find that Nephrite isn't at his food dispenser. It takes her a moment to realize she'd put the brown longhaired cat back in the pet house; Tina had finally managed to part with another longhaired cat, a white one this time, and Santana had fallen in love with him immediately and bought him on the spot. She now has a total of four pets living on her farm, the maximum that Will says he can allow, and she has already begun to put them to work.

It would be unfair to the new addition, Kunzite, and to the puppies Jadeite and Zoisite (golden Labrador twins Tina had sold her on a discount, a few months after the rancher had purchased a fine horse from Tina's Animals) if she made them work and kept Nephrite in the house all the time. She does miss having a companion in the house though; what she doesn't much miss is the cat hair, it's all over everything, and it will be a while before she can clean up properly. Santana glances at herself in the mirror she'd asked Shelby to hang up in her new closet. Her overalls look a little rumpled, but workable nonetheless. She checks the time, 6:15, and heads out of the door to begin her work.

She kind of hates the fact that she has so many damned animals to take care of, and so many crops to water (or at least, she would hate it if it wasn't what was keeping her alive, and if she didn't love working on a farm). Deciding to start with the animals, Santana dashes into the chicken coop, pleased to see that she'd left enough food for all of them to eat. She spends a little bit of time with each one, surprised to see that Usagi is now laying two eggs. Little Ami, the silkie chick that she'd hatched from an egg her friend had sent her, chirps happily as Santana picks her up and strokes her delicate black feathers carefully.

Glancing at her watch the rancher gasps a little, nearly dropping the chick in her hands; it's almost 7. If she gets stuck on the farm when the clock strikes, she's going to have to spend at least fifteen minutes watching her pets corral her livestock out into the fields. Santana makes a dash out of the door, reminding herself to pick up the rest of the eggs as soon as she can come back outside, and though she nearly trips on the fence as she vaults over it, she makes it back into her farmhouse with a minute to spare.

With a gulp of breath, Santana staggers to the kitchen, still reeling from the very sudden burst of energy. Of course, she thinks, you forgot to eat breakfast. With shaky hands she makes a few batches of egg soup (for later) and a plate of pancakes, the former of which she practically crams into her mouth as she puts the sealed containers of soup in her rucksack. She feels much better, and in a few minutes is back out on her farm.

She collects the remaining three eggs first, taking a few minutes to give pink chicken treats to her ten chickens. Then she goes into the barn in spite of the mooing and baaing of her cows and sheep. Mamoru, the black stallion that she'd bought when Tina had first come to town, looks at her with his intelligent eyes. She strokes his nose before grabbing an armful of fodder from the feed box and tossing it into the feeding tray for him. He eats quickly, ready for the day to begin, clearly, and she hops onto his back with ease, guiding him out to the farm. She allows him to canter through the stone arch but hops off of his back before he can leave the farm, and he whinnies to let her know how much he likes being outside anyway. She laughs and strokes his nose again before tending to the livestock.

The cows – Rei, Mina, and Makoto – chew at the grass before them lazily, and she thinks that maybe they might be smiling at her as she rubs their sides and milks them, relieving them of the pressure building in their udders. Inspecting their skin, she surmises that she'll need to brush them tomorrow, but they should be fine for now. Grabbing three green cow treats out of her bag, she feeds them from her palm.

Next, she checks on the sheep – Chibiusa, Hotaru, and Haruka – as they lie on the newly eaten grass fields; she'd shorn them the day prior, and they don't show any signs of infected or wounded skin, which is good. Like the cows, the three sheep are all clean enough that they won't need to be brushed until tomorrow, so she just feeds them orange sheep treats and gives them all a nice pat. The alpacas are next – Michiru, Setsuna, and Seiya – and like the sheep, she's shorn them already. She digs three regular treats out of her rucksack and feeds each alpaca one, giving a light rub to their still-fuzzy heads.

With a slight dusting-off of her hands, Santana surveys the field; she hasn't missed a single animal. It's now about 8:30, which means she's got plenty of time to deal with her crops. She grabs the gold watering can she'd made a few days ago, and yet never used due to a string of rainy days. *Thank the Harvest Goddess*, she thinks as she allows the tool to charge before releasing a rain cloud over her crops. She continues to do this, even managing to get the crops on the extended east end of her property done and fertilized too, all before noon. As soon as she's done and has returned to the farm proper, she finds Marley standing near her the weather vane she'd set up near her mailbox. "Morning, Marley!"

"Good morning!" Santana smiles as the usually quiet woman walks over to her. She watches for a while and follows silently as the tanned brunette checks on her beehives, and Santana can't help but remember when Marley had just moved in. The girl had barely said a word but she was a fantastic tailor and eventually, through long hours talking and the odd gift of some fabric or other, Santana had won her friendship. "Santana, Quinn wants to talk to you about something."

Santana doesn't know what it is that her girlfriend wants to talk about that's so important she would send for Marley instead of just waiting until Santana came by later. Only two people would know to use Marley as a messenger, and Kitty is currently out of town with Brittany, helping the older blonde find her newest scoop. Santana really wonders what this could be about. She asks Marley, but the younger brunette doesn't know. "Did she say where I'm supposed to go?"

"Well...uh, no," Marley looks embarrassed, but Santana just smiles and shakes her head; it isn't the quiet girl's fault. Santana beckons Marley to follow as she enters her maker shed. Grabbing half of the turnips she'd just harvested, she dumps them unceremoniously into her seed making machine. Over the gentle whir of the contraption, she hears Marley say, "Uh... Santana, I hope you take this the wrong way, but you should probably take a shower and change first. Knowing your girlfriend, she may not appreciate it if you show up and smell like livestock and sweat." The new seeds pop out of the dispenser and Santana is pleased to find that they're of better quality than what she can get at Carol's store; she laughs as the other girl's last comment finally registers with her.

"You're right, of course," she says to Marley. "Though I'm sure she doesn't have the right to say anything if I smell a little bit like my animals. I'm not the one that sells livestock for a living." Marley laughs and Santana joins her shortly before continuing. "I'm going to shower anyway though, and then I'll head out. Feel free to stick around; you know everybody is always welcome on Diabla Farm." Santana checks her watch. "You'll still be here?"

"Yeah, until lunch at least. Tina told me you got a new cat, and mom said I should take today off. She kinda took my keys so I can't get into the shop, anyway, so I've got no plans." Marley pulls her long hair off of her face, doing it up in a quick braid as she speaks. "I think Kitty and Brittany are coming back before five, if you guys want to join us? We'll probably be around the Goddess Pond." Santana nods, gives Marley a quick – she doesn't want to ruin the girls clothes – hug, and makes a dash for her house once again. Dumping some of her extra tools into her toolbox on the way, the rancher quickly strips herself of her overalls, leaving them spread out messily over her storage box. It takes her about a half hour before she's really clean, and by that time, it's already half-past noon.

She sighs; everybody is so good with schedules in this little village that lunch time always, *always* happens from 12pm to 2pm, so Santana has to wait a while before she can go find out what's happening. She decides that at the very least, she can get some more work done, and so she heads off to her closet, now unsure of what to wear. Casting a wistful glance at her overalls, she shakes her head; no dirty clothes after a shower. That would be pointless.

Thinking back on all of the outfits that had left a particularly good impression on Quinn, Santana settles on a cute vest and skirt combo that she'd worn to a party a winter or so ago. It's pleasant outside, even for spring, and even though she plans to go to the mine before the end of lunch, she isn't worried about getting dirty. Like everything else that would normally be inexplicable (for example, how her rucksack can hold up to ninety-nine multiples of up to fifty items) Santana assumes that this is thanks to the Harvest Goddess blessing the people of Echo Village. Santana is just slipping her boots on when she hears her stomach grumbling. She takes

out two containers of egg soup and sets in on them, which only takes her about twenty minutes. She still has time to go to the mine before lunch is formally over.

Santana steps back outside, not bothering to lock her farmhouse door. Nobody would bother taking anything from there. She sees Mamoru grazing idly near her mailbox and gives him a soft pat on the nose before hopping up onto his back once again. As she guides him out of town she can feel his yearning to run even faster, and soon he's galloping off in the direction of the forest. She sees Tina walking around with Rachel as she passes, and they both wave at her, which she returns even as Mamoru picks up speed. Santana is pleased; Tina had said that the closer she and her horse became, the faster he would be willing to gallop for her.

She stops him suddenly as they near the Great Tree. It's only 1:15, she has time. She runs to the marked base of the tree and knocks against it, surprised at how little of a toll her new Ultra hammer takes on her body. Within a few seconds Santana is collecting a few pieces of green down and a couple of honeycombs. Cool, she thinks, she'll need to turn the down into fabric. Marley's birthday is coming up, after all, and she remembers Rachel saying that she could really use some new material. Much as she makes fun of the hobbit, the girl is a fantastic hair stylist; she deserves some sort of gift. At the second marking in the tree Santana once again knocks on the pale wood with her hammer, elated to see blue and orange down fall from the branches. 1:27.

Mamoru doesn't need to run quite so fast, as the mine is only nearby, and he neighs lowly as she jumps off of him once again. The mines aren't exactly forthcoming with goods today, though she does manage to get enough silver to upgrade her refrigerator, a hunk of platinum, two rubies, and a pink diamond which could come in handy if ever her funds take a serious dip. Shoving everything into her rucksack, she checks the time; 1:46. In a mild panic, Santana races off in the direction of the village. It's 2:19 when she makes it to Quinn's house, and that's even counting the minutes where she'd kind of just been sprawled out in pain after tripping down the path and bumping into the lamppost she'd stupidly placed at the bottom. She knows that Quinn will be headed to her farm in a little while, but decides just to get whatever this is over with. When she comes in she notices Quinn fiddling with the ring she'd given her when she'd first confessed her feelings to the blonde, but Quinn puts it back on her finger as soon as she sees that it's Santana that's come to see her.

"Hey love, are you done all your work for the day?" Quinn asks, a little too quickly if you ask Santana. The tall blonde leans over and presses a chaste kiss to Santana's cheek. "You are absolutely lovely by the way. The cute look really suits you." Santana smiles at the compliment, but isn't put-off. She's curious as to why the blonde would fidget with her ring; Quinn never takes it off, she knows.

"Yeah...what was that?" Her curiosity is annoying her, and Santana can only feel herself grow a little more bothered when Quinn just shakes her head.

"Uh...nothing. Hey, you look tired, what's wrong, are you sick?!" Santana may feel a little cross, but the obvious concern in the blonde's voice is so lovely to hear.

"I'm ok. I must not have eaten enough for lunch," she says, which is only somewhat true. She ate enough, she just worked it all off. In spite of her protestations that she's fine, Santana can't pretend that she isn't pleased when Quinn dashes into the kitchen, only coming back several minutes later with a steaming cup of honey tea. Santana takes it and drinks, and the way that Quinn's eyes soften is absolutely precious. The Latina does feel better after she's finished, and placing a soft kiss on her girlfriend's lips she thanks her for caring about her health. Quinn blushes.

"It's nothing...I uh. I must've overreacted a bit...sorry," she says, and Santana giggles because Quinn is only ever like this with her. The Latina waits, unsure if she should say anything, or if Quinn has forgotten that she'd specifically said she wanted to speak with her today.

"Hey, don't apologize; I think it's adorable. At least I know what you'd be like as a mother...our kid's going to be so lucky," Santana jokes, and the blonde turns a fascinating shade of crimson. "Hey, Quinn, babe, are you alright?"

"I uh...I actually wanted to talk to you, today, would you come with me?" Quinn is stuttering and Santana thinks it's the cutest fucking thing she's ever seen. Normally the animal-seller is a little blunt and slightly grumpy, but Santana loves her anyway.

"Of course I will, where are we going?" Quinn grasps Santana's hand in her own, not saying a word but with a mischievous little smirk playing on her face. As Quinn leads the brunette past Carol's store Santana notices Burt trimming the ball topiaries she'd planted there shortly after Shelby had come to town and opened her blueprints shop. He smiles at them as they walk past and then soon Santana and Quinn are near the river. Still the blonde keeps on walking, with great purpose, it seems. The only time she is deterred from leading Santana to their mystery destination is when one of the wild boars on the mountain trail comes up to bump playfully against the blonde's leg.

Looking askance at her girlfriend, who nods, Quinn kneels down and strokes the brown boar, murmuring kind words. Santana herself has yet to begin a friendship with any of the critters around town, and she's always amazed at how Quinn seems to just *know* them; the blonde really has a knack for caring for animals. A few minutes pass and the wind whispers softly against the grass as Quinn feeds the animal an egg from her rucksack. Once the boar has happily eaten the egg Quinn rises, takes Santana's hand again, and walks up to the mountain path until the pair of them are standing by the Goddess Pond. It all feels very familiar and then, when Quinn starts speaking, Santana knows why; in spite of herself, small tears flow from her eyes.

"Hey, are you alright?" Quinn looks so concerned that Santana thinks the Harvest Goddess may have turned her tear ducts off so as to avoid a potentially over-dramatic scene. She nods and Quinn smiles reassuringly, still holding her hand. "Did you mean that thing you said? That *our kid* would be lucky to have me as a mother?"

"Of course I meant it...," it's Santana's turn to blush now, "Oh-m-my bad. I didn't...that must have sounded really—

"A little over a year ago, in summer, you came into my house at 8:03 in the morning, hair a mess, with fodder in your overall pockets and a cow treat in your mouth. I thought you looked impossibly adorable, but I was too scared to tell you that I liked you. Then you reached into your rucksack and pulled out a ring and asked me to be your girlfriend.

"I took you to this pond and asked you if you were sure that you wanted to date me, and you didn't say anything; you just took the ring out of your rucksack again and handed it to me, grinning because you knew there was no way I could say no to you. We've been together for a bit more than a year and I know that I want to start a family with you. You know how I feel about my father," Quinn pauses as Santana's other hand rubs slowly over her arm. "I don't want to keep on living like as if I have no family. I want you to be my family..."

"Quinn..."

"Santana, love, what I'm saying is, if you think that you might want to be with me, even a fraction as much as I know for sure I need you to be with me, would you uh...would you marry me?" Santana grins and doesn't say anything. She's been hoping that the chance would arise where she herself could propose to Quinn, but every time she's tried there's always been a festival, or somebody's birthday, or some stupid weather problem ruining half of her fields. She reaches into her rucksack and pulls out the blue feather she'd bought from Carol last month, delighted when Quinn's green eyes brighten. As is custom, she hands it to Quinn, who cradles the thing like as if it's more precious to her than anything else in the world, aside from Santana and her animals, of course.

"Of course I'll marry you!" Santana says as soon as Quinn has braided the feather into her belt loop. It seems to shine there, bright in the sun, and looks so appropriate hanging off of the blonde's hip that Santana is thankful the Harvest Goddess seems to have temporarily stolen her ability to cry. Quinn picks her up and swings her around, careful not to send them both spilling into the pond. As Santana looks down, into Quinn's face and she swears that there's not a more perfect sight in the world.

"I love you so much, Santana." Quinn kisses her once, softly. "Now what do you say we go tell Will, Carol and Burt? We'll need all the help we can get if I'm gonna give you the wedding you deserve."

"Okay... oh, but do you think we could take the long way and walk through the forest area?"

"Sure, why?" Quinn isn't going to like this, Santana thinks.

"I-uh...I think I may have let Mamoru by the mine entrance." The little vein on Quinn's head throbs.

"Santana! Again? *How are you always losing your horse?*"

"I didn't lose him! I just left him there by accident!"

The Hunt for the Lost Symbols, by lightblue-Nymphadora

The end of the term was always a bit shaky. Evaluations were coming in; grades were going out. People were leaving, and/or getting hired. The students you'd grown to love were leaving for bigger and better things.

"Airship training?" Professor Fabray asked, incredulity dripping from her voice.

The young woman across from her smiled brightly. "Yes, Professor."

"Tina, you've had me for six years running now," the blonde said. "You can call me Quinn."

"It still feels weird, Professor. I'll probably never break the habit."

Quinn grinned as the bell tower rang out the hour. "Well, if anyone can do it, you can. You definitely have the right disposition."

"Thanks...er...I think."

"It was a compliment, don't worry."

"I have to go now," Tina said as the last of the bell's tolls died away. "All of the recruits are going to dinner before we have to leave for the academy."

"Best of luck, Tina. I know you'll do great things."

The young woman gave her a shy smile, reminiscent of the first day she'd stepped onto campus. "Thanks Prof - Quinn."

Quinn got back to her papers after the girl left. She always felt a pang when her favorites graduated. This year even more so, since she'd seen four of her favorites move on to greater things. A Professor at the kingdom's premier college, Aelox University, she'd had a selective group of student in independent study tracks with her for the past eight years. This last group had been one of her favorites. She was the head of the Thaumaturgical Linguistics department, and attracted a diverse cohort of students each year. This past year, the group of four that had included Tina had been interested in Necromatic Accoustics - the reverberation from the dead, and how you could hear them in some places better than others. This had meant quite a bit of study of ancient magical languages with Professor Fabray. Currently, she was writing letters of recommendation for two of the four, who were trying to get their study funded so they could pursue further research.

The speaking tube made the strangled goose noise that indicated a call coming through from the department lobby.

"Fabray," Quinn answered, pulling the little bronze mouthpiece toward her.

"Dr. Fabray, there is a visitor here to see you. Er...."

Quinn sighed. The new student worker at the desk was having a real tough time getting the hang of "important" versus "take a message". "Yes, Evanna?"

"It's an important visitor."

That got Quinn's attention. One thing Evanna usually wasn't, was sparing with details. If she was holding back, that meant it was really important. "They're right there, aren't they?"

"Yes."

"And they can hear your answers."

"Very much so, Dr. Fabray."

"Okay, then just answer yes or no. Is it any of the royal family?"

"No."

"Is it the Archchancellor of the College?"

"No."

"Ah, that must mean it's some high-up from society, yes?"

"That's extremely correct, Dr. Fabray."

"Right. Send them up."

"Thank you, Dr. Fabray," Evanna said, clearly relieved.

There was a click as the speaking tube disconnected. Quinn replaced hers on the wall and waited for the mystery visitor. Sealing the two letters, she dropped them down the mail chute and let out a sigh. Any time bigwigs came to see her, it was usually something to the effect of "Hi, I found my granddaddy's diary in the attic, could you decipher it?" And usually it wasn't the ancient language of dragons the person had predicted (and hoped for, so they could sell it to the New Chronology House for a small fortune), but simply messy handwriting.

The floorboards in the hall creaked slightly as the visitor approached. A moment later, a tan woman with pitch black hair stood in the doorway. She was dressed in normal Airship attire, but with a few touches here and there that gave off the impression of extreme wealth.

"Dr. Fabray," she said, striding forward. "I'm -"

"I know who you are," Quinn said coolly. "Santana Lopez. Daughter of a wealthy Airship designer, niece to the Baron and Baroness of Aelox. Heir to the Laithenghast Airship empire, and rumor has it, a Sky Pirate."

Santana grinned. "Well, they did say you were thorough. Yes to all, but the last is exaggerated."

"What can I help you with?"

"I had the opportunity to do some...traveling over the past month. I came into possession of a certain book - don't look at me like that. I bought it, fairly," she added, seeing Quinn's face turn

stormy. "I was visiting the next kingdom over - Aradine - and I spent an entire day at their bazaar. Anyway, I got this book, and it's in a language I've never seen before. It's...an important book. The man who sold it didn't know what he had."

"What's so important about it?" Quinn asked. The other woman's self-important smile was starting to grate on her nerves.

Santana shook her head. "Can't tell you that just yet. If you agree to work with me, however, I'll let you keep it. I understand you collect rare works."

"You just need me to translate the book?"

"That's the first bit. I also have a feeling that there will be more things for you to translate - I think the book is a map of sorts. The full job, I hope, will take about a month. There would be travel involved, but I'm willing to provide decent compensation."

"I'll pass."

Santana's grin widened. "Really? Is it because of the pirate thing? Because I told you, that was exaggerated. True, I have my own Airship, and true it's not for the purposes of protecting the realm. But I don't loot, pillage, or plunder. I'm an explorer. Do you think, with how famous I am, that King Brad would let me live if I was a pirate?"

Quinn glared at her for a moment. "If this isn't something illegal, then why can't you just tell me what's going on?"

"I have a crew of fifteen men. For this, I'm only taking my two closest. I don't want word getting out before I've even got started. They're already jealous." She took the small book out of her bag, and passed it across Quinn's desk. "Think on it overnight. I'll see you tomorrow." Without another word, she swept from the room. It should be impossible to sweep, especially regally, when one does not have on a long cloak or dress, but Santana managed it.

Quinn scowled after her for a long moment. She should throw the book out, or tuck it away until the woman came back for it. She shouldn't get mixed up in whatever Santana was planning. She knew that, but she looked down at the book and knew that she was hooked. The script was bold, blocks and strikes. It immediately struck her as some sort of Elvish, but that couldn't be right because of the sentence structure. She looked at the book again. Three words. The first letter looked like an arrow pointing up, the second looked like an H with two bars across. The third looked like an M written by the world showiest calligraphist. She took a stab in the dark, guessing it translated to the word "THE" in her language. Pulling a scrap of parchment to her, she took out her pen and began the translation.

"Dr. Fabray? Dr. Fabray!"

Quinn jerked awake, parchment slightly stuck to her face. "Hrrm, what?"

"You slept here last night, Professor," Evanna said, gently removing the paper from her face and stacking it neatly with the others. "Another one of your projects?"

"Yes, an unexpected one."

"I've brought up your coffee - extra large today," Evanna said. "And a warm towel. The Dean is on his way over from the Cannterton campus. He'll be here in an hour. And there's a woman downstairs who says she wants to see you. She said she's happy to wait until you've woken up fully."

Quinn groaned. "Thank you, Evanna. Send her up."

Santana was in the room again in another five minutes, eating a slice of coffee cake. She offered one to Quinn. "I had a feeling you'd be intrigued enough to pull an all-nighter. I thought the least I could do was to bring breakfast."

"I looked through the book," Quinn said without preamble, though she did accept the pastry. "It's some sort of old Mage script - similar to the Aeloxian First Elvish, but -"

"Whoa, wait. Isn't that thousands of years old?"

"Seven thousand, three hundred and five, precisely," Quinn said, waving a hand. A few ancient, crumbling tomes floated just above the desk and opened. "And you were right, it is a sort of map - or directions, I guess would be more accurate. But it's like...."

"Yes?"

"Did you ever play 'Find the Prince'? when you were small?"

"That's the game where one of the children hides and the others get clues to where they are, right?"

"Right. Normally, the clues lead to other ones. That's what this book is. It's a history of a sect of Magi, and they didn't want to make it too easy for anyone to find...."

"Do continue," Santana said.

"There's some kind of treasure," Quinn said stonily. "But you already knew that."

"I had a hunch. So...are these the transla -" Santana pulled her hand back. She'd been reaching for the stack of papers, but Quinn had slammed her hand down on it.

"I haven't agreed to help you."

"Fine," Santana said, losing her look of smug detachment for the first time since they'd met. "What will it take to get you to say yes? This is a great opportunity for you!"

"You mean for you."

The sly grin came back. "For me? I'm in this for the chance to explore, and possibly line my pocketbook with something shiny. For you? This could be huge for your career. Don't tell me you had a better idea lined up for the summer. Better than researching a dead, nearly forgotten language? You want to do this. You may not like me, yet, but you have to admit I've just handed you a golden apple."

Quinn looked from her and back down to the translations. "They're rough. I'll need to study more."

"Can we get started with them?"

"Yes."

"Then we leave on the first day of summer. In the morning, just after breakfast. Pack only essentials."

"But that's only two days away!"

"Then I suggest you pack quickly," Santana said, winking. "We'll leave from the main Airship dock, across from the palace. I look forward to working with you, Dr. Fabray."

Quinn stood and paced the room once she'd gone. She stopped in front of the window, looking out over the city. The bell jar - a six story glass structure full of gears and purple lightning - was working overtime to produce enough energy for the coming festival. She turned away and started pulling her travel folders out.

Note: continued on <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10317484/>

AU, by noiseinallthequietspaces

Santana.

The name tumbled through Quinn's mind on an endless repeat. Her eyes following the young woman's body as she flew around the Quidditch pitch effortlessly. Quinn's keen hazel eyes watched the way that her robes billowed out behind her body as she cut through the air, arcing around the stands in a desperate attempt to find the snitch amongst the bodies and the clouds. Quinn's fingers played with the end of her bat, swinging the heavy wooden object around her head effortlessly to knock a Bludger off to the side of the pitch, amongst the oppositions' chasers as she watched Santana protectively.

Quinn marked Santana's opposite number, ruthlessly flinging Bludger after Bludger into the small Seeker, watching as he darted away from Santana's side in order to avoid the heavy impacts as Santana cut through the air in order to snatch the snitch out of the sky.

A roar came from the crowds - as fierce as the Lion emblazoned onto their coat of arms - as Santana lifted her arm into the sky, fingers held tightly around the snitch.

"One hundred and fifty points to Gryffindor!" The announcer called out loudly as the referee called time on the game, encouraging the various players to sink down to the ground, holding their broomsticks tightly.

Quinn's lips twisted into a smirk as she angled her broomstick up into the air and rose through the clouds. She disappeared into the underside of the sky, obscured by the dense white mist as she flew patterns of eight.

"Are you coming down any time soon?" A voice asked loudly, prompting Quinn to open her eyes, taking in the sight of Santana's soft chocolate brown orbs.

"That depends." Quinn answered, her eyes sparkling with amusement. "Is there any particular reason for me to come down?"

"I can't kiss you up here." Santana answered shrugging her shoulders as she did, a smirk spreading over her lips. "I owe you at least three kisses for those Bludgers. You're bloody good at that."

"It's all skill Babe," Quinn grinned cheekily, angling her broomstick to hover at Santana's side, her fingers reaching across to grip the handle of Santana's broom as she leant across the open air to press her lips gently against Santana's mouth. "I couldn't have you getting hurt."

"Of course not," Santana laughed. "You hate the hospital wing."

"I hate how often you seem to end up in the hospital wing." Quinn replied, tapping Santana's cheek before tugging the girl's broom down to begin a slow decent to the ground. "I love you."

"I love you too." Santana smiled brightly, curling her fingers around the back of Quinn's neck, kissing the girl soundly as they drifted to the ground.

Just A Taste, by SCWritings

Santana curls around a street corner in the dead of night, looking for her next meal. She stalks past a park, pausing before she steps back and turns into the park. She walks down the small walkway towards the playground, then sitting on the swings once she gets there. A rustling in the bushes behind her gets her attention as she whips her head around, listening carefully at the sound. She can hear the heartbeat. It's faster than a human's, so her target has been obtained.

Doing a quick once over of the park making sure nobody is around to witness her act of feeding, Santana swiftly, yet quietly, hops off the swing and lands softly next to the bush. She listens intently to gain a location of the animal with the loud heartbeat before she quickly reaches into the bush, her fingers wrapping around a furry animal and then pulling it out. She holds it in front of her eyes as she discerns that it's just a rabbit. Santana looks over the rabbit saying, "Man, you're kinda cute... But a vampire has to eat something." She looks around quickly one more time before she slowly slides her fangs out, groaning in the pleasure of them finally being free instead of stuffed inside of her gums.

Even though she is a demon of the night, she still doesn't like to see anything, especially animals, suffer. Santana has been a vampire long enough to know what places in the neck that will not harm an animal, it would just feel like a bit of pressure and then the sudden urge to fall asleep. Normally, she would try not to kill anything, but she hasn't had anything in at least three days, so she reluctantly sinks her fangs into the magical spot on the rabbit's neck and feeds until she can't feel a heartbeat against her mouth. She pulls the now stiff and dead animal from her lips and places it back behind the bush, knowing another animal will be by in the night to finish the remains off. It's always good to recycle, right?

Santana was just about to fully stand up when her ears pick up on the fast approaching footsteps from the entrance of the park. She quickly jumps up into the nearest tree and hides in the shadows of the dark leaves and branches around her. She watches a blonde headed girl, no older than seventeen, run through the park and crawl under the slides attached to the wooden structure. Being what she is she has no problem hearing the blonde's whimpering and complaining about how she will never be their perfect daughter. Though Santana has no actual beating heart she can't help but feel a sudden sadness and pain for the young girl. It brings her back to when she first came home after her turning, and her parents held up crucifixes and threw 'holy water' in her face, forcing her to leave them forever. That was 339 years ago, and the pain is still very real.

"I know you're up there." Santana couldn't help the confused look from forming on her face. She slowly crept farther back into the tree thinking the girl must be crazy. "I know what you are, and I'm not going to kill you. I never liked killing things. So come down, please. It's kinda creepy with you up there, who are you Edward or something, and you aren't a spider monkey, vamp."

Santana cocks her head to the side, hiding the internal smile at the Twilight joke as she picks a leaf from the tree to wipe her mouth with from her previous feedings. She swiftly jumps down,

almost floating to the ground and then squared her shoulders at the girl now sitting atop of the slides in front of her. "I'm more like Alice, if you must know." Santana smirks at the girl, yet keeping her distance.

"I'm not going to bite you, you're the vampire in this situation, not me." the blonde notes the distance between the two of them.

Santana laughs at the thinly veiled joke. "And how do you know I won't? Like you said, I *am* the "vamp" here," Santana says, complete with the air quotes.

The younger girl can't help but let a smirk play on her lips "Like I said, I don't like killing things. Although I *will* if I *have* to."

Santana lets a small smile play on her face as she looks at the girl. "Well, lucky for you, I don't take pleasure in killing things either." Santana starts to step closer, but abruptly stops. She can *smell* the girl. Why can she smell her? Smelling isn't a part of the heightened senses, it's actually dulled to allow the creatures around rotting corpses.

That's when she sees it. The slow rolling drop of red liquid going down the girl's leg. Santana could feel her fangs sliding out unwillingly. She takes a deep breath and starts to pull them back in, and the blonde definitely notices the change in the vampire's demeanor. "You, um, I think you cut your leg on your run into the park," Santana says while pointing a shaking finger at the girl's bloodstained leg as she continues to take steps back toward the tree, half-ready to pounce up there if she needed to.

The girl looks down at the general place of where the vampire was pointing, and curses under her breath. She then reaches into a bag she brought with her to find some gauze pads and gently applies pressure to the cut on her leg until it's only oozing blood instead of dripping. She wraps up her cut and puts the bloodied gauze back into her bag then looks up at the vampire. "Better?" Santana nods, slightly sniffing the air, thankful that the cut is covered up. "Good. Well, I'm Quinn."

"Santana." The vampire takes a couple more steps towards the girl, testing the waters, or well, air. Not smelling the blood as much as she was before, she sits down on a rock adjacent to the girl, Quinn.

"Care for a swing?" Quinn asks the vampire, Santana, with a nod toward the rusty swing set.

Santana mockingly thinks it over for a second, teasing Quinn, "Hmm, I dunno. There's a dead rabbit over there. Might be too much to handle."

"Oh please, I've killed things bigger and less cute than you or that dead little bunny."

Santana shakes her head and shows a look of mock offense. "Cute? Nuh-uh, I'm badass."

"Says the vamp who doesn't like to kill things," Quinn deadpanned.

"That's funny coming from a hunter who doesn't like to hunt," Santana jokes.

Quinn rolls her eyes. "I never even wanted to do it. My parents practically raised me on stakes and guns."

Santana gets up, holding her hand out to the girl on the slide. "Oh? And what would you be doing if they didn't?"

"Writing. What would you be doing if, you know?" Quinn asked as she takes the vampire's hand.

"Rotting in a grave back in Spain," Santana jokes, "but if I could actually be a normal human, I would be a dancer just like my mom was before, well you know." Santana leads Quinn to the swing set. It's weird. Normally, she would be out of the park by now, possibly leaving a dead body in her wake, but she's never been called out before, especially never called out of a tree. Just to talk to. With a hunter. She has no idea what she's doing, but she's learned to just go with it in her long years of life.

"You could pull a Keanu Reeves and appear to never age. That's apparently a thing now."

"Yeah that's true, but it's not the same... I can't feel the music flow from my heart. It wouldn't be the same." Santana shakes her head slightly at the empty feeling in her chest she's always tried to fill with sex. Santana then laughs, except it's not a laugh. It's more of a disgusted chuckle. "Probably because my heart doesn't beat anymore, right?"

Quinn kicks off of the ground, hopping onto one of the swings. "I wouldn't say that. You have grace, like when you came out of the tree. You have a heart, because if you didn't, this thing," she gestures between Santana and herself, "wouldn't have gone so smoothly." Quinn continues to kick her legs, gaining speed as Santana hops on her own swing, increasing her momentum in no time.

The vampire shrugs, a non-committal gesture, as she look up at the clear night sky. She closes her eyes and tries to focus on just the sounds of the sleeping world around her. Santana can hear the beat of Quinn's heart, its strong and powerful but at the same time calm. She can hear the owl in the tree hole spreading its wings readying to take flight and that's when she hears it. The thud of biker boots and drunken laughter entering the park and her eyes shoot open. She looks over at Quinn with a worried expression, and it seems as if Quinn had either heard the men laughing, or she had a bad feeling, either way, she nods and jumps off of the swing she was on, but before she can land, she finds that Santana has swiftly gotten off of her own swing and caught the blonde in her arms, ready to take off. Except it's too late.

"Well, lookie here!" The girls turn their heads to see a man swaggering up to them with a bottle in his grubby hand. Santana proceeds to set Quinn gently on the ground, and moving her body in front of the young girl's. "We gotta couple lezzies over here boys, what do you say we straighten them out?"

Santana hears a couple of laughs and footsteps from behind the man with the bottle approaching them. She moves her body further in front of Quinn, but then she hears the blonde whisper, "I can fight, you know."

Santana, taking a quick glance back at Quinn sees that the girl wants to help. With a small nod, Santana steps next to Quinn sizing up the two men in front of them. The man with the bottle squats down and smashes the bottle on the floor so the glass forms into sharp spikes. The other man, who looks slightly smaller, reaches into his pocket and pulls out a switchblade, flicking it open. Santana sees movement out of the corner of her eye and see's Quinn handling a butterfly knife like a pro. *Well, I guess I know who she's going after,* Santana thinks to herself.

"Hey chicka I'm over here! Let my brother teach your girlfriend about a real man. you're all mine." The vampire raises her fists and the bigger man laughs at her stance. "That all you got, baby?" He starts to advance, and the battle is on.

Santana rushes forward quickly, but not quickly enough to look inhuman, and blocks the man's hand that comes down, swiping it to the side and delivers a punch, a soft one in her opinion, to the man's jaw. He stumbles back, his hand caressing his jaw. She hears footsteps behind her and she turns around to be greeted with the brother holding up his switchblade in front of her. Before he could do anything, a kick is delivered to his stomach, but not by Santana. Quinn has come up to his side and roundhouse kicks him right in the abdomen. He groans, keeling over to clutch his stomach, except he keels into Quinn's knee.

Santana turns back towards the older man behind her and is greeted with a punch to the nose. She gasps, her head only moving a centimeter, but she over dramatizes it, throwing herself backwards and on to the ground. She looks over to see Quinn looking at her with concern, but the small break in focus causes the blonde to be open to attack. The younger man swings his arm across, cutting Quinn on her cheek. The girl yelps and drops her own butterfly knife, clutching her cheek.

Santana is overrun with the scent of Quinn's blood and her vision gets blurry with rage and the thirst consuming her as she gets up, stepping up to the sad excuse for a human she easily takes the switchblade from the man, and slices into his ribs. Before he can even react, Santana is in front of the older man, clutching his wrist, easily breaking it. He drops the bottle, leaving Santana to pick it up and hold it against his throat. Without a second thought she brings back her arm, ready to thrust the bottle into his neck when she hears a voice behind her.

"Santana, stop! Don't kill him. That's not you, you aren't a monster." The vampire turns her head to see Quinn laying on the ground watching her with big eyes. She turns back to face the man.

"Get out." The man hurriedly nods, picking up his brother and less than a minute later the sounds of motorcycles receding is heard in the distance.

Santana turns back to face Quinn. "You should have let me do it. Why didn't you let me do it?" Santana yells at the blonde, overcome with the feeling of hunger and thirst.

Quinn crawls her way over to Santana. "You aren't a monster. You aren't a killer, Santana." Quinn is within touching distance of Santana and she reaches toward the vampire with her clean hand, only to be grabbed.

Santana pulls Quinn dangerously close to her, staring at the blood seeping through the wound on her cheek. "Yes I am. I always will be," she says as she watched a droplet roll down Quinn's cheek and then to her neck.

Quinn attempts to get Santana to look at her eyes, not her blood. "Santana, stop. Look at me." The Latina glances up at the blonde's eyes. "Control yourself."

Santana looks back and forth between Quinn's wound and her eyes, loosening her grip on the blonde, she looks her in the eyes and mutters, "Just a taste," before moving closer to the blonde's cheek.

As she moves in, she risks a glance at the blonde's eyes. In an attempt to dissuade Santana from her wound, she turns her head to the side, the vampire captures soft lips instead of wet blood. As soon as their lips touched, Santana lets go of Quinn in utter surprise, but Quinn clings onto Santana as if her life depended on it, which it kind of does.

Santana's eyes close and she melts into the kiss, Quinn in turn relaxes into Santana. The kiss ends and Quinn opens her eyes to see Santana staring at her with a look of pure honesty. "Quinn, just a taste. Please. I promise I'll stop when you say."

Quinn stares deep into Santana's eyes, only finding a genuine promise within them. She slowly nods, and Santana leans in to capture the wound on her cheek, except Quinn cups her cheek and lifts her head, exposing her neck. Santana looks back up to Quinn, silently asking if she's sure. The blonde nods and Santana slowly closes the distance between her lips and Quinn's neck.

At first Santana kisses the soft flesh of Quinn's skin before skimming it with her fangs. Finally she takes a deep breath and lowers her fangs into Quinn's neck. The blood flow starts immediately and her blood taste like, like music. It tastes like dancing with her mami in the kitchen back in Spain. It tastes like singing while her family made dinner with her. It tastes like getting tucked in at night as her mom sang her to sleep.

She feels as if only seconds go by before Quinn's voice punctures her thoughts. "San, you need to stop." Quinn is calm about it. Not forcing her, just telling her, but it's enough to bring Santana out of her daze, and removes her fangs from Quinn's neck, looking back into the girl's eyes. "Gimme your blood," Quinn says through tired eyes. Santana nods and sinks her fangs into her own wrist, swiping her fingers along the puncture holes and then sliding them across Quinn's cheek and neck, making the marks disappear.

Quinn and Santana stare into each other's eyes before Quinn hears her phone ringing in her bag she left by the slide. She breaks the eye contact and runs over to her bag, leaving Santana to clean herself up.

"Hello?" Quinn says into the phone. "Yes, daddy. No, I'm fine. No, I haven't seen any." Quinn looks at Santana. "Okay, I'll be home soon." Quinn hangs up her phone and walks over to Santana. "I have to go," she whispers, feeling like if she spoke any louder it would ruin the atmosphere.

"Can I walk you home?" Santana asks with a glint in her eye.

Quinn shakes her head. "Daddy will find out about you." Quinn leans in and pecks Santana on the lips before walking away.

Santana stares after the girl. "I have to see her again."

AU, by seemenopeu

Detective Santana Lopez is put undercover to investigate the criminal boss Quinn Fabray. The blonde doesn't make this an easy job for Santana, and weirdly she doesn't mind the trouble at all.

Quinn ironed her yellow sun dress with her hands before leaning against the black Sedan behind her. It was an extremely windy day and a dress technically never truly agrees with the wind. So for the hundredth time today, she huffed and patted the fabric down before it rose too high.

She sighed as a strand of blonde hair fell out-of-place and looked over to the guy next to her playing on his phone.

"Time?" She asked, immediately catching his attention. He angled his screen towards her to where she got a glimpse of 2:45 PM. She rolled her eyes, "What's taking him so long?"

"Who knows," the guy shrugged before typing away at his phone, "I told you not to put that asshole on the job. He's not good for anything."

"Language, Noah," she waited for him to mutter a sorry before continuing, "I know you don't like him but he's got connections and that's what we need for this. We have to get through the boring part before we get to the fun."

Puck huffed and folded his arms and Quinn smiled at his immaturity. It wasn't long before they saw what they called "the sign" and Puck nudged her with his shoulder, "You want to sit this one out, Princess?"

"Do I ever?" She picked up her gun from off the dirt and cocked it like she was taught ages to do.

"Let's do it!" Puck pulled his gun out of his waistband before doing the same. He jogged over to the warehouse in front of them, Quinn not too far behind, and kicked the door opened so that they could enter.

The warehouse was old and abandoned with rotting wood on the walls and cracks splitting down the floors. Puck lead them carelessly through the halls and Quinn was thankful that Mike had given them a walk-thru before coming here.

Without stopping, Puck pointed his gun and let out two shots before laughing, "Only two guys? Seriously?"

They walked over the two fresh bodies before continuing their trudge.

They were well within the warehouse once they reached their destination. Puck didn't waste any time as he pushed the door open with his shoulder, letting Quinn in first.

Quinn furrowed her brow once she saw their new guy, Sebastian, holding a man down on the ground.

Sebastian looked up and smiled, "Here's the guy I promised you."

Quinn looked around in case there was someone else, but nope there was just Sebastian and this guy, "Who is this?"

"The guy I promised you," Sebastian repeated like it was quite obvious.

"You didn't promise me a *guy*, Sebastian," she looked down at the man who was shaking and gagging on the floor, "Does this guy even know where she is?"

"Technically," he scrunched up his face, "no. But this guy has connections like you can't believe. Forget about her, and just take this. This is a better option for sure. I'm making you a business deal-"

"Puck!" She called and he walked in, confusion on his face as he saw the two guys in front of her, "Could you take care of this guy, I've got to talk to Sebastian really quick."

Puck shook his head as he dragged the man out the room.

Quinn walked over to Sebastian and folded her arms, "Seriously?"

"I just thought-" Sebastian started to say.

"You just thought I wanted to take over a pigsty like this? You just thought you'd waste my time with trash? What did you just think, Sebastian?!" He cowered in fear and she bit her lip in thought. She wasn't as pissed as she thought she would be, but she was disappointed, "You should have just told me what you were doing. Then I could have told you no and we wouldn't have wasted so much time."

Sebastian nodded his head vigorously. He knew better than to make Quinn mad, he should have thought this through.

"I can't just let you do that, you know?" She asked before pointing her gun at his knee cap and pulling the trigger. The thunderous noise from her gun had no comparison to his scream as he fell to the floor. He held his kneecap and whimpered while Quinn looked away, "That was strike one. Keep messing up and I'll shoot higher."

He nodded his head but she didn't see it as she began to walk out the room.

Santana spun her chair in circles waiting for the time to pass. She stopped her chair and stared at the desk adjacent to her own. It was Sam's, and to say that she wasn't jealous that he was on vacation instead of her would have been a lie. Of course she wouldn't say it aloud.

"Santana!" The most annoying voice in the world sing-songed next to her.

Santana turned her chair slowly to face Rachel, an nasally over talkative short person who Santana could barely stand, "Hobbit?"

"Looks like the Captain wants to talk to you," Rachel smiled, "Maybe she's finally going to fire you."

"Maybe you're finally going to get taller," Santana smiled back as she stood up from her chair. Rachel rolled her eyes as she walked around her.

Santana made her way into the Captain's office, closing the door and jumping into the seat in front of the desk, "You want to see me?"

"Sure did, Sandbags," Sue frowned at Santana's posture in the chair before sighing, "I want you to go undercover again."

"Do I have to?" Santana whined. She had been put on three undercovers in the past six months and don't let anybody tell you that that's not a lot.

"Yes you have to," Sue threw a file at Santana, "Plus it's not a regular one. It's for that big time criminal Quinn Fabray."

"Quinn Fabray?" Santana perked up and looked through the file. She had heard about Quinn Fabray many times in the six years that she had worked at the department. She was one of those infamous criminals that had yet to be captured or even yet to be photographed. Santana eyed the only picture that they had of her which was taken when she was much younger and sported a horrible pink haircut and a even worse attire.

To Santana she looked like a regular punk with no future according to the picture, but from the massive reports of robberies and murders, she was a mastermind of some sort. And Santana was supposed to go undercover to find her or something? Holy shit.

"You heard me right, Boobs McGhee," Sue stood up from her chair and leaned on her desk, "I've got even better news for yah. A guy who worked with her walked in this morning wanting to help us catch her. We got him in custody, so you should go interrogate him right now."

"Seriously?" Santana's eyes widened.

"Yes, seriously," Sue rolled her eyes and pointed towards the door, "Now get out of my office and go do your job. Grab Porcelain if you see him on your way there."

Santana stretched to her feet and turned out of the room. Luckily on her way to the interrogation room, Kurt was in her path. She grabbed him and shoved him into the room where a pale looking guy sat at a steel table.

"Hi, I'm Detective Lopez and this is Detective Hummel," Santana said as she and Kurt sat at the table, "You're Sebastian Smythe, correct?"

"Yeah," he folded his hands on the table, "Are you the ones who are going to help me?"

"Help you with what exactly?" Kurt asked carefully.

"To put Quinn Fabray in prison," Sebastian said almost too dramatically.

"Qu-Quinn Fabray," Kurt's eyes were wide and Santana almost laughed at his expression.

"What can you tell us to help us help you," Santana said coolly.

"Um, she uh," he leaned into them both, "She's looking for somebody. So she's got a soft spot for new people who are willing to help her."

"Who's she looking for?"

He whispered, "Shelby."

"Shelby who?"

"I'm not sure, but," he begun whispering, "She wanted me to help her find her and I didn't deliver but she seems pretty desperate for her."

"Okay," Santana drew out as she leaned back against her chair. She looked over to Kurt whom looked more confused than her.

"Let's say you actually worked with the notorious Quinn Fabray," Kurt said, "Why do you want to put her behind bars?"

"Because she," Sebastian sniffed, almost like he was going to start crying, "She shot my in the knee."

"That sucks," Santana faked concern as she started to get back up, "We'll be right back."

She dragged Kurt out of the room, whom looked like he was still in disbelief, "That guy must be nuts to be coming here like this."

"Yeah, he's going to get himself killed."

"But then again he might be great help," Kurt smiled deviously and if you didn't know that he was a cop, then you'd probably assume that he was about to commit a crime, "What if he could get you on the inside? You know since he said that Quinn has a soft spot for new people or something. You get in there, gather up all the evidence, call back up, and then arrest the greatest criminal of our generation! We'll be legends, Santana! Legends!"

"There's so many flaws in that plan," Santana folded her arms.

"Let's just try it," Kurt patted her on the arm, "What do we have to lose?"

"I don't know? Like my life!"

"Come on," Kurt whined but realize who he was dealing with and changed his tactic, "We'll just try it out for a little while. If it gets too dangerous, we'll pull you out. It'll be fine."

Santana sighed, "Fine, whatever. But I'm not doing this for you, I'm doing this because it's my job. And I was going to do it whether or not you asked."

"Great! You're going undercover to investigate the infamous Quinn Fabray. Exciting," He begun to push her back towards the interrogation room, "Now let's go get in cahoots with that criminal in here so that we can do our jobs."

The weird thing about trying to get in "cahoots" with criminals was that it was actually really easy. They concocted a plan where Santana would pose as a contact who was good at finding people (which Santana did have the resources to do so) while they offered protection to Sebastian.

Of course there was no promise of his safety, because they were still dealing with a mastermind criminal.

It took three months for Santana to even talk to Quinn Fabray. Three months of going to Sebastian for messages and random things that the woman wanted her to do. First it was to find where a certain person was and give the location to Sebastian to give to her. Then it was to find extra someones to give the location to Sebastian so that he could give the location to Quinn Fabray. It sucked and it was repetitive and though ethically it wasn't okay for Santana to use her police power to give up people to a criminal, it was really none of her business. Which helped her sleep better at night.

Santana stood nervously with her hands in her pockets. Meeting a infamous criminal in a deserted parking lot actually seemed like a great idea until Santana had actually arrived. It was Kurt's idea after all, which reminded her that she should probably punish him in some way for that.

"Don't look so nervous," Sebastian said next to her. He set up this whole arrangement, "Haven't you done this before?"

"Not with crime bosses," Santana took a deep breath. She needed to calm down. This was really no different from the other undercovers that she's been on. Stay chill, catch the bad guy, go home. It was suppose to be easy.

It didn't feel easy as a black Sedan pulled up in front of them. Santana watched from the corner of her eye as Sebastian stood up into full posture as the car door popped open. Out walked a muscular man with a atrocious Mohawk and an almost all leather attire. Santana's eyebrow shot up as the man uncomfortably shuffled the back of his leather trousers before going for the passenger door of the car. Maybe that picture of Quinn Fabray wasn't that long ago. She was probably was still the same pink haired punk girl and for some unknown reason that made Santana feel more relaxed.

The door opened and Santana laughed at herself as the woman appeared in her sight. There of course was no way that the picture was going to be in any way accurate and there was the proof walking out of the car with her blue sun dress and blonde hair. She looked like an everyday girl next door, but the way her face was indifferent to her surroundings made it feel like the lack of empathy was seeping off of her.

As the infamous Quinn Fabray walked towards her, Santana actually felt a chill. Like a legit chill and she wasn't sure if it was from the icy stare or the way the woman flexed her legs under her dress.

Santana laughed at herself again, this time over the fact that she thought that Quinn was really hot. Extremely hot. Like jeez, but that was unprofessional on her part. Though that don't seem to stop her eyes from roaming.

"Is something funny?" Quinn Fabray asked and Santana smirked. She bet five months of paychecks that not one person in her department had even heard anything close to the soft rasp of Quinn Fabray's voice. She could basically hear Kurt freaking the hell out telepathically.

"Not especially," Santana said and then remembered that she had to leave an impression, "I just expected more."

Quinn's head tilted to the side while the other two guys moved like they were going jump Santana. Quinn motioned for them to calm down before saying, "You're kind of funny."

Santana shrugged because anything with the words "kind of" in it wasn't a compliment or anything.

"We actually have one more challenge for you," Quinn said, deciding not to explain anymore and turned to the Mohawk guy. He smiled and yanked a man out of the car. Santana didn't recognize the man but she did recognize the gun that Quinn was handing to her, "I want you to shoot this guy for me."

Santana looked at the man and tried to cover up her sympathy. He looked afraid and kept his arm up as a way to block them from him. She couldn't even place his face and it worried her that maybe Quinn Fabray was now grabbing innocents from off the street and shooting them for no good reasons, "What did he do?"

Quinn smiled, "Does it matter?"

"I guess not," Santana reached for the gun but but brought her hand back without it, "But I don't like shooting guns."

"You don't?" Quinn looked genuinely surprised and a bit offended.

"Nope," Santana knew that her excuse was more than lame, but she couldn't think of another way out of this. She used to be so good at this, "That's why I don't carry them around."

Quinn blinked her eyes. She turned to Mohawk guy again and he shrugged his shoulders.

Quinn turned back, "That's cool. I'm okay with that."

Without looking, Quinn fired the gun behind her, hitting the man directly three times in the chest. He spazzed before letting out a cough as he sunk lifelessly into the dirt. Santana tried not to react as her ears quickly adjusted to the prickly sounds of the automatic.

Quinn watched her carefully and kept a smile on her face. She dropped the gun to the dirt before motioning to the car, "Do you like back seats?"

Santana nodded her head and swallowed, "They're not so bad."

"Good," Quinn's grin disappeared, "Get in."

Quinn walked over to the car and Santana chanced a glance over to Sebastian, whom was paler than before.

They all got into the car and Santana's nerves almost got the best of her as they pulled away from the scene as someone in the front seat turned on a Jason Mraz album.

It was a month and a half later after that car ride and Santana's job had gotten nothing but more difficult. She had been asked to find countless of people for Quinn and had yet to gather any evidence of the girl doing any crimes. She had witnessed a lot of course; robbery, drugs, arson. But there was no proper evidence even though she and Sebastian had seen it all. So they couldn't take her down yet. There wasn't even a body left in that parking lot, and as the saying goes at her job: "No body, no crime."

She was stuck.

She sat on the huge white couch in the middle of one of Quinn's huge white rooms in her huge white mansion. Santana combed her fingers through her hair and tried not to worry. She would find something. Sooner or later, she'll be able to go home.

"Something the matter?" Quinn's head popped in the doorway.

Santana pretended that the blonde was actually interested, "No I'm fine."

Quinn stared at her before walking into the room, "I need a favor. And confidentiality."

"I don't promise either, Fabray," Santana joked. Both the privileges of being able to joke and call Quinn by her last name came from one late evening where Santana was too tired to remember where she was. She panicked but Quinn found it refreshing, so now it's a thing.

Quinn sat on the couch next to Santana and smoothed out her dress, "You should tell me a secret first and then I'll tell you."

Santana squinted her eyes. Was this a test? "I don't have any secrets."

"Everyone has secrets," Quinn huffed, "Just tell me one so that I feel comfortable enough to tell you what I need to tell you."

Santana thought about this. Should she confide in anything with this woman?

She shrugged, "I had a boob job when I was in high school."

Quinn's eyes went large before looking down at Santana's chest before back to her eyes, "Really? Why?"

"Confidence boost," Santana folded her legs, "Your turn."

"I've, uh," Quinn looked down, "I don't like carrying guns so I either have Puck carry them for me or I just leave them on the ground."

Santana nodded her head, not really sure if she believed her, "Is that what you wanted to tell me?"

"Yep," Quinn took a deep breath, "I need you to find someone for me. Shelby Corcoran. You think you can find her?"

"Sure," Santana said, immediately hating herself for helping Quinn probably kill an innocent woman, "Are you going to tell me why?"

"No," Quinn snapped and looked back to Santana.

"Fine, whatever," Santana rolled her eyes. She was so done with this whole undercover thing. She could literally leave right now.

"Do you have any respect?"

Santana had a million answers to that question but couldn't think of one that justified for Quinn, "For you?"

Quinn bit her lip before nodding her head and standing up. She left the room and Santana let out a big sigh.

It only took Santana two days to find out where this Shelby person was. The problem was that there was just as much records on the woman as there was for Quinn. Shelby was a criminal, Santana was relieved at that, and her criminal record was longer than the blonde's. Except she had never been charged because no one had ever brought her in. There was no picture, but just her address and her warrants and Santana worried about how much power this woman had. She hadn't even heard of her, but just looking at her file... There should be at least 40 documentaries on her by now.

If she was to be honest with herself, Santana was also worried about Quinn. She was positive that she was worried that the blonde would get herself killed before Santana could bust her, but another part of her was worried that Quinn was plainly just going to get herself killed. Quinn was a nice girl, when she wasn't shooting people down or orchestrating a robbery, and Santana was sure that she would do some sort of mourning if the girl ever...

Santana always had a soft spot for blondes and this just proved it.

She decided to tell her, though. Because of the way Quinn would indirectly ask her every other day. She was sure it was way too important to keep to herself.

So, Santana moved through the crowded people in Quinn's house. They all were enjoying Puckerman's monthly party and it never stopped amazing Santana on how many people came. She was sure there was noise complaints that probably meant that half of the department had probably already seen the infamous Quinn Fabray face to face just to tell her to turn down the music.

Santana scouted the room until she spotted Quinn, standing to the side of the room with a wine glass in her hand and a scowl on her face. The changing lights from the special effects system that Puck had set up lightened only portions of her face.

Santana made sure that the blonde didn't see her, before walking up behind her to whisper, "Isn't this your party, Fabray?"

Quinn jumped, a reaction Santana was delighted to see, but smiled once she saw Santana's face, "Honestly, I'm not sure."

Santana nodded before pausing for dramatics, "I found Shelby."

Quinn's smile disappeared as she grabbed one of Santana's wrists and yanked the girl into a nearby room. She shut the door behind them and almost stuttered, "You did?"

Santana nodded, proud of herself all of a sudden, "Yep. It didn't take much at all really."

"Thank you so much. I-" Quinn's face changed between emotions before going cold, "What do you want in return?"

Santana swallowed, taken aback from the change in the air, "I don't want anything."

"Is it money?" Quinn walked over to a dresser in the corner of the room, "Would a thousand suffice?"

Santana looked around, now realizing they were in a bedroom, "I don't want your money, Quinn."

"Then what do you want?"

Santana wanted many things from her but settled on something easy, "I want you to tell me why. Whose Shelby? Does she owe money to you or something?"

"Two thousand?" Quinn offered but Santana didn't budge. She sighed and sat on the bed, "Shelby was something like a friend of mine. And she has something of mine that I need to get back."

Santana took a risk and sat next to her, "Money? Drugs?"

Quinn let out a small laugh, "Have you ever done something that you regret? Like something that hurt someone that you didn't want to get hurt?"

Santana took a moment to ponder, "Yeah, when I was younger."

Quinn turned her body to give her full attention, so Santana continue on, "When I was a teenager I was in with the wrong crowd. Not saying that I'm not right crowd now, but compared to those guys you all are a walk in a park."

"I remember selling anything I could for them, guns, drugs, or whatever. And I would hide them under a box under my bed. It wasn't the smartest thing to do but I wasn't thinking about anything but myself and the attention I was getting from the people. It was intoxicating."

"Then, in the fall of my sophomore year, my baby brother had found my box," she paused, waiting for the wound to stop stinging as she probed at it, "He'd play with anything, really. Including the gun."

"Oh God," Quinn looked down, guessing the rest of the story, "I'm so sorry."

"It's fine," Santana said though technically it wasn't. She took a deep breath to put any emotions at bay. It was always hard to bring up that memory.

"How did you live on?" Quinn asked, eyes still glued to the floor, "How could you?"

"Well, I mean I had to," Santana thought back to those hard years of trying to go back to being her after the death of her brother. It was almost impossible, "It took awhile before my parents forgave me but it took longer to forgive myself."

Quinn looked up, her eyes tearing up and a lump in her throat, "How did you forgive yourself?"

"I don't know," Santana placed a hand on Quinn's thigh in a form of comfort, "I just tried to do right by my brother. And like, do right by myself, too."

Quinn's eyebrows rose before she nodded her head. Doing right made sense. No wonder she had yet to forgive herself.

They were interrupted by Puck opening the door without knocking, "Quinn. You've gotta come out here."

Quinn nodded at him and stood up to follow him. They walked through the crowd until they stopped in front of a familiar Asian girl lying on the floor crying.

"Tina?" Quinn asked as she bent down to address the girl.

Tina looked up at Quinn, eyes blood shot and shakes throughout her body, and smiled, "Q! I'm so glad to see you!"

Quinn helped Tina to sit up, "Is something wrong?"

"No, not at all," Tina rubbed her nose with the back of her hand.

Quinn scrunched up her eyebrows and shook the girl by her shoulders, "God dammit, Tina! Are you strung out?"

Tina shook her head but began to cry, "Nobody listens to me! I just don't understand. I'm important, too!"

Quinn really didn't need this and she especially didn't need Mike to see his ex-girlfriend like this either. She looked in back of her for Puck and instead got a confused Santana, "Could you help me help her to that bedroom?"

Santana nodded and helped Quinn get the girl to her feet. Tina continued to cry as they dragged her into the room and laid her on the bed.

Santana gave her a look, so Quinn gave her something to do, "Could you go to the bathroom and get a wet towel, the small trash can, and whatever you think might be helpful for someone who's high on something she hasn't been on in a while?"

Santana nodded her head before leaving and Quinn turned back to the girl sitting on the bed, "What were you thinking?"

"I'm depressed, okay?" Tina said as she scooped her hair into a ponytail.

"But I thought you quit," Quinn whined. Tina was the only person who Quinn admired after seeing her shake her drug addiction, but now she was just disappointed.

"I don't want to talk about me anymore," Tina snapped and Quinn raised an eyebrow at her, "Who was the girl?"

"Who?"

"The girl, Quinn," Tina rolled her eyes as Quinn continued to play dumb, "She's cute."

Quinn scrunched up her face, "You think she's cute?"

"Do you?"

Quinn scoffed. Of course she didn't think Santana was cute.

She thought Santana was incredibly attractive and alluring and had the confidence to talk down Quinn anytime that she felt the need and that was absolutely a turn on for the blonde.

"Do you like her?" Tina continued while Quinn folded her arms, "You do, don't you!"

"You're so lucky that I even talk to you," Quinn tried.

"Whatever," Tina kicked off her shoes, "Have you slept with her yet?"

"Tina!" Quinn gasped, "Not to say that I would, but I haven't even known her for that long so please keep your fantasies to yourself."

"What are you so worried about?"

"I'm not worried about anything, I just don't know her," Quinn shrugged, "She could be an axe murder for all I know."

"That's fresh coming from you," Tina jumped up with an idea, "She could be a cop!"

Quinn guffawed at the idea, "Yeah right."

"She could! She could be undercover or something!"

"Coke makes you paranoid about cops, Tina," Quinn guessed. She motioned for the girl to sit back on the bed.

Three doors down from the room, Santana had made a wrong turn and stared at her big bust. A whole entire room full of narcotics in plastic bags, stacked up on chairs and tables, next to stacks of money. It was the most illegal storage room that she had ever seen. This was it. This was how she was going to take in Quinn Fabray. Sure, it wasn't murder but it was a gateway to put the blonde in prison for the many crimes that she committed.

She fished her phone out of her pocket but paused before dialing anything. Did she really want to put Quinn in prison? Sure, she was a cop first but she cared for the blonde. Santana didn't realize how much she cared until her finger hovered over the call button on her phone. Could she really do this to Quinn?

Quinn, Puck, and Santana stood in front of an apartment door waiting in silence. Puck was leaned against the wall in back of them while Santana watched as Quinn reached over to knock on the door but change her mind every time.

Santana had led them to Shelby's apartment and Quinn had seemed nervous on the whole way there. No encouraging words could make her shake the feeling of this being a bad idea.

"Are you going to knock or what?" Puck finally said and Quinn glared at him.

"I will, I'm just," Quinn turned to walk away, "Never mind. Let's just leave."

Santana stopped her, "Come on, Quinn. We're already here. I don't know what's behind that door, but whatever it is, you're ready for."

Quinn gave her a small smile before turning back to the door as knocking on it courageously. She almost felt like running away once it began to open.

"Quinn?" A brunette woman, who must have been Shelby, answered the door and Santana tried to rack her mind around how this woman was the same woman with the rap sheet as thick as her ass. The woman gazed over to Puck in the corner, "Noah?"

"Shelby, hey," Puck said with a smile. He pushed off from the wall and gave the woman a hug.

Once they separated, the woman looked back at Quinn, "You look nice, Quinn."

"I'm here to see her," Quinn folded her hands in back of her, "Not you, just her."

Shelby nodded her head and let them all into the house. Quinn scanned the apartment before her eyes landed on a little blonde head, playing in the middle of the floor. The little girl looked up at Quinn and gave a weird look before giving a mega watt smile.

The little girl was an exact replica of Quinn. From her hair to her eyes to her smile. She stood up, with great trouble, and limped over to Quinn before engulfing her with a hug. Quinn sobbed into the girl as she held her into her arms and Santana felt a tear escape from her eye.

"I don't think I know you," Shelby brought Santana's attention away from the two girls.

"You don't," Santana put out her hand, "I'm Santana."

"Shelby," the woman shook her hand tightly before retracting her hand, "Where does Quinn know you from."

"I, uh," Santana struggled, "helped Quinn find you."

"Oh," Shelby turned to the girls whom were now talking aimlessly as the young blonde wiped the tears from Quinn's eyes, "I'm glad she wanted to find her daughter."

"Her daughter," Santana repeated, the words bringing a smile to her face.

"You didn't know," Shelby continued on, "I guess you also don't know why that baby has a limp."

"I'm sure it's none of my business."

"Of course it is," Shelby laughed bitterly, "Did you know Quinn's in the crime business? Her daughter, Beth, didn't. She found out the hard way when Quinn's gun went off while holding her. Poor baby, didn't see it coming."

"That's enough, Shelby," Puck commanded.

"You brought her back into Beth's life," Shelby folded her arms, "Is it safer now? Is there an guarantee that that baby will be safe?"

Santana clenched her jaw. She didn't know if Beth would be safe around Quinn. Quinn was barely safe around Quinn.

By the time it was Beth's bed time and it was time to go, Santana felt antsy. In the parking lot, she pulled Quinn to the side and asked if she could talk to her.

Once Puck went to go warm up the car, she talked, "I don't trust you."

Quinn blinked her eyes, "What?"

"I don't trust you," Santana repeated, "To be in that little girl's life again."

Quinn folded her arms and shifted, "Why?"

"Shelby told me what happened to her."

"Oh."

"So, I can't let you be apart of her life."

"Santana," Quinn said, not so much to start a sentence but for just the feeling of saying her name, "I would change everything about myself to be with Beth. I mean I have, but I just didn't know how to face her. And then you came into my life and-"

She took a shaky breath, "You told me how to forgive myself and it was so easy. And now I would give up anything. I would give up everything to have Beth back."

"You're going to *have* to give up everything."

"I know. I am."

Quinn looked down and without a second thought, Santana pulled her in for a hug. Quinn stiffed at first, but returned it tighter than Santana expected. They stood there for a moment before breaking apart. The moment didn't feel over yet, so Quinn took the chance to brush her lips over Santana's. It was nothing but a quick peck, but it felt as though the world shook under Quinn's feet and as though Santana's heart thumped right through her chest.

"Sorry," Quinn said as she gave them both some space.

"It's fine," Santana reassured, though technically it wasn't.

Just the next morning, Quinn organized a meeting type thing in her dining room, inviting almost everyone. Santana was sitting next to the blonde as she looked around the room. There was many people that she didn't know and only a few familiar faces like Sebastian, Puck, and Mike whom she had only met twice. Everyone looked confused, especially since they had all been served pancakes.

"Everyone," Quinn called out as she stood up from the table, "I have an announcement."

"It better be good, Q. I'm not okay with the whole having a meeting at 7:30 in the morning," Mercedes Jones, another infamous criminal, said. Santana remembered reading files about her in the academy, and while Quinn's speciality was drugs, Mercedes was known for fraud.

"I promise, it is," Quinn clapped her hands, "I'm quitting the business!"

The whole table went quiet.

"What the fuck does that mean?" Puck asked.

"Language," Quinn folded her hands in front of her, "It means I won't be doing this type of thing anymore. I'm out. Done. Finished."

"What the actual fuck?!" Puck exclaimed.

"Quinn, this seems a bit rash," Mike said from his side of the table, "Maybe if we talk about it."

"There's nothing to talk about," Quinn folded her arms.

"Who am I suppose to get my coke shipped from?" Sugar Motta, a not so infamous criminal, voiced.

"You're fucking insane if you think I'm just going to let you do this," Puck stood from his chair and pointed at the blonde.

Quinn slammed her hand on the table, silencing everyone, "I'm quitting the business and that's it! No one's stopping me! It's over! The reason is mine and mine alone. There is nothing nobody can do about it. Now eat your damn pancakes."

No one had time to react as the front door flew open and a dozen cops ran in. Everyone froze as the cops commanded to do so in almost a million voices. After a few other commands, the people at the table threw their guns to the floor and raised their hands into the air.

Santana recognized all of the cops, some in uniform and some not. But only one acknowledged her.

Kurt, with his gun pointed at Puck, looked over to Santana giving her a smile and a wink thus shattering the cover she had worked so hard to get all over the floor and onto her face.

She looked over to a still standing Quinn who was now looking at Santana, eyes wide and an array of emotions flowing through her.

In a quick second, Quinn bolted and Santana cursed as she ran after her but not before scooping a gun from off the floor.

To both of their surprises, a whole part of the house was not covered by the police and Quinn ran straight outside with Santana on her tracks.

Quinn's heart was beating in her ears and she had barely even begun to run. She was so pissed, she should have known Santana was a cop. It was too good to be true.

Santana panted as Quinn lead her into the city and almost bumped into a pedestrian. She didn't know if she was panicking at the fact that Quinn was getting away or that she found out that she wasn't who she said she was.

Quinn beelined into the alleyway in front of her, knowing that at this rate, Santana was going to catch up with her. It had been awhile since she had ran like this and she hadn't expected to be this out of shape.

Santana picked up her speed after Quinn, almost knocking over a trash can, "Quinn! Stop running or I'll have to shoot you!"

Quinn stopped in her tracks and turned to Santana who pointed her gun at Quinn. They were both out of breath and took some time to gather it.

"You're a cop?" Quinn finally said, a strain in her voice evident.

"Yeah," Santana nodded, "I'm sorry."

"You're not sorry," Quinn pointed to the gun, "You've got a gun on me."

"I have to," Santana took a deep breath, "I have to take you in."

"You can't," Quinn whined, "I just got Beth back."

"I know," Santana lowered the gun a bit, "I know. I'm sorry."

"You're not sorry," Quinn looked around for anything to help her but she was at a lost. She couldn't think of anything, so she panicked and kicked her leg out high enough to successfully knock the gun out of Santana's hands.

Santana's eyes went wide as she cradled her now throbbing hand, "Did you just karate kick that gun out of my hands?"

"Yeah."

"What the fuck, Fabray? You know karate?"

"No."

Santana walked forward, "I have to take you in, Quinn."

"Back off, Santana," Quinn backed up, "I'll fight you if I have to."

"I don't want to fight you, Quinn."

"Why? Are you afraid?"

Santana stopped moving, "Why would I be afraid of you?"

"If you list off some of the things you're arresting me for then you should know."

Santana laughed, "More like you should be afraid of me."

Quinn scoffed, "Why? Because you're a cop?"

"No, because I'm from Lima Heights Adjacent."

"Adjacent to what?" Quinn blinked her eyes, "Wait, did you say Lima. Like Lima, Ohio?"

"Um, yeah."

Quinn shook her head in disbelief, "I'm from Lima, too."

Santana scrunched up her face, "That's a weird coincidence."

"Yep, just another reason to let me go."

Santana shook her head at the girl and Quinn decided to make another break for it. This time, she didn't get far as Santana tackled her to the ground. Santana tried to hold her down but Quinn kicked her in the stomach, knocking the air out of her and into the ground. Santana coughed as she laid there for a moment before tripping Quinn before the girl could run. The movement cause Quinn to fly forward and smack her head in the sidewalk. She hissed but got back with one hand placed on her forehead.

Santana had finally gotten back up as Quinn was limping away and walked herself over to her, "I gots to bring you in, Fabray."

"No," Quinn picked up the closest thing to her, a long metal pipe and whipped it around the Latina, knocking her in the back. Santana fell to the floor and held her back in pain and Quinn watched in horror, "Oh my God, Santana! I am so sorry!"

Quinn looked around, if she wanted to get away this was her chance. Then she looked down at the girl on the ground, laying face down on the floor with her hands rubbing at her lower back and mumbling words to herself.

Quinn stomped her foot before squatting next to Santana and rubbing the spot that she hit her, "I'm sorry, Santana. I panicked."

"It's fine," Santana muttered and no it was not fine.

Quinn continued to rub Santana's back in silence and the Latina looked over to her in confusion, "You can still escape."

Quinn bit her lip, "I can't leave you here. Plus, you wouldn't want to be the loser who couldn't catch the infamous Quinn Fabray on foot."

Santana mumbled something as she turned away and Quinn continued to to rub.

Only a few moments passed before Quinn's ears perked at the sounds of sirens in the distance. They must be close, "Do you think you can sit up?"

Santana nodded her head as Quinn helped her into a sitting position. Quinn gave her a smile before laying herself face down on the pavement and putting her hands behind her back.

"What are you doing?" Santana questioned.

"You got me," Quinn turned her face to Santana, "You can take me in. I'm sure in prison I'll get more time to think about how I can make Beth's life better. And if I never get out, then that'll be fine too. As long as she's safe. Even if that means safe from me."

Santana gave a sad smile and placed her hand on Quinn's, "You're doing right for Beth."

"I'm trying to," Quinn smiled.

Santana smile back before leaning down to press her lips against Quinn's. Though the position was awkward and her back hurt like hell, when Quinn sucked in her bottom lip her heart did summersaults through her chest. She broke the kiss and gave Quinn another smile.

"Stop making eyes at me," Quinn muttered, "The cops will be here any minute."

As Santana walked the halls of the police department, it almost felt like an entirely different life. She hadn't been gone that long but yet she couldn't fight the feeling. She sat at her desk and rolled the pen between her fingers. She looked at Sam's desk and smiled at the little new items that decorated it. She was glad he was back from vacation.

"Well, look who's back," Rachel's uncanny voice chirped in Santana's ear.

Santana turned her chair to face the woman, "Rachel."

"Everyone's pretty ecstatic for your return," Rachel then begun to whisper, "But to be honest, this place got along much smoother without you here."

"Only because it was so boring," Kurt pipped in as he walked over to the desk, "Everyone missed Santana. Including Captain."

"I beg to differ."

"And I beg you to shut your mouth," Kurt laughed to himself then turned to Santana, "Are you happy to be back, hotshot?"

"I guess," Santana placed the pen back on her desk.

"Come on, get a little excited," Kurt did a little shimmy, "You caught Quinn Fabray. You're a legend."

Santana tried not to ask, "Is she still in custody?"

"Yep, till the end of the day. Why?"

Santana tried to hold it back as she drummed her fingers on the arm rests but decided against it as she stood up from her chair, "Could you put her in the interrogation room?"

"Yeah sure, why?"

"I want to talk to her," she said as she walked away from her desk and the confused people standing by it.

It only took twenty minutes to get Quinn into an interrogation room, but it took forty just to convince Kurt to let Santana go in by herself. Once she walked into the room Quinn looked up and gave her a wide smile.

"How's it going, Fabray?" Santana asked as she sat in the chair in front of Quinn.

Quinn didn't look any less beautiful with the orange jumpsuit they put her in and with the optimistic look on her face. It was almost like she wasn't even locked up, "Pretty good. It's only been two weeks, though. Anything can happen."

"They're moving you tonight," Santana revealed though it wasn't asked, "Then your trial starts a few weeks after."

"Cool. Could you do me a favor, though?" Santana nodded her head and Quinn folded her hands on the table, "Could you make sure that Beth doesn't find out about this. I don't think any kid wants to know that they're mom's incarcerated."

"Deal."

"So you're not just a cop, you're a detective," Quinn motioned towards the badge resting on Santana's hip, "You didn't always want to be?"

"When José died," Santana traced the badge with her finger, "I wanted to avenge him in some way. He always wanted to be a cop. So this is my way of doing it right for him."

"I think you're doing great," Quinn smiled and Santana smirked back at her.

A loud siren flooded the room and their smiles disappeared. Quinn looked at Santana for an explanation while Santana's mouth twitched.

"Someone's holding up the department," Santana clicked her tongue before sighing.

"The entire police department?" Quinn's eyebrows rose, "People can do that?"

"Yep," Santana checked her phone, "You didn't contact anybody did you?"

"No way."

"Quinn."

"I'm serious!" Quinn shifted nervously, "What if people found out I'm here?"

"That's probably what happened," Santana tried to call Kurt but his phone went to voicemail, "They're probably coming to break you out."

"Or kill me," Quinn started to panic, "I have so many enemies out there, Santana. They could be coming here to shoot me down. It could be anyone like... Like..."

"Like Sebastian," Santana joked as he called Rachel, but no luck there either.

"Yes! Like Sebastian! Did you know that he tried to poison me twice?"

"And yet you kept him around."

"He made a mean filet mignon."

Santana rolled her eyes and grabbed both of Quinn's hands, "Don't fret, Fabray. Someone's just trying to break you out. No poisoning will be happening today."

"Promise?"

"How the fuck can I promise that?"

Before Quinn could answer, the door of the interrogation room was kicked open. Both Santana and Quinn jumped hard at the sound but only Quinn relaxed once she saw who was behind it, "Brittany?"

"Hey, Quinn!" Brittany greeted before pointed her gun at Santana.

Santana put up her hands and Quinn put up one of her's to stop the girl from shooting, "Stop, stop! Britt, it's okay. She's a good cop!"

Brittany laughed, "Aren't they all?"

"Put down the gun, please," Quinn asked sternly and Brittany let the gun down slowly, "Thanks, Britt."

"Let's go then!" Brittany tossed the blonde the gun and rushed out of the room.

Quinn and Santana stood up, and Quinn gave a shrug, "Should I leave?"

Santana nodded, "Yeah, sure. Go get your kid. Start a new life with her. Leave this all behind you."

Quinn stared at her, "Are you sure?"

"Not really."

They didn't say anything for a moment before Quinn took a step to her, bringing her free hand to cup Santana's cheek, and surged their lips together. They both groaned at the feeling and moved their lips against each other.

Quinn smiled and broke the kiss. She backed away towards the door, "Sorry."

"It's fine," and technically this time it was as the blonde dropped the gun to the floor and ran out of the door, leaving Santana there to think of a way to explain what happened here to her Captain and the rest of the department.

In Another Life, by ShadowKira

Quinn smiled, humming to herself as she made her way down the cobblestone street toward the docks. Today was her last day in Liverpool and she was more than ready to see a new land and reunite with her parents. Her luggage had been taken ahead of her by cart, she'd been offered a ride as well but had declined.

It was too beautiful a day to not take one last walk through the city she had grown up in.

She glanced down the dock, her eyes moving over the ships that lined it. Quinn smiled wider when she found the largest of them, the Seahawk.

Quinn had barely taken two steps onto the ramp when a well dressed man appeared over the rail above. "Hello, you must be Miss Fabray."

The girl's smile fell slightly and a blush tinted her cheeks a shade darker. "Yes, I am."

"I am the Captain of this fine vessel, Sebastian Smythe." The man's smile pulled wider and he stepped closer to the ramp, extending his hand to her. "Welcome aboard."

Quinn ducked her head shyly and took her first step aboard the majestic ship. The famed Captain was far more handsome in person than her Mother had described.

"I must apologize, I'm afraid I must taint your first few minutes aboard my ship with some bad news..."

"What is it?" Quinn asked, her eyes widening in alarm.

"The other family who was to join you... They've decided to postpone their trip. It would seem that their youngest child has fallen ill."

Quinn frowned and her eyes dropped down toward the deck. "Oh, I see."

"You can still continue on with your journey today, or, you can wait until our next run and come along with the other guests."

Quinn bit her lip, trying to weigh both options in her mind. She had a home here, with her Sister... But she longed to be back with her parents, especially since Frannie would be absent. She was older and had always been the '*golden child*.' Quinn had been stuck in her shadow for as long as she could remember and now, she wanted to be free of it.

"I'll go. If I don't, I fear that my Mother will worry herself to death."

Sebastian's smile returned, "Well then, let me show you to your quarters. I will have Santiago and Samuel here bring your luggage."

Quinn glanced toward the two young men nervously, they looked nothing like the Captain. If anything, they looked more like the pirates that her Father had told her about as a child.

Santiago was shorter and appeared to be younger than the other man. His skin was dark and his eyes and hair even darker still. Sam was tall, tan skin with bright blonde hair. His hair was

longer, tied back in a small ponytail while his companion's was short and a little choppy. She blinked, blushing more deeply when she realized that she had been staring.

"Be careful around the crew..." Sebastian said as soon as they had moved off of the main deck and behind the safety of a thick door. "They're not civilized people, like you and I. They've grown tough from the salt and the sea... And are often drunk and rowdy. I would prefer that you only go out of your cabin when you know that Mr. Anderson and myself are out there."

"Mr. Anderson?" Quinn asked as they paused, partially down the hall and next to a closed door.

"He's my First Mate, his room is right there... Between your quarters and mine."

It was then that Quinn realized that they were standing in front of her room. The knowledge that the Captain and his second in command would be so close was very comforting to her.

"Where does the crew sleep?" She asked, without thinking.

Sebastian smiled, "Don't worry about them, darling. They sleep below our feet, in the hold. Now, why don't you get settled in? Your luggage will arrive shortly, if you need anything, I will be in my quarters discussing the first leg of our journey with Mr. Anderson."

Quinn lingered in front of her door, watching until Sebastian disappeared behind his own. She finally turned the knob to peek her head inside.

The room was large but if the other family had come, there wouldn't have been much space at all. And with that knowledge in mind, Quinn was actually very relieved that they had been unable to make it.

There were three cots in the room, two larger and one smaller. All three were fixed to the floorboards with a clothing chest beneath them.

Quinn made her way over to the large cot to the left of the door and settled herself down on the edge of it. There was some padding to the mattress but it was nothing like the beds that she was used to.

It was suddenly settling in, all of the luxuries that she would be without on this journey to America. There would be no hot baths, no fantastic servants named Rachel to clean up after her and help her dress... An uncomfortable cot instead of a plush bed.

The blonde was snapped from her thoughts as a knock came at her door, she glanced over toward the sound before smoothing down her dress. "Come in."

The door opened slowly to reveal Santiago and Samuel with her luggage. They carefully carried the luggage into the room and set it down on the floor, in front of the bed across from the one she had selected.

Once they were done, Samuel shot her a goofy smile. "There you go, Miss. I hope you enjoy your time on the Seahawk!"

Quinn smiled at him nervously, "T-thank you."

The other blonde bobbed his head before exiting the cabin, Santiago lingered a minute longer before quietly excusing himself.

Quinn let out a small sigh of relief when the door was finally closed and she found herself alone again. She made her way over to her luggage and spent the next few hours moving her clothing and personal affects into the chests provided.

A knock came at the door a while later and she was surprised to see yet another new face. The man was a little taller than herself, muscular but easily as well dressed as the Captian. His dark hair was slicked back and tidy and a wide smile played at his lips. "Hello, Miss Fabray. I am the First Mate, Blaine Anderson."

Quinn accepted his proffered hand and blushed as Blaine brushed his lips against her own. "Sebastian asked that I come introduce myself... And fetch you, for dinner."

"Oh, thank you." Quinn said, smiling as she followed him out into the hall.

The two made their way back out onto the deck and while Quinn had felt the boat leave the dock, she was still shocked to see nothing but open sea on all sides of them. The deck was now crawling with crewmen as they worked to keep the boat on schedule.

Her eyes scanned the many faces around them, lingering slightly on Samuel and Santiago before pausing completely when she found the Captain. He smiled at her briefly before yelling out orders to the crew.

"Blaine?" Quinn asked in a quiet voice.

"Yes?"

"Are there any other women on board?" The blonde asked, glancing up toward him.

The man frowned slightly, "You're the only female on present, there are no women in the crew."

Quinn glanced toward her feet, her heart rate rising slightly. "Oh, I see."

"Don't worry, you're safe here, Miss Fabray. I promise you that."

Quinn smiled in response, her fears easing a little. She fell quiet then and followed Blaine through the ship and what appeared to be the crew's quarters. There were large hammocks swaying from the ceiling. She was glad to see that they all appeared to be empty and even more so when they passed them quickly.

"If you're ever hungry, this is the kitchen." Blaine said, pulling a worn curtain aside to reveal a large open space.

"Ah, hello Mr. Anderson... And who's this then?" A kindly man asked, turning away from the pot that he was stirring.

"Hello, William. This is our guest, Miss Fabray."

"Ah, yes... I remember now. We were worried that you wouldn't be joining us when the Puckermans decided to postpone their journey."

Quinn smiled, charmed by the man despite his scruffy and somewhat wild appearance. "I'm glad that I have."

Will's smile widened, "I'm sure that this is nothing compared to what you're used to... But it's fresh and still warm yet." He said as he ladled her out a large portion of stew.

Quinn took a seat at the small table in the room and left the men to talk.

"How are the supplies?" Blaine asked, before taking a bite from his own bowl.

"We've plenty, sir. A wide variety of fruit, bread and salted meats."

Blaine smiled, "Good. The crew is always so much more well behaved when they're well fed."

Quinn listened to them talk casually for a while longer as she ate. She was nearly finished when Blaine approached her with a smile. "I don't want to rush you... But the men will be coming for their dinner soon. And it tends to get a little crazy around here when they're hungry."

She nodded, finishing what little was in her bowl before handing it off to Will who had been waiting with a smile of his own. She said goodbye to the man before following Blaine out of the kitchen.

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After her meal and brief outing, Quinn had been returned to her cabin. She sat on her bed reading, her eyes flicking occasionally toward the candle that was shifting around slightly on the nightstand fixed to the end of her bed.

She was losing her mind already, being cooped up. While she was used to spending time in her room since she had moved in with Frannie, she was also used to having a window.

Quinn shut her book suddenly, reaching for the candle before rising from the bed. She made her way quickly down the short hall before peeking her head out of the door that lead out to the deck.

She smiled slightly to herself when she realized that it was deserted.

Moonlight sparkled out across the ocean, catching on the spray that had found its way onto the deck. Quinn approached the railing placing the candle at her feet after a strong breeze blew out the flame. She sighed, enjoying the feel of the ocean air on her face.

Several minutes passed in silent bliss when the girls moment was interrupted.

"Pretty 'lil thing like you should be out here all by 'erself."

Quinn jumped and turned around to face the man who was leering at her from several feet away.

He took a few steps toward her, easily closing the distance between them. "I just come up 'ere to take a piss... Never thought I'd get so lucky." He whispered, stroking her cheek with a large,

rough and resin stained hand. He was about to say more when the door leading down below swung open and a loud chuckle split the cool air.

"Patrick? What are you doing?"

Quinn's heart jumped at the new voice, it sounded like Samuel. She didn't know the man very well but he seemed kind and caring.

The man standing between them retracted his hand quickly and glared toward the blonde man. "Nothin'."

"Good, Miss Fabray is a guest on our ship... You know the Captain would have your hands for touchin' her." A third voice said, it was soft and higher than Sam's with a slight rasp to it.

Patrick huffed and stomped away from the girl, mumbling incoherently under his breath as he went.

Samuel made his way over to Quinn quickly, worry written all over his face. "Are you alright?"

"Y-yes, thank you." The smaller blonde stuttered, her eyes on her feet.

Santiago paused a few feet away from them, his hands in his pockets. "Most of us are good men... But there are a few..." His voice trailed off and was carried away with the breeze.

Samuel nodded, "It's probably best that you don't move about alone, especially at night."

"I understand." Quinn said quickly, raising her eyes to meet his. "Thank you again."

The two men watched as she hastily grabbed her unlit candle before racing back toward her room for the night.

Physical, by skaldic

The alarm clock brings Quinn Fabray back from a dream that seems to vanish from her mind as soon as she opens her eyes. She stretches and turns in the arms of her husband - her exceptionally good-looking handsome bastard of a husband, Santiago Lopez. She loves that despite the fact that they have a king-sized bed in a comfortably large bedroom overlooking the backyard of her dreams, they still fall asleep and wake up touching each other in some way. She allows herself a minute to take in Santiago's angelic face, as it only is when he's asleep. He looks so innocent asleep and it takes her right back to high school, when they first started dating. She can hardly believe that was over ten years ago. She leans down to kiss his full lips and then forces herself to get out of bed. After all, she does have a firm to save.

Quinn loves her job as a crisis manager. She goes wherever she is invited to save a firm from bankruptcy. She loves how she gets to move from one world to another, exploring so many different things. She loves the satisfaction of arriving somewhere, analyzing the problem and then fixing it with the help of her team. She loves making a slacking business, often on the verge of bankruptcy, successful again.

She goes into the bathroom to get ready for the day. She knows Santiago won't be asleep for much longer - he likes to get up a few hours before his training starts to make sure he's well-fed and well-rested. She grins - she can't help but feel so proud of her husband for being such a talented, hard-working soccer player. They both love their job - Santiago has often said how lucky he is to have been able to turn his hobby into his profession, and then earn loads of money with it too playing for a team he loves - DC United.

When Quinn returns to the bedroom and walks over to her bedside table to grab her phone, Santiago pulls her down and kisses her passionately. He drags her onto the bed and she can feel how she's losing herself in this kiss - his soft lips caressing hers, their tongues teasing and then exploring one another, his hands feeling up her ass. The kiss ends organically and it leaves them both panting slightly.

"Good morning," Santiago grins cheekily, wiggling his eyebrows in suggestion.

Quinn laughs. "I'd love to get down and dirty with you, stud, but I do need to leave for work."

He pouts and tries to win her over using those same puppy eyes that have got so much done for him. "You're the boss. You can go in whenever you like, right?"

Quinn sighs, but smiles nevertheless. "You know how I feel about that, San. If I expect the others to turn up in time every day, it just isn't right for me to go in whenever I feel like it. I would love to, but I can't be in late because I had mind-blowing sex with my amazing husband."

He touches her cheek and looks her in the eye. "Yeah, I know. You're perfect and fantastic and a much better person than I am. Truly my better half," he says in an overly dramatic voice.

"Don't you know it," Quinn winks. She moves closer, pats his dick and says: "I'll take care of you if you win the game tomorrow."

Santiago's eyes widen. "No sex tonight?"

They've been together for a long time now, but their sex life is still extremely active.

In her defense, Quinn looks genuinely regretful when she says: "I'm sorry, but I just don't know when I'll make it home tonight. We're starting a new phase of the recovery plan today and you know the first day of those are always crazy. But I'll be at the game tomorrow, okay?"

He smiles and they share another loving kiss. "Okay. Now go kick ass, babe."

Quinn is on the edge of her seat, barely hearing the noise of the people around her. in the sold out stadium. She's entirely focused on the match, on her husband in particular. Only a few more minutes to go, and then a teammate passes Santiago the ball. When he kicks it right inside the goal, cheers erupt everywhere and Quinn jumps up, pumping her fist. A few minutes later, the referee whistles to signify the end of the match and Quinn runs down the rows of seat to the edge of the pitch.

Santiago spots her from the pitch and runs over to him, a shit-eating grin spread on his handsome face. He lifts her up with his strong arms, over the barricade, and kisses her fully on the lips. Santiago is sweaty and panting heavily, their kiss sloppy but loving. It's such a turn on, to have him sweaty and victorious in that soccer outfit.

"You're so getting laid tonight," she screams in his ear - she has to, if she wants him to hear her.

He grins. "I love you!" she shouts to her before running back to his teammates.

Quinn feels elated as she makes her way back to her seat. She knows that if it was up to him, Santiago would go home with her right now. But he is a professional soccer player and he has his responsibilities. She knows the team has their rituals after they won and she wouldn't want to come between that.

Quinn makes her way to the bar and orders herself a beer. She knows that after having a shower and getting dressed, the team goes out to greet their fans and pose for pictures and autographs. Not all of the teammates do that every match, but Santiago insists on it. Quinn chuckles to herself - he just loves it.

She talks to some of the other girlfriends and wives. Quinn spots Sam's boyfriend as well, but he's not out and the only reason Santiago and Quinn know about this is because they've known Sam since high school and he trusted them with the secret. Unfortunately, Sam feels uncomfortable coming out of the closet, knowing what a taboo it is in the soccer world.

After the initial beer, Quinn switches to soda. She has to drive them home later, after all. She leans back and then her phone vibrates. When she checks it, she sees her husband's name pop up on the screen and she smiles at his words.

From: San

Going to greet fans now. Wait 4 me bar. Love u like crazy! xxx

She grins like a teenager getting a text from their boyfriend and quickly types out a reply.

To: San

You were awesome. So proud of you! Love you tons xxx

This is a home match, so the atmosphere is elated. Quinn has to admit that she's just as happy as everyone else is, while she's not even a major soccer fan. Being married to one of the biggest stars of the moment, though, she really can't ignore that world. Santiago was a soccer player when she met him and over the years, she's started to appreciate the sport. He's always been extremely passionate about it and he basically thought her everything she knows about it. She tries to catch every match he plays at home, but because of her own job she can't afford to fly out for the ones they play away.

It's not always been easy, being married to him. It's been a strange experience since he became famous. She's known him for all these years and been together with him for so long. It was just them, and then when he got that contract with DC United, suddenly it exploded. He became famous and everyone seemed to want a piece of him. Santiago is cocky enough as it is, so for him to suddenly be the big star... it definitely led to some fights in the beginning. All the parties he went to just because he was invited and even when she didn't feel like going, the girls being all over him. Definitely not easy. But they never broke up, and she's still so happy that he asked her to marry him soon after that rough patch.

And after all, Quinn muses, who can blame those girls? Santiago Lopez is definitely the hottest guy she knows, and then he has this charm that is just irresistible. He likes to party it up and toning it down wasn't easy. It took nearly being kicked off the team for him to see that if he's serious about this and wants this career, he has to adapt his lifestyle. For such a smart guy, he can be incredibly dense, Quinn thinks to herself.

Girls are still all over him, but Santiago always simply tells them he's married to the most gorgeous and cool girl in the world. They trust each other completely. Sure, he had a reputation of being a player in high school and he's naturally a flirty person, but she knows he would never cheat on her. It definitely helps to get the message across when he's out with Quinn and just can't keep his hands off her. He still manages to make her feel as giddy as a schoolgirl.

So, yeah, her San is now a big star - but he's all hers.

Quinn jumps up when she feels a pair of strong arms wrap themselves around her waist and soft lips kiss her neck. She turns around and her husband gives her a broad smile - God, does she love those dimples. "Hey, babe," he says simply.

She smiles and leans in for a kiss. "Congratulations, honey."

He bites his lip as he takes in her appearance - she knows he loves her in dresses. He licks his lips and says: "Let's go home."

Santiago is still on a high when Quinn parks the car in their driveway, going on about the perfection of his winning goal and how they hammered down their opponent. Quinn has to admit that it's kind of sexy. He's in the middle of another vivid description of a pass he made when Quinn shuts him up with a searing kiss. He seems surprised at first, but then kisses her back just as passionately. They completely forget they're in the driveway, in plain view of anyone who would happen to pass by. Santiago's hand is already roaming towards Quinn's ass when they both need to come up for air.

Quinn cups his cheek. "You were totally hot out there," she smirks. "I'm not the only one who noticed. But I *am* the only one who gets to go home and fuck you until you forget your own name." Her voice is hoarse and she can see on his face that it gets him going.

Santiago is at a loss for words and it makes Quinn proud - he's known for his witty comebacks as well as his talent in the game. She leans in to kiss his cheek and whispers in his ear, her hot breath tickling his skin: "Grab your bag so we can take this inside."

Santiago nods and does as he's told - another accomplishment Quinn is proud of. Santiago Lopez has got to be the most stubborn man she knows and doesn't let anyone tell him what to do, but she knows just how to talk to him. This attitude was a problem when he first started out playing soccer on a professional level. He had to get used to playing on a level where that kind of behavior isn't accepted in any way. He's definitely had to tone down the cockiness and arrogance, realizing that if he didn't, he had a good chance of being thrown out. He couldn't have that, not so close to his dream. And now they're both living the dream.

Santiago grabs his kit bag and follows his wife inside. He firmly believes in washing his outfit at home for good luck. Quinn thinks it's a bit silly and never knows if he actually means it, but like so many soccer players, he's superstitious about the funniest things when it comes to the game.

Quinn walks straight to the washing machine and bends down to put his outfit inside. She yelps in surprise when he smacks her ass slightly. She turns around to chastise him, but he gives her that cheeky grin again and she just can't be mad.

"I'm not even sorry," he shrugs. "You just have the sexiest ass."

Quinn rolls her eyes playfully. Leave it to Santiago Lopez to be a pig yet still manage to be charming at the same time. She honestly doesn't know what it is about him, but it's always been this way - he's so unapologetic, so confident and cocky, and she's sure that if he were anyone else she wouldn't be able to stand it, but with him... she really just can't be mad. Especially not when he leans in for such a loving kiss that it makes her knees tremble - his hands of course on her ass. He licks her lower lip and she opens her mouth just enough for him to take his chance and slip his tongue inside her mouth, taking complete control of the kiss.

"You were really amazing out there," Quinn says softly when they let go for air. She knows he doesn't need it, and in the morning he'll read and hear everywhere how outstanding he is on top of already being convinced of that himself, but she can't help saying it. She knows that he talks big, but underneath, he's still just a guy who likes to hear from his girl that she's proud.

They kiss again and Quinn slides her hands down to unbuckle his pants, dragging them down his hips. His lips just taste so damn good. He pulls up the hem of her dress and she reluctantly pulls away from the kiss so he can take it off. She gets rid of his shirt as well and they're both left wearing only their underwear.

Quinn slips her hand behind the waistband of his boxers and firmly grips the base of his dick, slipping her other hand inside as well, touching his balls with her fingertips. He groans and throws his head back, inviting her to lean in and kiss his neck. She squeezes his cock and smiles against his skin when she can feel it stirring in her palm. Quinn drags her hand to the head of his dick, her fingers wrapped around him in a tight fist. She jerks him off with hard, fast strokes, her thumb flicking over the head of his cock. His throbbing member grows stiff in her hand and he involuntarily bucks his hips into her hand. She smiles when she can feel the precum dribble from the slit and starts tugging even faster, her other hand still squeezing his balls.

"Jesus Christ, Quinn," he mutters, eyes closed. "So good." She loves seeing him like this - completely losing all control, putty in her hands. The high and mighty Santiago Lopez reduced to a quivering mess in her hands. She can't deny that it's a complete turn on.

His eyes fly open when she suddenly lets go of his dick and licks the precum from the palm of her hand. He doesn't need to say it, she can read it in his eyes - *what the fuck?*

She quirks an eyebrow and smirks, licking her lips deliberately before saying: "Seeing you win made me so horny, San. I need to feel your hard dick filling me up right now."

He lets out a breath of surprise and then scoops her up, sitting her down on top of the washing machine. Her legs are dangling over the side and she moans, realizing what he's up to. She places the soles of her feet against the side of the washing machine to steady herself and he grabs her thighs, pulling them apart a little more before diving in and licking her slit from her entrance to her clit. He swirls his tongue around her clit and drags it down again, licking her up and down, up again. He kisses her clit and then flicks the tip of his tongue over the hard nub repeatedly. She can feel herself getting closer, her entire body seemingly weaker, focused on the impending orgasm - and then he lets go.

She gives him a questioning look. He steps out his boxers, standing in front of her completely naked. Her eyes immediately go to his dick and she licks her lips involuntarily. "I thought you wanted me to fuck you," he winks.

He steps closer to her again, occupying the space between her legs. She reaches out and grabs hold of his dick, placing it on top of her pussy. He licks his lips and leans over to take a nipple between his lips, sucking and biting down on it as he spreads her pussy lips, his once again hardening dick sinking into her slick folds. She rubs the head of his large cock over her clit as he gives her chest some much-appreciated loving.

Finally, she guides his dick to her entrance and he thrusts inside, loving how tight she is around him, her walls working to accommodate him. She tightens her thighs around him and then grabs his sexy butt to pull him in close.

He turns on the washing machine and as it starts its work, Quinn is convinced she's died and gone to heaven. The surface she's sitting on is heating up, making her even hornier than she already was, and he slips inside her more easily. The vibrations of the machine feel delicious against her naked skin. He fills her to the hilt and keeps still, letting the vibrations do the work for both of them. He lets go of her chest and leans in to kiss her neck instead, his dick throbbing inside her hot, tight channel.

He leans forward, his thighs against the machine. The vibrations rock through his entire body. He moans against her skin and pulls out, slowly setting a pace in sync with the vibrations of the washing machine. He pounds into her just the way she likes it and he can feel that - her hot pussy squeezing his solid member, taking him in hungrily. She has her hands on his butt and she squeezes it harshly, knowing it will leave marks but not caring a single bit. He blows her pussy so good and they can both feel themselves getting closer to their release when suddenly, the machine changes cycles, causing them both to experience a different sensation.

"Fuck," Quinn mutters. "I need you to fucking fill me up, Lopez," she grunts, knowing how much it turns him on. He thrusts harder and faster and she keeps going. "You're the big man on the pitch, huh? The great Santiago Lopez... I can barely feel you," she lies through her teeth. He immediately picks up the pace even more.

"Quinn," he moans, grabbing her hips to keep her still as he pistons into her. "Fuck."

"Fuck me," she eggs him on, grabbing his hair now damp with sweat. Her skin is flushed and he knows she's enjoying this so insanely much. She ruts against him and he guides his hand to her pussy to rub her clit. "I need - I need to - yes - be full - of your cock," she pants, her voice high-pitched. His eyes roll back in his head as he blows her pussy. He can feel her pussy fluttering around his dick sucking him in and trapping him, clamping down on his cock. He can feel his balls tighten. "Fill me up, big boy!"

Just then, the machine changes cycles again and he loses it, blowing his load into her tight pussy again and again. He keeps spurting strings of hot cum into her, filling her up, just like she asked. She's coming undone around him, losing all control over her body, her body trashing underneath him. Quinn feels completely weightless, loving the feeling of his giant hard cock filling up her pussy, his hot seed spilling inside of her.

They both come down from their orgasms and as if reading each other's minds, she sits up and he leans down for a lazy kiss.

"I love you," he mutters. "You're so sexy, babe."

She smiles against his lips. "Seeing you on the pitch, seeing you in action... it gets me so wet, babe, I could fuck you right there."

He moans into her mouth. "Jesus. You're perfect."

Quinn smiles again, wrapping her arms around him. She loves seeing how the big bad Santiago Lopez, all confidence and swag, shows such a vulnerable side to her. She knows she's the only one who gets this side of him and it makes her feel so loved and safe. He wraps his strong

arms around him and carries her to the bathroom, his dick still inside of her, so they can enjoy a relaxing soak in the tub together.

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Quinn forces herself to stop checking her mails and goes in search of her husband instead. She knows he likes to relax on the patio and that's exactly where she finds him, occupying the double-sized comfy lounge chair they've set up there. He seems oddly quiet, his gaze fixed on a point in the distance.

"Penny for your thoughts?" she asks as she crawls onto the lounge chair. She cuddles up to him and he wraps an arm around her, pulling her close. He gives her an uncharacteristically sweet smile and kisses her on both cheeks.

She knits her eyebrows. Usually, if not a witty reply, he'd surely have made a sexual pun by now. "Are you alright?" she asks softly, draping her leg over his, looking him in the eye in an attempt to read him.

He licks his lips and she's transfixed by the sight - she can't help it that she's married to the sexiest man that ever lived. "I was just thinking," he begins, his voice soft and low, "We won the match, that was great and I love it and it's what I do. But I was thinking to myself just now... I couldn't do any of it without you." He pulls her on top of him and continues. "I'm so glad I'm married to you, baby. You're the best thing that's ever happened to me. I love you with... just... with everything, you know? Like everything in me loves everything about you."

She blinks. Santiago isn't one to declare his love like this. She leans in for the softest kiss and smiles against his lips. "I love you too, honey. I'm proud of you and I'm proud to be your wife." She gives him a peck on the lips. "I've always known you had this in you. I've always believed in you."

He combs his fingers through her hair. "We've been through so much together, Q. We've been together since we were teenagers and I'm glad you've been here with me, you keep me grounded."

Quinn grins. "God knows you need it," she teases. "Can't let you get a big head now, can we?"

"You're something else," he sighs. "I remember when I fell in love with you, I was so confused. There was the instant boner factor, but then there was also that part where I knew I would spend an entire day with you just to see you smile once. I'd never felt that before. It was about so much more than just banging you, like I really wanted to talk to you and hold you and do corny things with you. It freaked me out at first. I didn't realize I was falling in love."

Quinn laughs. "I wanted you so badly because you were - and are - hot as fuck, but I couldn't stand you at the same time. You were vain, conceited, arrogant, cocky, seemed to think any girl was lucky to have you even look at her. Everything was handed to you on a plate and you seemed to take it for granted. I thought I was just going to be another notch on your belt and I wasn't about to let that happen."

Santiago leans in for a kiss. "I'm glad you went on that first date with me. Even if I had to ask you five times."

Quinn rolls her eyes playfully and kisses him back. "I warned you I wouldn't be putting out. I figured you'd give up if I didn't put out. Then we went on that first date and I still thought you were just going to go through the motions and take me on a few dates until you got what you wanted. But you seemed to really care about my opinion and you were really interested in me as a person and you kept asking me out on dates. You actually remembered the things I told you. When you asked me to be your girlfriend before we'd even made out, I knew the impossible had happened: Santiago Lopez, first class player, had fallen in love."

Santiago's hands roam toward Quinn's ass and when they arrive, he squeezes it lovingly. "I had to ask you to be my girlfriend five times too. Then when you agreed, we'd been together for weeks before you would even make out with me. All my teammates thought I was having the best sex of my life when in reality, I wasn't having sex at all. I'd never gone that long without sex since I *started* having sex. But damn, baby, when we did... heaven. Pure heaven."

Quinn smirks, her fingers drawing patterns on his chest lazily. "You were speechless. I remember. I have to say, it wasn't easy on me either. Having the hottest boyfriend in town, looking so goddamn sexy all the time, and wanting so badly to just... to just rip his clothes off and jump him - and restraining myself all the time. When it was getting so bad that I had to take care of business myself thinking about you, I realized just how ridiculous it was to be masturbating to the guy I was with instead of having sex with the guy I was with. So yeah, that first time was pure heaven for me too."

Santiago kisses Quinn's neck and slips his hand under her shirt. "It still is pure heaven every single time. I never quite know if you're still as hot as you were in high school or if you've become even hotter."

"Hmm... you've definitely become even hotter," she winks, dragging her hands all over his body. "I mean, sure, you were hot then, but you were... more of a boy than a man. You're *definitely* a man now."

Santiago touches her lips with his, then takes her lower lip between his own. He sucks on it, eliciting a moan from Quinn. She nips at his upper lip, nibbles on his lower lip before slipping her tongue inside his mouth. Her hot, smooth tongue. She drags it along his, shifts her head a little to get a better angle, their noses brushing as they lose themselves in the kiss. He licks under her tongue, lifting it up a little, then sucking on the tip. He squeezes her but as she kisses him and then she decides it's her turn to suck on his tongue. He cups her face with both hands, bucking his hips into hers as he feels his dick stirring in his pants.

Quinn can feel his member pushing against her and slips one hand inside his drawstring pants. She closes her fist around his hardening cock and starts tugging on it, short and hard. He lets out a keening sound as it stiffens under her touch. She palms the head of his dick before tugging down again and starts kissing his neck, trailing her way down his chest and defined abs,

keeping up a steady pace. She leaves wet kisses all over his body, swirling her tongue against his skin, sucking hard enough to leave faint marks.

Santiago throws his head back when her mouth arrives at the waistband of his pants. Her hand is still working his cock and when the head of his dick peaks out of his pants, she leans down and flattens her tongue against it, then pushes against it with her tongue before licking the slit.

"Jesus," he mutters, writhing underneath her.

Quinn takes his pants off and bites her lip as she watches his pulsating member, rock hard from her ministrations. To his surprise, she takes off her shirt and leans forward, rubbing his hard cock against her chest, spreading the precum oozing from the tip over her nipples. He's not sure how much more of this he can take and she knows it, because she leans back and takes off her pants.

When she gets back to him, she leans down and takes one of his balls in her mouth, sucking and nipping at each ever so lightly. She uses her hand to stroke his throbbing shaft, her fingertips ghosting over the head, then back down again, as she licks his balls and sucks again.

His body is almost trashing underneath her and he leans on his elbows to watch her when she moves her mouth to the base of his hard cock. She tongues the throbbing vein running along the underside, licking and sucking her way along his large cock, her hand working the upper part until she reaches it with her mouth. He reaches out and cups her breasts, palming them, tugging at her nipples, palming them again. She then closes her lips around the head of his dick from above, hollows her cheeks and guides his dick down her mouth, pushing her tongue against it from beneath, feeding herself more and more. She's still fondling his balls as she starts bobbing her head up and down on his dick. Quinn swirls her tongue around the head whenever she comes up, pursing her lips around it and sucking before going down again. His girth stretches her mouth, but she loves it, taking him in entirely as he still plays with her tits.

Her nose hits his pelvis and he can't control himself any longer. He juts his hips along with the pace of her bobbing head, slowly and as gently as he possibly can, but still - fucking her mouth. She takes it like a pro, humming around his solid member, even taking it down her throat. She lets him pull out and push in again a few times, then when he's burying his dick inside her hot mouth again, she grabs the lower part of his dick with her hand and starts sucking on the cock she has in her mouth. She scrapes her teeth over his skin and that's when he loses it completely, his balls tightening inside her hand as a first load of hot cum shoots down her throat.

Quinn swallows eagerly, but then pulls his dick out and closes her eyes, directing him so that he's shooting the strings of hot seed all over her face. His mind is positively blown as he watches his wife licking her lips, cleaning her face with her hands and licking her palms to get as much cum as she can.

His eyes widen when her smirk tells him she's not done. She licks the cum off the head of his dick and then slips the tip of her tongue under his foreskin. Santiago can feel it coming again as she alternates between tonguing the ridge of his foreskin and sucking on his head. When the seed

spurts out again, she closes her lips around his cock, swallowing and milking his cock of every last drop of cum. Even when he's finished, she keeps suckling on his dick before finally letting go.

Santiago is panting and Quinn looks immensely pleased with herself.

"God," he mutters after a while.

She grins cheekily. "Just 'Quinn' will do," she winks. She slips a hand between her legs and then leans over him to put a finger in his mouth, coated in her essence. His flaccid dick brushes against her pussy and he can tell how wet she is, eagerly sucking on her finger.

"I'm so wet for you right now, San," Quinn says, biting her lip. "I need you to fuck me so hard that you'll have to carry me to bed tonight because I won't be able to walk."

Santiago smirks - that, he can definitely do.

"You want my cock, huh?" he asks with all his usual confidence.

Quinn nods as she leans back, brushing her wet pussy against his dick, coating it with her juices. Santiago knows that when his wife is this horny, she loves talking dirty.

"You're such a slut for this big dick," he continues, gyrating his hips into her. "Aren't you?"

"Yes," she hisses, then bites her lip as her enlarged clit bumps into his dick. Her eyes are closed, her skin flushed. "Fuck me, San."

He grins and she grabs his dick - he loves the way she's using the entire length to rub her wet pussy. He grabs her hips and lifts her a little. She guides the head of his now rock hard dick to her entrance.

"You just want to sit on my cock and ride it," he pants. "I bet you can't wait until I'm filling you up, until my cock is buried so deep inside you that you can't even *move*."

She licks her lips and lowers herself on his dick. "San, just fuck me like the slut I am," she responds.

He pushes into her and throws his head back when he feels her soaking wet pussy enveloping his dick. Her pussy is pulsating with need and her hot walls suck him right in, until he's fully sheathed inside her. He forces his eyes open - he wants to watch. He can't believe how beautiful she looks right now, his cock buried so deep inside of her that he pussy lips are touching his pelvis, her mouth open, her eyes closed. She lifts herself a little and then pushes down again.

Santiago utters a long, guttural groan when she starts bobbing up and down, her tits bouncing as she holds on to his body. He reaches out and grabs one of her breasts, tugging at her nipple, then leans in to bite it. She screams out, but he knows that she loves this. She plants her hands on his shoulders and pushes him back down again, riding his steel rod, panting with need.

He starts working with her, thrusting into her every time she comes down. Her moans make him pound into her even harder and then he grabs her hips, holding her still as he starts fucking her pussy faster and faster. When his entire length is buried inside her, he cants her hips and her clit is now rubbing his pelvis. He keeps pounding into her hard and fast, holding her hips still so

she can't move. She's screaming and moaning incoherently, and he can feel her walls fluttering around his dick, clenching around him. She's so close to her orgasm as she clamps around him, his cock buried inside her to the hilt. He smacks her ass slightly and that's enough to send her flying over the edge, the wetness gushing around his dick that is entirely trapped inside of her tight channel.

He feels his balls tightening at his wife's intense orgasm and when he can feel she's coming down from her own, he pulls out and aims his dick to shoot his load all over her stomach and breasts. She looks confused for a second when she feels him pull out, but then realizes what he's doing. The hot cum keeps spurting from his dick.

"More," she almost begs. "I need more."

He tugs at his dick to give her everything he has and when he's done, he has to resist the urge to take a picture. "Feed me your cum," she whispers, dropping down beside him.

His eyes almost roll back in his head and he does what he's asked, scooping up his seed from her body and feeding her with it. That takes a while, but Quinn is still panting slightly by the time they're done.

She grins at him, looking utterly exhausted. "Baby, I would totally suck you off right now, but I'm spent," she admits.

He chuckles as he wraps his arms around her and pulls her in for a tight hug. "Jesus Christ, babe. I don't think I could take another orgasm right now. I love you so much."

"Mh-hmm," she mutters. "Love you too, hottie."

The next day, they decide to go out for dinner. Quinn drives them into town - she's always loved driving and Santiago's just fine with that. After all, he gets to watch his hot wife be sexy as she swears at traffic and is fully focused on the road.

Santiago snakes his arm around Quinn's waist as they walk up to the restaurant, pulling her closer into him. He cops a feel of her ass and she laughs. "Santiago, we're in public, remember?"

"Mh-hmm," he smiles. "You know I can't help myself." He then leans in to whisper in her ear: "Maybe you should punish me later."

She quirks an eyebrow. "I bet you'd like that, wouldn't you?" she winks suggestively.

"Fuck," he mutters, following her inside - but not before pulling her in for another scorching kiss.

They enjoy some light-hearted chatter over dinner, but then one of the waitresses recognizes him and decides to ignore that he's there with his wife.

"Are you Santiago Lopez?" the waitress asks unashamedly, leaning forward for no reason other than to show off her cleavage. "Congrats on the win! I'm a huge fan."

"Yeah, that's me," Santiago smiles - his charming self, as always. "And this is my amazing wife, Quinn Fabray. You might've heard of her, I mean, she's a hotshot in her own professional field and I get told that I talk about her all the time in interviews and such..."

Quinn smiles, blushing as he boasts about his wife. He always tends to do that - people will ask about him and as soon as he starts talking about Quinn, he just keeps on going. The waitress blinks, but doesn't respond.

"Can we order?" Santiago asks politely.

The waitress winks and comes closer to whisper: "I'm on the menu as well..."

"Excuse me, your tits are kinda in my face, it makes it hard to talk," Santiago says seriously.

Quinn has to keep herself from bursting out in laughter. Santiago is patient and charming with people, remembering he used to look up to soccer players himself and feeling grateful for all the opportunities he gets - but when they push him, or ignore the fact that he's married, his good old mean streak tends to rear its snarky head.

The waitress smiles sourly and leans back, quickly jotting down their orders before hurrying off. Santiago reaches his arm over the table to take Quinn's hand and kisses it lovingly. "You look beautiful tonight, Q"

Quinn blushes. "You look quite handsome yourself, San."

He grins cheekily. "I do, don't I?"

Quinn rolls her eyes playfully and smacks his arm. Leave it to him to be sweet one second and joking the next.

—

The next morning, Quinn idly looks through the tabloid Santiago picked up when he went out to get them breakfast. It's one of those shameful little secrets only Quinn knows about, but Santiago is truly a sucker for gossip. She's willing to bet he told the shop owner he bought this tabloid for his wife.

She raises her eyebrows when she sees a picture of her with her husband.

"What's up?" Santiago asks, looking up from a magazine.

Quinn shows him the article. "I bet we're on the blogs too."

The article shows a few pictures of Quinn and Santiago kissing as they enter and leave the restaurant. It's short and the focus is clearly on the pictures.

Santiago Lopez and his Quinn still in love!

Married for years now, DC United star Santiago Lopez and his wife, Quinn Fabray, are still very much in love. As they headed out for dinner last night, they couldn't keep their hands off each other! Lopez wasn't shy about letting the waitress know he's only interested in his wife either... sorry girls, this one's taken!

Santiago laughs. "You'd think these people have something better to do on a Sunday night than follow people and take pictures of them kissing." Then he shrugs. "I guess it comes with the fame."

Quinn nods and checks some blogs on her phone. "At least, they're being positive. They could easily be giving me crap for the dress I'm wearing or something, or for looking too fat to their liking."

Santiago scoffs. "I'd kill anyone who'd write something like that. You're totally hot."

Quinn finishes her breakfast and walks over to him, nestling herself down on his lap and leaning in for a deep kiss. "I know you'd kill them. I'm off to work now - I'll be home in time for dinner, yeah?"

He smiles and kisses her back, not wasting the opportunity to feel up her ass in that skirt. "Can't wait to see you," he winks.

She gets her stuff and they exchange one final kiss before she leaves for work - of course Santiago has to cop a feel and tell her to keep on those heels during sex. She's in the elevator when her phone rings and she frowns when she sees her husband's name.

"Babe? Is something wrong?" she asks worriedly.

He chuckles. "Nope. Just calling to tell you I love you."

"Aww," she blushes, her heart melting a little. "I love you too. Don't forget to put the trash out."

"I won't. See you tonight. I don't love you."

She quirks an eyebrow. "You don't?"

"Nope. I adore you."

She sighs.

"You want to slap me right now, don't you?" he predicts.

Then she laughs. "I do, dork. I have to hang up now. Love you."

"Love you too!"

Picturesque Intolerable Diva, by TakeMyBreathAwayTwoTimes

Santana Lopez arrived on set to a host of greetings from everyone she passed with her entourage in tow. She had to be one of the few people who could look so glamorous in baggy sweatpants, a hoody, Saint Laurent kicks and large sunglasses hiding her eyes. She smiled and greeted everyone politely, without the diva persona that preceded her. At 5.30am as she arrived onto the set of her vogue cover shoot, everyone was in awe at how down to earth the makeup-less mega star was.

Santana was one of the biggest stars on both the music and acting scene, with her empire currently taking over the planet. She had just finished up making her third album and was also about to start a new movie project. At twenty-six, she couldn't have possibly been in a better place in her career and everyone around her knew it.

'Ah Ms Lopez, it is a pleasure to finally meet you. I'm Amanda.' the shoot intern greeted her as she shook her hand and began to lead her to her dressing room. 'This will be your dressing room for the day. I'll let you and your team get settled and hair will start roughly around six.'

'Hi Amanda, nice to meet you. Thank you very much' Santana replied shortly but not unkindly as she quickly moved into the room.

As Amanda closed the door, Santana sunk into a leather couch dramatically.

'Oh my god, where is my coffee?!' Santana called out to the group around her.

She was immediately presented with her complicated drink order as her team settled around her and talked among themselves quietly. One thing they had come to learn is unless you wanted to feel her wrath, you left Santana's coffee sink in before trying to get into a conversation with her. Yes, she was polite to those that didn't know her, extinguishing any rumours of her diva fits but her team as they were her confidants received any mood that may come their way and she was nothing but short before coffee was consumed.

'Why is it so fucking early?' Santana groaned as she lay her head back against the head rest, eyes closed.

'Because it's a photo shoot and they're always early.' Tina replied sarcastically. 'Maybe you should have thought about that before going to that after party last night!'

Santana turned her head pathetically to the side to glare at Tina while taking the cap off her coffee and throwing it at her head.

'Shut up T. I didn't hear you complaining when Mike Chang came over to talk to ME and you nearly had a heart attack.' Santana replied snarkily as she dramatically reenacted Tina's expression.

'Shh San that didn't even happen you're such a liar!' Tina said blushing as she played with the lid that had been thrown at her.

'Aww T.T! Don't be embarrassed. Come give Auntie Tana a cuddle.' Santana mocked as she opened her arms for the girl.

'I hate you.' Tina muttered as she did move to hug Santana.

One thing Santana would never admit was that she was a particularly touchy person and loved giving and receiving hugs. Tina as her best friend and personal assistant had grown from a not very touchy person to nearly an automatic cuddler when Santana was around.

The group idly waited for the shoot as they looked through pictures of some of the outfits up for selection. No matter how early it was or how busy Santana was she couldn't deny she was buzzing with excitement. Yes, she had done many photo shoots but this was Vogue!

Soon, there was a knock on the door as Amanda peeked inside shyly.

'Ms Lopez, they are ready for you in hair and makeup!' She announced as she held the door open for Santana who quickly got up to walk with her.

As they walked down the hall, Amanda quickly thanked Santana to fill the silence.

'Thank you so much for coming so early and accepting to be on our cover! Anything you may need I can get for you.' She said hurriedly as she played with her fingers.

'I'm not sure it is you that should be thanking me for such a great honour! I'm so excited.' She smiled at the woman as she walked in to the hair and makeup room.

'As are we, Miss. Now, not that either hair or make up should take long given how you already look but we'll start the shoot at around ten?' Amanda questioned timidly.

'Haha, wow thank you so much! That's great, whenever you are ready, I am.' Santana smiled as she took a seat in front of the mirror. 'Oh, Amanda? Please call me Santana.'

'Yes okay Miss....I-I mean Santana. Thank you.' Amanda stuttered as she left the room star struck.

'Aww she's so cute.' Santana cooed as she sat in her chair.

Unfortunately, her hairdresser had pulled out for today so she had a new one but her makeup artist was still there so at least she knew some of whom she was working with. As the woman washed her hair she almost found herself dozing off under the massaging of her fingers against her scalp. She quickly asked for another coffee as she was moved back in front of the mirror and her hair was curled.

In between hair and make-up she quickly took a break to pee. As she was about to walk out of the cubicle, she overheard two woman talking about her as they entered. She quickly froze and tried not to make a sound.

'So what's this diva like? Exactly as the tabloids say?'

'No, as far as I can tell she seems to be lovely or so everyone says.'

'No I bet she'll be like all the rest, demanding, arrogant and intolerable. If she wasn't so picturesque, I wouldn't be doing this.'

'I know right she's gorgeous!'

'Yes but can I tolerate her for her beauty?'

At this sentence, Santana had just about enough. She loudly unlocked the door and pulled it back to reveal herself to the two other occupants. She barely glanced at them before brushing past to wash her hands at the sink. Both women stood frozen with eyes wide and jaws hanging. Santana gave each of them the once over, one blonde and one red-head. The blonde had Santana stopping to take in her beauty as she stood in casual clothes, hugging her nicely while the red-head looked professional in a tailored suit.

Santana quickly stopped her leering, turned to dry her hands on a paper towel and made her way to the door. As she left, she brushed slightly against the blonde.

'Careful, you'll catch flies!' Santana mocked as she left, laughing at their still stunned faces.

She quickly walked back to tell the group what had happened, much to their amusement. It didn't really offend her that people were talking about her behind her back even if it was negative, she got it every day from the media and twitter etcetera. It was nothing out of the ordinary but it was nice to be able to catch someone out for a change.

The next few hours flew by quickly as she was dressed and pampered until she was ready to shoot. As Amanda once again led her around the venue where the camera was set up, she asked about the photographer.

'So this guy Q, is he any good? I heard he's like new to the team or something.' Santana asked.

'Oh Q is great. Vogue are mad about their newest photography genius.' Amanda gushed happily.

Before Santana could ask anything else she caught a glimpse of the blonde from the bathroom out front and centre by the camera, looking extremely nervous and jumpy. She couldn't help but wonder what was bothering the girl and smirked wondering if it had something to do with their previous meeting.

'Q, this is Santana Lopez! Santana, this is Q!' Amanda introduced professionally.

Quinn turned to face the girls, biting her lip as she once again got her wide-eyed look. Santana smirked as she looked around to see if Tina was close before greeting the woman.

'Oh we've already met, briefly. I'll be your picturesque, intolerable diva for the day!' Santana greeted, hearing Tina slightly giggle in the background.

'Well great you already know each other! Enjoy your shoot mis-Santana, I'll be around if you need me.' Amanda spoke as she quickly departed to run errands.

Santana waved at the Amanda and without so much as looking at the Q,

moved onto the set. It was beautiful, full of colourful backdrops and expensive furniture. She ran her fingers along the ornaments and took a seat in a colourful armchair just to rest before starting the shoot.

Eventually Q built up the courage to approach the Latina after an extensive internal pep talk. She slowly walked over after calling five minutes until the shoot and sat in a chair opposite Santana.

'Ms Lopez, I...I apologise immensely for what you heard in the bathroom. I realise I have offended you and you have my deepest regrets.' She apologised as she looked down at the floor.

'It's cool. Next time I hear you talking smack about me, I'll go all Lima Heights!' Santana said dramatically.

Worriedly Quinn looked up, only to sigh in relief when she saw the smile on Santana's face. Santana reached over and patted her leg that was tapping nervously, making it relax and making her skin tingle.

'Look, it happens all the time. To be honest, I don't really care about your opinion of me since you got it from the tabloids. Now can we get this rolling?' Santana asked as she removed her hand and raised her eyebrows expectantly at the photographer.

'I...you...Okay yeah let's do this.' Quinn said, taken aback by the stars nonchalance.

After that, the shoot came together. Santana posed from stairs and balconies as well as lounging on furniture and posing. They got through all the onset shots before lunch was called and Santana was already exhausted. Quinn on the other hand almost didn't want to break for lunch. Her shots were gold, not one of them could be considered as not being beautiful. Santana was truly stunning.

As Santana went into the food area to get lunch, she picked up proper food instead of the assortment of salad that was on offer. Having changed back into her own clothes, Santana picked up a gluten-free spaghetti and much to Amanda's delight, sat across from her as they discussed everything and anything. Her team sat around and all entered into conversation together.

When Quinn came into get lunch, she decided she needed to get a second chance with Santana and be on good terms. Even though the woman said she didn't care, Quinn felt she needed to make amends. She spotted a spare seat to Santana's left and timidly approached the group.

'Is it okay that I sit here?' She asked clearing her throat.

'It's not high school Q, you can sit where ever you like!' Santana smiled as she shrugged at the girl.

Quinn sat awkwardly for five minutes as she listened to the conversations around her. Santana, her P.A and Amanda were currently having an in depth conversation about the road in which Santana's music was taking and whether it was of the same genre as her earlier albums as others discussed general topics. Quinn wasn't going to lie, she was actually a fan of Santana's.

Not obsessively but she had both her albums and had seen a few of her movies. She admired the girl but didn't want to come off like a fan girl to her colleague, that would be embarrassing.

'No, I've done the nineties thing and the features album and yeah, they were great and I met some amazing people but this album is probably going to surprise people.' Santana explained to an enthralled Amanda.

'Oh, what direction are you taking?' Quinn asked, bringing herself into the conversation.

'Hmm, it's pretty personal. A lot of ballads and I suppose the words are closer to my heart. It took me a long time to write it but I'm hoping people get it.' Santana replied, unfazed by the new comer although Tina gave her a strange look.

With that one interaction, Quinn became comfortable to take part openly in the conversation.

'Even though I screwed up this morning and thought the shoot was ruined, you are so photogenic that even my fuckery couldn't mess this up.' Quinn complimented, blushing as Santana squeezed her knee.

'Please, from what I've heard, you're too talented to let a photo-shoot fail.' Santana replied, winking at Quinn.

The two seemed to be drawn to each other, soon the rest of the table were forgotten as the girls got to know each other. Too soon, they were required to get on with their day. They quickly packed up to go to their off-venue shoot. Here Santana was photographed on busy streets and roads, parks and by statues.

Throughout the girls enjoyed themselves as they flirted and messed around. The shoot was better than anyone expected and they could personally dedicate a whole book of pictures to Santana. Choosing the best ones would be impossible.

As the day came to a close, Santana could finally take her hair down and wash the makeup off her face. As she was leaving, she hugged Quinn tightly and thanked her for all her hard work.

'You've ruined me for all other photo shoots' she winked as she pulled back.

Santana blushed deeply at the compliment. They both froze as they were nose-width apart, their breathing changing at the intensity of their connection.

'Hey San? Let's go!' one of her friends called, pulling them from their moment.

'See ya around...!' Santana said, trying to act casual.

'Yeah, hopefully.' Quinn muttered to herself as she watched the Latina leave.

Just as her car was about to pull out, a yelling and arm waving Amanda came running out towards them.

'Wait Santana! You forgot this.' She said as the window was rolled down. 'It's from Quinn.'

'Oh, thanks Amanda. Hey, thanks for today. You were great. I hope you get a job at the end of your internship, in fact I'll recommend it.' Santana praised the younger girl as she took the envelope she was offered.

'Oh my god thank you so much! Good luck with the movie and album release.' Amanda replied with a mega-watt smile.

'I'll send you the link to my first single.' Santana called out to the girl as her car pulled away, laughing at the screaming she could hear from the girl.

Santana opened the envelope she had received. Inside there was a single photograph with a note attached. The picture was of her but not from the photo-shoot itself. It was of her when they were just after lunch in Santana's dressing room and Santana was lounging on the couch talking to Tina. Quinn had taken out her phone to send a text or so Santana thought.

The note attached read;

Dear picturesque, intolerable diva,

You have taught me my lesson on ever trusting tabloids again.

If there was any notion in my head about beauty only being skin deep, you shattered it!

This picture shows how beautiful the skin deep part is.

Yours admiringly,

Quinn x

Ps: call me.

Things of Substance, by Tampered Temporary Bliss

"She's all yours, Boobs McGee, all yours."

"Thanks, Captain!" A pause. "Marley!"

"Coming!"

I hear the door slam shut, shaking the whole cell, including those flimsy-looking but surprisingly strong iron bars. The floorboards creak as the ship balances itself in the cradling ocean by tilting from side to side. Why doesn't the whole thing just fall apart already?

Here I am, sitting on a wooden board that's supposed to serve as my bed, my dress drenched in salt water, blood (not my own, duh), and a little bit of sweat. Oh, and the filth of this tiny little space that I happen to be sharing with a family of mice. I feel as filthy as a rat in the gutter.

Where the hell is self-proclaimed Prince Charming named Finn Hudson now that I'm kidnapped by... pirates? Whoever runs this ship must have some criminal background. I hate to admit it, but I could use some saving right now.

There's no way I'm breaking those iron bars with my soft hands.

I stand up, restless from the limited amount of freedom I have in this rocking cradle of hell, pacing back and forth in that 7ft by 7ft cell. At least, it looks about that size.

What am I, the future heiress of the world's greatest jewellery reseller doing in this hell-hole of nothing? I'm Quinn Fabray for god's sake. Has god forsaken me? I say my prayers every night before I sleep! But what use is it to scream for help here. No one can hear me. All I hear are waves. And the shouting of the barbarians above deck.

Why did I ever agree on going on that dingy little 'cruise' with my father? Mental note to self, always reject all trips father plans.

I think one of the floorboards is a little leaky. My feet are in a puddle right now, and it's grossing me out. Where did my shoes go?

"Hey."

I look up at the unexpected voice, but in the dim candlelight, I can only see a faint outline of a stranger. She's in pants, but her hips give it away. She's a woman, which makes my chances of not being raped better, but nonetheless, does not put me out of danger. She's skinny, not that tall, and her hair glints bronze in the fading candlelight.

"What," I retort, squinting in the dark to try to hope for some recognition of this mysterious bitch.

"I brought you some clothes to change into. Figured it might be a little stuffy in here." She reaches through the bars and hands me a folded set of clothes. I eye them suspiciously, but bring them to the wooden board anyways, setting them down so I can hold the ensemble up piece by piece to figure out what exactly I'm being asked to wear.

Oh god.

"You're going to need some help with lacing up that under-bust corset."

"No way in hell am I wearing this... thing! I'm not a fucking whore!" I spit bitterly, tossing the clothes to the side and tossing the thought of changing out of my head.

"It's the only thing left in here that would fit you. Once we get on land, I promise we'll get you something more... less scandalous?"

"I'm not changing."

The door creaks open and slams shut again in the near distance. Who is it now?

Another unfamiliar voice rings out through the darkness again, "Marley, I'll *make* her wear that fucking under-bust corset." A dark shadow emerges from the emptiness, and instinctively, I walk a little closer to it, till I'm pressed against the iron bars, my fingers wrapped defiantly around them, as though to tear them apart. I squint again, trying to see better in the dark. "Captain wants you on deck to help her, so I'll take over here." The candle shifts from one hand to another, and for a moment, the flickering of the flame allows me to see the smallest bit of my captor's face. "She's... *mine* after all."

Again, the door creaks open and slams shut.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" I hiss. I hear the soft clicking of the stranger's boots, as she goes... somewhere... the flame being my only hint to where she is.

The flame splits into two, apparently having lit a small oil lamp in the far corner of the room. It sheds little light, but enough to let me make out the features of this bitch.

"I'm Santana Lopez, first mate of the ship," she coos at me with a sly smirk, "I'm here to help you change. Then take care of you."

"Take care... what?" I splutter. I always thought the whole plank-walking thing was a myth!

"Let's get you changed first, shouldn't we?" She pulls out a key from her sash. For the first time since she's entered, I realize that she's also in pants, in a man's attire for sea-faring. Well, generally, women don't go adventuring on the sea. Do they have no men on this ship then?

As soon as the key enters the keyhole, I lunge myself at the opening door and at the stranger, hoping to escape. To my surprise, she's strong. She's really strong.

"Woah, easy." She pushes me to the side with ease as she enters the cell unscathed, shutting it and locking it behind her.

"Give me that damned key!"

I lunge for her again, this time reaching towards her sash. If only I could steal that key!

But she's not giving it up without a fight. Instinctively, I slap her, running my palm across her surprisingly smooth and flawless face.

We both pause for a moment.

I'm not sorry.

"Genius slapper," she mutters darkly, "Jesus Christ! Just who do you think you are?!"

"I'm Quinn Fabray, heiress of Fabray and Co., so how about you just let me the hell out of here?"

She laughs coldly as though the slap never reached her, "Well, nice to meet you, Quinn Fabray." She says my name slowly, letting it roll off her tongue as she savours the taste, "Once again, I'm Santana Lopez. And as far as I'm concerned, you're my prisoner until we get to shore. Then Captain will see what she wants to do with you."

"Prisoner my ass!" I lunge myself at her again, ready to put up a fight to get that key. I'm going insane in this tiny place.

"Easy, easy," Santana sneers, and within seconds, I find myself pressed against the wall, my hands held up above my head by Santana's one hand. Her free hand is on her hip as she presses close to me, trapping me. She shoves her leg in between my two, physically letting me know I'll be going nowhere.

Fuck. Instantly, I squirm, trying to break my arms free of her death-grasp.

"Let's try this again, Blondie," she murmurs. In the dim light, her eyes sparkle. She is intimidating, though I won't ever admit it. "We'll get you changed, and then life will be easier for both of us."

"Never. Get off of me!" I struggle again, but she only holds me tighter.

"Alright, Princess," she sighs, rolling her eyes dramatically, "Don't make me do it."

"Do what?!"

"This." Her free hand reaches for my chin to steady my head. Her own head moves closer and she's about to—

"Fuck you! Stop this!"

"Make me."

"Santana!"

"That's right, that's the name you'll be screaming~" She stops, but the smirk on her face is still very much visible. She doesn't lean forward, or backward, but simply stays in place, her lips an inch away from mine. Our breaths are mingling, and though I'm slightly breathless, I refuse to give in. Are all pirates so cruel?

What's that smell? Tropical fruit? Some exotic flower? If it's Santana, she smells really good despite being stuck on a ship in the middle of nowhere.

"You're not going to rape me, are you?" I murmur, realizing that I've been looking at her for way too long, and averting my gaze.

"Jesus, no." She utters, "I may be mean and judgemental and intimidating and bitchy, but I'm not vile."

I scoff, "Yeah right."

"No really, Princess." She stares straight into my eyes, using her hand to move my chin so I'm forced to gaze back into her. She has pretty eyes.

Is she trying to eye-fuck me?

"Look, if you're willing to get changed, this is a lot easier for both of us." She reaches for the back of my dress, but I recoil, pressing myself deeper into the wall. I want to disappear.

"I'm scared," I blurt. Shit, did I just say that out loud? Despite the way I act all high and mighty, I just really want to get out of here. I'm just a small child who feels so lost. I whimper in realization. Probably not the wisest choice.

"I know." Much to my surprise, Santana's tone softens, and she takes a half-step away from me.

Oh?

"There's no one coming to save me, is there?"

"Afraid not, Blondie," her gaze softens now, and her hand removes itself from my chin.

So tugging on heartstrings will work this whole thing out? I smirk inwardly. Easy then. Getting out of here will be easier than I thought.

"Can I hug you?" I whisper. Living in an aristocratic society, you know how to be fake. It just comes... naturally.

"What?"

"Please? I just..." My voice cracks as I force tears to my eyes. In this dim light, body language will speak louder than facial expression. I let myself go a little limp. Clearly this is working on the bitch in front of me.

She's human after all.

I feel my arms freed from above my head, and instantly, I lunge myself at the woman again, wrapping my arms around her neck as I bury my head in the nape of her neck. Hell, she smells good.

Santana stumbles backwards for a step, before hesitantly putting her arms around my waist. Clearly, this is all new to her. "I'm sorry I scared you, Blondie." Her voice is equally as hesitant as her arms, but I waste no time in asking for sympathy. In a situation like this, I need control.

I sniff in response to her words, simply holding her closer. "Promise me you won't hurt me..."

"I..." Santana has no choice if I'm playing her with my whole heart. I know how to be in control, "I promise. I promise I'll protect you."

"Hn." I whimper again, shaking a little bit just to make myself look more pathetic. Pulling on a few more strings here and there. Being a puppet master.

"Shh..." Santana takes her arms off of me, puts her hands on my shoulders and holds me at an arm's length. There's something about the look in her eyes as I pull away that seems a little unsettling. "Let's get you changed now, alright? You're not going to feel much better being stuck in these layers of... ruffles."

"Could I get a bath of some sort?" I murmur softly, my eyes pleading.

"Well... I suppose. There's a barrel of water in the corner here." Santana doesn't let go of me, but turns her head to locate the said barrel. "Let's get this off of you first, and then we'll get you washed up. But don't use all the water, it's fresh, so you'll need some to drink."

I nod like an obedient little child, looking down and biting my lip. For all I care, I look vulnerable, and nothing works better than looking vulnerable when someone feels sympathy for you.

I'm using Santana, I know, but so what? Desperate times call for desperate measures.

"Alright, let's get you out of this first."

She goes behind me to unbutton my dress. Obviously, she knows what she's doing. I wonder why and how. I doubt she's ever worn a dress before.

I hear her inhale at the sight of my backside, and I smirk. So maybe she is the masculine type. And on a ship with all girls... maybe...

Sex never comes without attachment, you know?

"Can you... finish the rest yourself?"

"I want to," I whisper innocently, "But I can't lace a corset properly alone."

"Oh, alright," she mutters, helping me out of my dress from the back. As the fabric pools on the floor, I step out of it and turn around, knowing full well that the only thing on me now is an over-bust corset and skimpy underwear.

"Oh god," Santana's breath hitches as I turn, and instantly, I know I'm on the right track. I'm flawless and beautiful, after all. I've been told I resemble a goddess.

"Do you..." I look away for a moment in mock shyness, "like what you see?" I fiddle with my fingers, flinching uneasily. Santana seems almost too comfortable.

"Yeah... I mean..." She's clearly lost for words as she practically undresses me with her eyes. What's the point? She'll be undressing me soon enough.

I'm going to make her my personal slave until we get ashore. Then I'll make her set me free. Then I'll find my way back home. Even if this all means letting her fuck me senseless right now. No, I am not a whore, but I certainly don't intend to rot here. Good things come with a few consequences. And I'm willing to take them.

I bite my lip again, stepping closer to Santana. I take her limp arms from her side, and put them around me, as though to guide her hands to the lacing of my corset. But of course, that's not my real intention. I let her hands rest on my hips as look up at her. Santana's a little taller than me because of her boots. Still, her being taller only aids me. I can look smaller and more helpless. I stare into her eyes, and find her staring back with equal intensity. I tip toe a little more, and kiss her on the lips.

At first, she seems to pull away slightly, but almost within seconds, she starts kissing me back. To my surprise, this isn't like the sloppy kisses that Finn-the-coward gives me... it's more... sensual... It's the way she moves her lips gently against mine, taking her time, as though we had forever in this cell.

Maybe to her, I do have forever here. For me, not so much.

Her tongue darts out to lick my bottom lip, and like a wave, it tosses my mind straight into oblivion. I'm diving headfirst into an unknown sensation.

And said sensation blossoms within me as I part my own lips to let out a small whimper, only to find her tongue against mine, still taking it's time to explore me.

I don't know when or how, but my fingers find themselves tangled into her silky black locks as I'm backed against a filthy wooden wall again.

Somehow, I feel like I'm losing myself as I feel Santana's lips trail downward, straying from my lips and latching themselves onto my jawline, trailing lower onto my neck. I groan as I tilt my head back, allowing her more space to work her magic. Everywhere she's kissing seems to burn with a new fire in this dingy and cold cell.

Santana sprinkles kisses along my collar bone, ready to go lower anytime. As she reaches the edge of my corset, though, I let out another whimper as I reach out to stop her.

"I..." Santana pulls herself away from me, her hair dishevelled thanks to the wonderful work of my fingers. She actually looks really beautiful. Her flawless tanned skin... her chocolate brown eyes... In the dark, everything looks a little more mysterious.

"Go slow on me," the gentleness in my own voice surprises me, "I'm..." I trail off as Santana pulls me closer to her, her hand resting on the small of my back. I can feel her heartbeat, skin to skin.

"You're a virgin?"

I blush at the word, averting my gaze once more, "Yeah..." It's not a lie, Finn is really bad at turning me on, and so we never really do it. I don't let him put it in anyway. Santana, on the other hand... if this is how being turned on feels like, it's the most beautiful yet most painful thing ever. Or maybe something better awaits. They say orgasms feel even better?

"I can go gentle on you," Santana whispers into the shell of my ear, making me shudder instantly. *Control, Quinn, control. It's all a game of control.* She doesn't pull away after speaking though.

Instead, she starts to suck softly at my earlobe. I feel a jolt of arousal shoot through my body and I press my body further into her's instinctively. I moan.

"Shit, Santana..." I exhale, falling limp into her embrace again. Whatever she's doing, she's doing a great job. I suppose that since I'm stooping so low already, I might as well enjoy myself while she works her filthy magic. Not that I could deny myself the pleasure.

"Quinn..." She whispers my name like it's a sacred word as she props me back against the wall for support. The way she says my name in that husky voice makes my knees feel weak.

Pressing me against the wall with her own body, Santana brings her lips back to mine one more time, and she kisses me softly again. I move my lips against her's, almost all too willingly. I don't want to think about where I'm doing this, or... why...

Her lips retrace the path along my jawbone, down the nape of my neck, and onto my collarbone. Only this time, I don't stop her.

I feel her fingers dancing on my back, reaching further up to find the lacing of my corset. She finds the ribbon in no time, tugging at it, and within moments, I feel air flooding back into my lungs. Sometimes, I'm so used to wearing this devil-created contraption that I forget I can barely breathe in it.

My breath comes out extra shaky as I try to exhale, finding that she has already unbuttoned the front of my corset, tossed it aside, and landed her lips just above my nipple.

Fuck, Santana is...

I let out a small groan in protest as she kisses the sensitive skin on my breasts, almost forcing me to lean further back into the hard wooden wall to support myself, but I do nothing to stop her. If anything, I don't ever want her to stop.

Her fingers inch up my sides and she palms my breasts, groping softly, but it's driving me insane. I arch my back even more, my fingers finding themselves in her raven locks once more, trying to guide her lips where I want them.

She's denying me the pleasure though, agonizingly teasing me on my breasts everywhere but where I want.

Unexpectedly, her fingers pinch my nipples, and I let out a strangled whimper at the newfound sensation. "Santana... don't... tease..."

"Not trying to..." I watch with anticipation as she pulls away and stares into my eyes, her lips still ghosting right by the hardening nub. She's making this so painful for me... driven by desperation, I need her now. "You said to go gentle, right? I'm not... used to going gentle..."

Even in the dim light, I can see the soft shade of red that tints her cheeks as she continues staring into my eyes, this time her tongue flicking out to graze my nipple in an experimental lick.

"Fuck!"

"Shit, sorry, did that hurt?"

"What?" I swallow as Santana pulls away again, "No... Just... unexpected and... good...?"

Santana smiles softly, before leaning in to drop a kiss on my breast again, "Alright... I usually just go rough on people... so I wasn't sure..."

So she's not new at this, is she? What makes me think she's new at this anyways? Assuming we're aboard a ship filled with women... this kind of entertainment must be really normal. Really... really normal...

"So... should I... continue?"

"You talk too much, you know," I murmur, my fingernails scraping softly on her scalp. I exhale out of relief as I feel her lips touch my nipple again.

Santana begins to suck softly, licking every now and then. She runs her finger just around my other nipple, drawing random patterns. Every now and then, her finger runs over it, and she pinches it out of the blue...

Already, I'm going weak against her touch, my head tilting back as she entices each and every moan out of me.

I'm pathetic.

I suddenly feel a little ashamed. Just a little.

"Hey..." I gasp as I feel teeth pulling gently.

Santana seems to be thoroughly enjoying my responses, but she pulls away all the same, "Yea?"

"I... It's embarrassing to be the only one without clothes on..." I breathe, staring into her eyes as I suck my lower lip in to bite.

Pulling away from me, Santana raises an eyebrow in this dim candle light, hesitant to undo the crimson sash tied around her slender waist. I know that's where the key is, and for a moment, she seems to ponder whether or not I actually know.

She decides within seconds that whether I know or not, it is safe enough to take the sash off. She tugs at the fabric, wrapping it into a bundle and tossing it aside.

I watch her with a growing blush on my cheeks. She's actually going to do this, is she?

Immediately, Santana begins to unbutton her loose shirt. As she pops each button open, I find my eyes tracing the path her nimble fingers take, almost wanting to see more of... her...

She tosses her shirt aside in a well practiced motion, revealing her full breasts in all their glory. She's beautiful. A pang of arousal hits my lower abdomen, and I give a small whimper at the sensation.

I force my eyes away from her inviting breasts, tracing my gaze down to her abdomen. Honestly, the sight I find there doesn't make my breathing slow down. If anything, it makes my

heart race. Santana has toned and defined abs. All the work she's done on this ship has certainly served her well.

"Like what you see?" I hear her voice mutter mischievously, echoing my own words from before. Her eyes twinkle as I raise my gaze to her and nod absentmindedly. "Should we... maybe... continue?"

As Santana kneels on the floor in front of me, my breath hitches. She doesn't break our stare as she kisses each of my breasts again, then trailing kisses down my sides, onto my navel, threatening to go dangerously low. She stops at the hem of my panties, though, taking her time to kiss the sensitive skin. I see myself in her chocolate brown eyes.

I feel pleasure pooling hot and low, ready to explode. I want to explode. Why don't I tear my gaze away from her's?

My panties are beginning to feel sticky, uncomfortable, a fabric prison which deprives its prisoner of utmost pleasure. I want them off.

"Santana..." the sultriness in my own voice surprises me, but I decide to toss all pride aside. Having already brought to this state, I just need Santana to go through with this...

"Are you sure you want this?" There's a depth in her gaze, as though she really cares.

"God, yes, don't talk... just... ahnm!" My words roll into a moan while my thoughts roll into a mess as Santana licks my clit through the cloth. Whatever intense eye-fucking she was doing to me clearly has a greater effect than I anticipated. She licks again before I can really respond, and I tilt my head back and instinctively part my legs a little more so she can gain more access.

Santana slides down my underwear with a swift moment, the cold air of the small cell hitting my heat instantly. I shiver as I feel her warm tongue ghosting on my clit again.

I close my eyes, too ashamed to see this for myself, and feeling too pleased to want to stop.

Allowing Santana to lift one of my legs over her shoulder so she can have the better angle, I tangle my fingers in her hair to provide myself with something to hold onto.

When Santana's tongue comes into full contact with me, I whimper out another curse. All coherent thoughts are ripped out of my head as pleasure soars through me, coursing through every pulsing vein in my body.

Her licks are gentle, but they're consistent, and whatever motion she's doing down there with her tongue, it feels all too good.

I dig my fingers further into her hair, my knees shaking with every wave of pleasure. My whole body is jolting against the wall, and I don't think I can keep myself upright much longer.

As if on cue, Santana steadies my bucking hips with her two hands, pressing me into the wall, but holding me up as well. She never ceases the motion of her tongue, and frankly speaking, I'm about to lose my mind.

I feel a tingling sensation, and for a moment I feel like I'm actually ready to burst. My whole body begins to shake and I'm almost too certain that my legs will give out. Clutching and yanking on Santana's hair, I let out a strangled moan before pleasure erupts inside me, knocking me over like a wave in the ocean.

Santana's tongue continues to run along my clit, this time travelling down between my folds, and I again shudder at the contact, a rather feral sound escaping my lips.

"Fuck, you're soaked."

I'm too breathless to shut her mouth, so I just try to push her head back closer towards me. My strength is failing though, with my shaking limbs too weak to really move. Within moments of that orgasm, I'm aroused and needy all over again. This woman can work magic.

Santana doesn't even need to try as she gets off her knees and moves to kiss me on the lips. I can sort of taste myself on her, which in any other situation I would have found offensive and disgusting, but right now, with her finger already rubbing in a circular motion on my clit, I allow her to kiss me, to drown out and swallow my whimpers and moans.

Santana presses her body on me, trapping me against the wall yet steadying me at the same time as my body shudders, shakes, and jolts with each of her ministrations. I can feel her breasts against mine, and just the thought of that alone makes me want her more desperately than I already do.

Her fingers trail down from my clit, slipping between my folds and tracing my core. A single finger slips inside of me without warning.

It hurts a little bit, as... wet as I am, but Santana's gentle kisses and the way she grinds her palm against my clit makes the pain subside within seconds.

Beginning to move her finger in and out at a slow pace, Santana, parts my lips with her tongue and kisses me with a passion I never knew existed.

Santana wiggles her fingers inside of me, although I'm barely aware of her obviously expert motions, I am all too aware of the way she makes me feel when her fingers brush across a certain spot. Again and again, I moan, desperate to breathe as I break our kiss, resting my forehead against her shoulder and holding onto Santana for dear life.

I buck my hips to get the most out of her lone finger, as she kisses the side of my neck. She adds another finger, again without warning, and I cry out, biting her shoulder subconsciously to subdue another series of moans.

I hear her swear under her breath, and it turns me on impossibly more.

Within the next few fluid thrusts, I feel pleasure ready to explode once more, and I unravel with her finger at the very spot that sends me to heaven.

I clench tightly onto her fingers, letting out yet another throaty moan, half whimpering her name in the process. My body jolts and tightens over Santana's fingers. This earth shattering orgasm is the best I've ever had.

I feel alive.

Santana slowly slips her fingers out of me as I'm brought down from my high, still taking the time to softly rub at my still overly-sensitive clit, sending small shots of pleasure into my body, like the aftershocks of an earthquake.

I fall limp into Santana's arms as she fully removes her fingers from me. My clit is swollen and throbbing, my heart is gradually slowing down, but my breathing is still ragged.

I know if she lets me go now, I will drop to the floor in a heap. My limbs are weak, and I can barely stand.

"Quinn, you alright?" Her voice is soothing, dreamy even, as she holds me a little closer, "Did I overdo it?" She intertwines our fingers.

Having long since given up trying to form words, let alone sentences, I simply shake my head. Santana smiles in the dark light of this little prison cell, inhaling before picking me up bridal style in one fluid motion and helping me onto the wooden board. I lie down naked, eyes still closed, but my fingers still entangled in her's. I feel an aching in my body already, but it aches just right, like a friendly reminder of the mind blowing events that were a new reality only moments before. Nonetheless, I pout.

"Would you like it if I stayed here tonight? It's getting late outside... you should... get some rest..."

I whimper in response, tightening my grip on her fingers. I feel her sit down on the edge of the hard board, and then lie down beside me.

I roll onto my side, pulling her hand with me, draping her arm over me like a blanket. She holds me a little closer, moving my hair aside with her free hand, and then resting her own head at the crook of my neck, "Tomorrow, I'll ask Captain if you can sleep in my cabin with me. This board isn't good for your back."

I smirk in the dark, even in all my tiredness. I've very successfully squirmed my way into one Santana Lopez's heart.

—

"Santana's looted another heart!"

"Oh shut it, Marley!"

I watch with curiosity from the safe distance of five meters away from the rest of the crew as they share a meal, passing along bread, dried fruits, some sort of meat, and containers full of beer.

It's not that I'm not hungry. It's just that being brought into the daylight, above deck is a blessing already.

Last night's events had rendered me so powerless and tired that I had slept past noon. When I awoke, I was surprised to find a faithful little Santana lying behind me still.

Honestly, it's nice to be able to fall asleep with someone and wake by them too.

Of course, when I woke up, I was still a little shaky on my legs, but Santana took care of me, bathed me with a rag and the barrelled water, and then dressed me in this ensemble that I almost wish I wasn't wearing.

Thankfully, the dark brown skirt isn't too short, even if the material is coarse and itching up my legs. The shoulderless white blouse is a little too scandalous for my liking, and once completed with a dull crimson under-bust corset that's thankfully loosely laced, the whole costume makes me look ridiculous. But Santana seems to fully enjoy seeing me in this awkward choice of clothing, so I suppose I will bear with it. At least none of the crew have tried to hit on me or anything... forbidden while I'm dressed like this. Can they smell in the air or tell by my face that I'm taken? Oh god, maybe they heard me last night! No, no, musn't be.

In the distance, the sun is hiding its final rays of light beneath the horizon. The sea is calm, and the sound of the crew laughing is actually surprisingly comforting.

Right now, a brunette dubbed 'Marley' (who I found out had brought me my clothes last night) and a blonde I have now understood to be called 'Britt-Britt' (who still believes in mermaids?) are busying themselves with teasing Santana about her night spent in the dingy cell with me. I ought to be more ashamed of it, but I am not. In all honesty, I wouldn't have given up it up for anything. A feeling like that was worth every bit of shattered pride. No it wasn't. At least, it's not supposed to.

I gaze into the distance again, watching the small remainder of the sun set into the sky. Night sweeps over the sky quickly. I can still hear the crew's laughter, their friendly teasing, but having been more or less chained onto a wooden pole in an isolated corner of the deck does make me feel a little lonely. I don't understand why I'm chained... my only escape from this ship is miles and miles of endless ocean, which is barely an escape at all.

"Hey, you hungry?"

I look up to find Santana looking at me with a smile. She holds a small dried and wrinkled fruit out to me, but the first thing I notice is her unbuttoned shirt. Shit.

"Yeah... a bit." I shift my position to reach for the fruit. I wince as the shackles dig into the skin of my ankle.

"You okay?" Santana kneels before me almost instantly, her hands on my already bruised ankle, "I want to take this off... but... Captain Sylvester..."

"I understand," I whisper, "I'm glad enough I'll be sleeping in your cabin instead of in the cell tonight already."

"While being tied to me," she adds, her eyes still focused on my ankle, "But I'm sure you don't mind that."

"Yeah..." I blush a little, suddenly feeling a little flustered.

"Do you think Captain can see your ankle if I'm kneeling here?"

I peer over her shoulder, "Not really."

"Don't utter a sound, okay?"

I watch Santana curiously, but I nod.

Santana pulls a key from her sash, quickly shoving it in the keyhole and freeing my ankle from the deathly metal restraint.

To my surprise, Santana then sets the key aside, pulling her shirt out of the sash, shrugging it off with ease. I'm too busy staring at her revealed breasts to hear the ripping of the fabric. Only when I feel her lifting my ankle to wrap the shredded cloth around it that I realize what she's doing.

"Santana!"

"Hush. This will stop the chaffing, alright? I'll grab a shirt from my cabin in a bit, just let me get this all set. Don't breathe a word about it."

Within moments, her skillful fingers wrap the cloth around my ankle, securing it with a knot, and she clamps the shackles back on. It doesn't hurt this time though, the fabric cushions the weight. I smile softly at her kind gesture as she retrieves the key and sprints to her cabin for another shirt. With the covering of the night, the crew don't seem to notice her absence, or the absence of her shirt.

When Santana returns, she flashes me a smile, and then proceeds to walk long strides across the deck to rejoin the group. Staring at her back, I find myself smiling back, genuinely thankful that I have her on this ship, even if I'm held captive.

Santana isn't actually half as badass as she made herself seem within the first few moments of meeting me. I suppose it's really the first impressions that she believes in. But with me, first impressions don't stay that easily.

Looking up into the sky, I find stars twinkling back at me. Strangely, on this foreign ship, in this foreign ocean, I don't miss home. In fact, if anything, I feel strangely at home.

Somewhere under the sparkling stars, I must have dozed off, because when I find my eyes open again, the glowing light from lamp had long since faded, and the sound of a chattering and cheerful crew had long since vanished. It's also a little chillier than I remembered.

Suddenly, I feel a coarse material being draped over my shoulders. I look up to find Santana looking back at me, a sympathetic smile gracing her bold features. She looks a little bit surprised to see me awake. How long have I been sleeping here?

"Um... do you want to... maybe go back to my cabin?"

"For sex?" I blurt innocently, watching Santana's eyes sparkle a little more in the starlight. I'm not the wisest speaker when I've just woken up.

"If you insist," she whispers seductively, reaching for her sash for her key, "but I think you need a rest." My eyes follow the glimmer of the key as soon as it's out into the open air.

The lock on my ankle opens with a soft click, and Santana puts her arm around me to help me stand up. My legs are wobbly from sitting down all day (and half a night), and I realize I'm still aching in all the right places. She's right. So maybe I do need a break.

My bruised ankle throbs as blood rushes into it.

"So... how are you planning on tying me up tonight?"

Santana laughs as she leads the way into her cabin, "You sound like you're looking forward to something kinky."

"N-no!" I protest, pouting even though I doubt she can really see me, "I'm just asking!"

"Well... we can either do the hand or the ankle. I'll use a rope, so it'll give us a little more space to move around?" She pushes open a ragged curtain, revealing a small room with a thin mattress in the corner, raised by a huge wooden cabinet of some sort. It's a shabby little space, but a huge improvement from my little hell of a cell. "Or..."

"Or what?" I murmur as she shuts the curtain and leads me to her 'bed'. She props me up on the edge of the mattress, and I stare at her expectantly as she lights an additional lamp in her room to make it a little brighter.

"Or, we can tie you to the bed?"

These words bring a genuine blush onto my cheeks and I avert my eyes as Santana comes closer. My heartbeat skyrockets as she leans down and places a soft kiss on my lips, "So, Princess, which is it?"

I don't answer, biting my lower lip and giving her silent permission to make the choice for me. To be honest, I am a little tempted to see what the whole tied-to-the-bed thing would turn out to be.

"You're unsure, mm?" She takes a seat beside me, her fingers brushing against mine on the bed, "I thought it'd be a li'l... wanky. But maybe too much for you."

I let my silence be my answer as my cheeks grow redder and my heart beats wilder. I know it's not what she just said... it's the way her pinky has hooked itself onto my own.

"Or... we could sleep like last night, and we don't have to tie you up at all, since if you move, I'll wake."

Her hand creeps onto mine, and though her touch is soft, it's firm. And comforting.

A sudden wave of tiredness hits me, reminding me that it's way past my usual beauty-sleep time, and that I ought to be lying on the bed, ready to sleep.

I subconsciously lean my head on her shoulder as we continue sitting in silence. She laces her fingers with mine.

I can feel her breathing, and I can hear her heartbeat in my current position. It's a relief to find that her breathing and heartbeat are no less erratic than mine.

I'm not the only one feeling this, then. But for her, this feeling is real. For me... not so much.

"Sleep with me," I whimper, raising my head slightly to look at her.

She looks utterly confused by my suggestive words, but nonetheless shifts her position so she can lie down beside me.

"Do you want the lights out?"

"Yeah, that'd be nice."

As I lie down, letting my body press onto the mattress, I watch Santana's every move. She's a really confident looking beauty. Pity she's falling within my grasp so fast.

"Q, don't you want to take that corset off? You'll sleep better without it."

"Can you help me?"

"Quinn..." her eyes linger on my body and her words linger on her lips, "you can undo it yourself from the front..."

"Help me?"

With a sigh, Santana kneels on the bed, pulling on my arm to make me sit up. I obey, and bite my lip again as her fingers reach for the buckles of my corset. She lets them loose one by one.

Almost instinctively, my own fingers reach out to unbutton her shirt. What am I doing? I do not know. It just feels natural.

Santana doesn't stop me, but she pauses her motions to stare at me. I stare back, letting myself drink in the passion in her brown eyes.

"I think we should sleep," she whispers hoarsely as she tosses my corset to the floor of the gently rocking ship, "It's getting late."

"Or..." I slip the shirt off of her shoulders, my eyes travelling down to her breasts again. I get up on my knees, crawling up to her, closing the distance between our lips.

I don't kiss forcefully, and within moments, I let her take the lead in our kiss, but to say that it was forced would have been a complete lie.

The way Santana's fingers travel lightly along my jawline and my neck drives me insane. Just that simple touch is enough to send me into a newfound paradise.

But no paradise lasts.

"Tana..." I pull away, panting softly, "Sleep..."

A hint of disappointment appears in her eyes, but she nods, helping me lie down again, before taking her position behind me, "Sleep... Goodnight, Quinnie."

"Goodnight, Santana." I bring her hand up to my lips, kissing her finger once, before guiding it accidentally-on-purpose to rest my breast. I wonder how much self control she's using to stop herself from groping them.

Just keeping her wanting more.

"Do you think you can steal another orange from the kitchen?"

"Do you think you can eat it without being seen?"

I shake my head playfully, fingers still clutching onto her arm, "Please? We can share it in your cabin!"

"Quinn..."

"I'm hungry! And I feel sort of sick and sore! What if I get scurvy or something and all my teeth fall out?"

"Quinn... It won't happen! It's been less than two weeks on this ship!"

"Please, Tannie, pleaseeeee?" I pout, looking a little crestfallen.

"No, it's too risky. I don't wanna get caught."

"But you told me you're good at stealing! Is Santana being chicken now?" I muse aloud, haughtily looking over at her direction. A sly and thin smile appears on my face, "Or do you think I should go do the stealing?"

"Quinn..." Santana grits her teeth, her brows furrow in frustration, torn between wanting to please me and obey the rules of this fleet.

"Fine! Leave me to get scurvy then!"

"Don't be so unreasonable," Santana mutters with a sigh, reaching out to touch my arm. I shift away.

We're on the deck, so the affection ought to be kept at an all time low. Santana, though, doesn't seem bothered by the occasional wandering eyes that catch a glimpse of our 'passion'. "I promise I'll take you out to a hearty meal when we get to land, alright?"

I perk up at the word 'land', "And how long will that take?"

"To land...?"

"Yeah, to land!" I see a shade of doubt on Santana's eyes as my sudden enthusiasm explodes, "I mean... I just... miss having my feet on solid ground and everything."

"Yeah..." She gives a soft sigh, "I get it. This life isn't for you, is it, Blondie?"

I look into her eyes, trying to find out what she is asking me. There's a sincerity in her eyes that makes me feel unsettled.

"I..." Her fingers creep towards mine, but I don't move my hand away, "It's just that I've been born on land, brought up on land, and done everything on land... I'm just used to the thought of being able to walk to places without being confined to a wooden thing floating on the water..."

"I get it," she murmurs, "If the skies stay clear we'll reach land in no more than two weeks."

"Hey... do you know what your captain wants to do with me...?" I raise my gaze to the horizon, watching as the sun shimmers over the water, settling lower into skies.

"Mm... Not what I've done to you?" Santana sighs softly as she puts an arm around my waist, pulling me in, closer to her. Possessive, protective.

"Will she kill me?"

"I won't let her."

"Really?"

"Yeah, really..." She turns to look at me, "I promised I'd protect you, right?"

Tilting my head and resting it on her shoulder, I try to find her fingers with my own, "Do you believe in love, Santana?"

Silence. I don't push on. I know I am pretty cruel, using her like this... but how else am I supposed to get out of here?

"Hey, Santana!"

Instantly, we pull apart. It's not out of embarrassment. Just instinct. I think.

"Yeah?" We turn around in time to see Marley turn the corner and face us.

"One of the girls in there are offering tattoos. Got some new stuff from the market we last stopped at. Wanna get another one?"

"Mmm... maybe? I'll come in a bit later."

Marley nods and turns on her heels to return to wherever she came from.

"Tattoo?" I whisper, "Doesn't it hurt?"

"It does, actually," Santana smiles softly at me, "But it's pretty."

"Do you have one already?"

"Yeah. Two, actually. One on my lower back and the other on my shoulder blade." She unbuttons her shirt right there in the open, turning around before I can catch a proper glimpse of her breasts. She has a small star on her left shoulder blade, and a more elaborate pattern of flowers on her lower back.

I cock my head to the side in curiosity.

"Do you want to get one?" Santana puts her shirt back on, buttoning it as she turns to face me.

"But it'll hurt!" I frown, genuinely interested in the prospect of getting one.

"I'll get one with you if you want. Just something small? You can hold onto my hand the whole time?"

I'm tempted by the offer, but I don't like the possibility of pain. "What will you get this time though?"

"I don't know, what do you want me to get?" She takes my hand and begins to walk in the direction that Marley came from.

"I..." A sudden thought passes through my head, and I let out a small smile, "Would you dare to engrave my name on yourself?"

"Your..." Santana stops in her tracks, looking at me right in the eye. She frowns.

"Would you?"

"If I do your name 'Quinn', I want an 'S' on your body." She has a defiant smile that graces her face as she regains her pace, taking me with her.

"It can be small right? I don't want it to hurt so badly..."

"Yea, we can do that. On the hip bone?"

"Um... sure...?"

"Left or right?"

"Up to you..." I feel a sudden sense of insecurity sweep over me. How will I explain this to Finn when I'm home? I could certainly say that the pirates *branded* me, but it just wouldn't feel right to say that. Would it?

Santana pushes open a heavy wooden door, the noise of a merry crowd hitting me instantly. The Captain is no where to be seen, but it seems as though everyone else is here.

"Tanniee! I got a mermaid!" Britt-Britt comes bounding right at us, tackling Santana. I don't like the way she latches onto Santana like I'm not there. But who am I to judge?

"Oh? That's cute!" Santana smiles. I've noticed the way she smiles at Britt is different than the way she smiles at everyone else. Even at me. With me, it's more similar, but still different... Why do I care?

"I added it to the star we did together last time! Maybe you can add the mermaid to your star too? I bet all mermaids wish they could touch the stars. So we can help them make their dream come true!"

I visibly frown, unlocking my fingers from Santana's. I don't like the idea that she's gotten a tattoo with someone else before. Do these two have history? Or worse yet, chemistry?

I'm jealous because that could mess up all my plans. Why else would I be jealous?

"Sorry, Britt. Maybe next time? I promised Quinn here I'd do a tattoo with her."

"Oh." Britt turns her head to look at me, before grabbing my hand and dragging me towards the center of the cabin with a dopey grin, "Heyyy can someone help her do a tattoo?"

Santana follows close behind, her fingers somehow finding mine again. She holds onto them tightly this time, not allowing me to escape from her grasp.

"Alright," a rather... large woman grips my shoulders and sits me down on a barrel. Santana sits herself on the barrel beside me. "What do you want?" She's gruff and coarse. I feel a little scared.

"Geez, Lauren. Don't be so cruel to our newcomer."

"She's hardly new, bitch," the 'Lauren' person sighs, "Alright, what da you two want?"

"Can you do a... 'Quinn' on my right hipbone? And then an 'S' on Quinn's?"

"Are you two like... a thing now?" Marley pips from the side, coloring my cheeks pink.

"No!" Santana and I both answer a little too quickly. It stings to hear her say that and get all defensive about it, even though I know it's the truth. I wonder if she hurts from me saying that...

I watch with apprehension as Lauren dips a needle into ink, "Which one of you ladies wants to go first?"

"I'll go first. It's 'Q-U-I-N-N'." Santana mumbles, reaching out to hold my hand. I take it silently, my eyes focused on the point of the needle as it hovers above Santana's skin. I just realized she's taken off her sash and lifted her shirt. Where's the key?

The point of the needle breaks Santana's skin, and she bites her lip a little, still smiling and looking at me. She doesn't look at the pattern forming on her skin. Maybe it hurts less when you don't look.

I watch, though, as patterns begin to take shape, swirling over her flawless skin. I see my own name begin to take shape, and I feel a strange sense of pride and possession. I like it.

Time passes quickly when you're focused on something. Within a short time, it's my turn.

"Lift up your skirt, dear," Lauren coos as she dips the needle into ink again. I swallow, but I do as told. Revealing the skin on my right hip, I clutch onto the dress itself and to Santana a little tighter. I decide to stare at Santana, hoping that will ease the pain.

The first prick takes me by surprise and I let out a small yelp. Santana looks almost apologetic as she smiles at me, rubbing her thumb on the back of my hand. She holds a small cloth over her own tattoo, maybe to dry the blood or whatever that I'm certain is spilling out of my body right now. I try to focus on Santana's eyes, the passion I find there, and the surprise it brings me. Little by little, the stinging becomes a little more numb, and in a few more moments, there's an elaborate floral pattern on my hip, with a little 'S' nested into it. It's beautiful really.

Lauren presses a small cloth over the tattoo, "Let's pray it doesn't get infected."

"What?" My eyes grow wide as I rip my gaze from Santana to Lauren.

"Don't scare her, Lauren," I hear Santana say, "It doesn't happen often."

"So it happens?" I whip my head back towards Santana.

"Easy, Blondie, you're going to break my hand..." She shakes herself free of my clutch, shaking it in the air to get the blood back into it. "It won't happen, not under my watch. I know how to wash that properly, so don't worry!"

"Promise?"

"Promise."

I feel a little doubtful still, but the sincerity in Santana's eyes reassures me a little. It also breaks me a little, knowing that in two weeks time, I will be betraying her trust.

But a victor must be merciless and cruel. I cannot let my emotions get ahead of my escape plan. I will leave this ship, and I will leave Santana. It's the right thing to do.

"How long have you been living on this ship?"

The darkness covers us both as the ship sways gently from side to side in the tossing ocean. Wrapped in her arms and lying together on the mattress strangely makes me feel security.

"Mm... Five years?" Santana kisses the back of my neck softly. We're both sweaty, and very much naked. I tremble at every touch she gives, still sensitive from... well...

"Where were you before that?"

"Me? At sea, still. I was born on a ship."

"Is Captain your mother?"

Santana laughs, "Oh, I'd rather kill myself, Q! My mother..." A silence covers the room. I snuggle a little closer to her. "My mother and I were captured in a fight. She died from untreated battle wounds... I was rescued by this ship."

"Oh... sorry I asked..." A wave of guilt washes over me as I realize why she's so easily manipulated now that I'm a prisoner of her's. She doesn't want another person to lose a loved one to captors again.

"No, it's alright. I'm over it."

Nonetheless, as though it can somehow be my apology, my lips find her's in the dark. I kiss her gently.

"Where do you see yourself in the future?"

"I... " She nuzzles my hair, "Why are you so curious today, Q?"

"I don't know... sorry... is it annoying?"

"It's cute," she whispers, "My future... I'd rather not think about it. Take each day as it is."

"Santana, do you have a special someone?"

I hear her chuckle softly into the dark, "I think so. Do you?"

"What do you mean 'you think so'?"

"Mm... Doesn't matter. Do you?"

"I'm engaged?"

"Doesn't mean that's your special someone, does it?"

I fall silent. No, it doesn't. I don't feel anything when I'm with Finn. He's just someone I *have* to marry.

"There's no possibility of you staying with me, is there?"

"What?"

"No, nevermind..." Running her fingers through my hair, she lets out a hearty sigh, "Tomorrow. Tomorrow we reach land."

"Really?" I'm not as excited as I should be. In fact, a small part of me dreads it. I'm not sure I'm ready to leave this place yet.

"Yeah. We're docking tomorrow first thing in the morning." Santana's voice has lost its usual enthusiasm, too. Does she realize I'm planning on leaving?

"Let's not sleep tonight then. It's our last ni-" I pause. I can't blow my cover now. "It's our last night together before we get onto land... How long are we docking for?" Whatever I'm saying doesn't even sound convincing to me.

"Probably a day. Maximum two. Need to load up materials," Santana sighs as she sits up, pulling herself away from me. I sit up with her. "How do you want to spend the night then? Want a third round or what?"

"You know..." I lean in, finding the nape of her neck at my lips, "I've been here for three and a half weeks... It's always been you pleasuring me... I thought maybe... I can return the favor?" It's not that I feel as though it is compulsory... I just... want to leave Santana with something to remember...

"You're cute," Santana murmurs, tilting her head back to give me more room, "Do you want to do this blindly groping or do you want me to light a candle?"

"Just a dim candle will be fine..." I whisper as she gets up. I hear a match strike, and then a small flame.

The flame illuminates the room by a fraction more, letting shadows waver around in the room. Santana comes towards me again, already naked since I forced her out of her clothes last round. She has a strange expression on her face, but as she closes the distance between us, I see it no more.

Our lips meet in a passionate kiss. The way she moves her lips gently against mine drives me insane. As much as I want to lose myself, though, I pull away. "This is your turn, not mine. It's

about you..." I whisper as I kiss her on her neck. I'm certain that if she kisses me on the lips again, she'll be able to easily dominate me.

I trail a series of kisses down from her neck and between her breasts. She's watching my every movement, which makes me a little nervous. I then kiss each of her breasts softly, watching as her nipples harden in anticipation. Her breathing grows ragged.

"How long has it been since you've been... you know..."

"Almost a month. Since you came..."

I waste no time in making an answer, partially because I don't know how to answer that, but also because I can see her quiver under my touch. I lick the hardened nub softly, already eliciting a small gasp from Santana. I raise my gaze to meet her's, still licking around and occasionally across her nipple. She can't seem to pull her gaze away from mine, although her cheeks are growing redder by the moment.

I'm suddenly filled with a need to kiss Santana. So I do. I pull my lips from her breasts and kiss her on the lips. I press her towards the mattress, trying to make her drown in me.

With one hand, I prop myself up above her. With the other, I draw random patterns on her toned abdomen. She shivers with excitement, opening her lips to gasp. I take this opportunity to slip my tongue into her mouth. She does little to fight back.

The moment my finger trails lower onto her clit is the moment she breaks our kiss with a tilt of her head and a moan. My finger ghosts over her, touching her very gently, with minimal pressure. She lets out a small whimper, bucking her hips for more.

Although I've never done this to a girl before, having been done by Santana has taught me lots.

I trail kisses back down her jawbone and to her breasts once more, this time, sucking intently on one nipple. I rub her clit in a circular motion. Santana lets out a strangled moan and shivers under my touch.

"Quinn..." I love the way she whispers my name, the way she wants me. It's almost as though that's a plea for me to give her a little more. I kiss my way down her abdomen, feeling her back arch and her stomach muscles tighten. I kiss her just above her clit as her hands find their way to my hair. She's pushing my head lower.

I remove my finger, but before she can complain, my tongue flicks over her swollen clit. Santana lets out another sound, parting her legs to give me more room. She bucks again and again, and I try my best to hold her down with my hands, but she's a lot stronger. I watch her as she closes her eyes, a faint red on her cheeks.

I work circular motions on her clit, kissing it now and then, but most the time just licking it. She thrashes beneath me, desperate for release already.

It prides me in knowing that I'm doing a good job, but it prides me even more to know that I'm making Santana... mine...

I let my tongue travel a little lower between her folds, before retracing my path to her clit. Santana is cursing in a foreign language, moaning my name in broken English. It makes me wonder how many girls have made her feel like this...

"Fuck! Quinn!" Santana is thrown over the edge and into ecstasy without warning, but I continue to lick lazily at her clit as I watch her writhe underneath me. It thrills me to see her like this.

"Quinn..." she breathes out, "Can you... inside..." Her chest heaves from her heavy breathing, but clearly, she wants more.

I continue licking as I trace a finger between her folds, making her shiver again. She whimpers as I enter a little bit of one finger. She tightens on me, and I pause, though I let my tongue continue to work its magic. Santana mumbles something that I can't quite make out, but she relaxes, and I enter my whole finger. I curl my finger inside of her, the way she does to me, and before long, she lets out a yelp followed by a moan. I pull my finger out, entering two at the same time, and curl my finger again at that very spot. Santana tightens her hold on my hair as I begin to lick a little harder, curling my fingers inside of her, thrusting every now and then.

She's letting out a constant stream of curses, moans, and whimpers, peppered with the occasional half-moan that begins with my name. I feel her insides begin to tighten quickly, and I see her abdomen contract. She's close, and I want this to be something she'll remember forever.

I rub a little harder inside of her, watching her writhe a little more, before breaking into a moan and shaking almost uncontrollably. I feel her tighten over my fingers as she climaxes in a silent scream. Still licking her over-sensitive clit, I try to prolong her bliss for a while more. When her euphoria begins to die down and she begins to relax, I trail kisses back up her body.

I kiss Santana on the lips again, her breathing still hitching every now and then. I run my finger across her cheek, caressing it gently. That's when I feel something wet.

Somewhat reluctantly, I pull away from Santana. "What's wrong?" I whisper. In the dim light, I can see tears streaming from her face. I frown, something unpleasant stirring inside of me, "Did I hurt you?"

"No..." she shakes her head, pulling me closer to her, "Thank you, Quinn..."

"Thank you for what, silly," I whisper, kissing her softly on the forehead.

Santana doesn't reply, only clutching onto me a little tighter. I shift my position so I'm lying comfortably beside her. Drawing her into my embrace, I kiss her lightly on the top of her head again, soothing her as her sobs die down.

She falls asleep in my arms like that, with me cradling her.

I stay awake all night, dreading the coming of dawn.

Any trace of Santana having cried last night is now gone. When she woke up this morning, she was her usual self, with only a hint of difference in her eyes. Something's missing in them.

"Praline?" Santana holds out a dainty cardboard box at me, filled with sugared nuts. I take one with a small smile.

It's just the two of us now, walking on the busy streets of the town, having just visited a confectionery. We're strangely quiet. I'm clad in a soft blue gown, simple, but elegant. Santana insisted on paying for it, even though I was sure she spent too much on me for one dress.

As we turn the corner into smaller alley, Santana stops me. I raise my gaze to look at her, for the first time since this morning, I see a little emotion in them.

"You want to kiss me?" I smile softly. I'm still thinking of how I can run away from Santana's watchful eye. But more often than not, the thought of how I can *bare* to run away from Santana crosses my mind. It's a strange thought, really, because the whole idea was to make Santana *want* to help me run away. I almost feel as though I've been using my devices not only against her, but against me.

"I do..." She leans in to catch my lips in her's for a split moment, "Listen, Blondie..." She looks away for a moment, biting her lip as though finding the right words to speak. She takes a really deep breath, inhaling, exhaling, inhaling, exhaling, and it begins to worry me. She reaches out to cradle my cheeks in her palm, but the touch is different. There's something not quite amiss, yet not quite foreign about it. But I feel as though she has never touched me this way before.

Her hand drops from my cheek to her side, "I knew what you were doing all along... I can tell... but you win, Quinn... you win..."

"What are you talking about?" Panic grips me as she speaks. Does Santana really know or is she trying to get a confession? Is she going to tell me she'll have to kill me?

"I know you want to leave. From the very first moment you kissed me, I could tell," Santana runs her hand through her hair, "Listen. I want you to spend this one last day with me. I'm going to return to the ship tonight. Before that, I'll let you go. I'll tell Captain I lost you in the crowd."

"Won't that... get you in trouble?" I choke, tears suddenly stinging my eyes and threatening to spill. I shouldn't be emotional. I should be anything but emotional I ought to be defiant, happy in my victory. But I'm not.

"It'll be worth it." Santana offers a sad smile, moving in to kiss me on the forehead, "Don't cry. You look prettier smiling. Come spend the rest of the day with me?"

"Santana..." I splutter, "I'm sorry..."

"Don't be, Blondie. You gave me the best fantasy I could ever ask for. I should thank you." The pain that lines Santana's eyes breaks me utterly. I feel ashamed all of a sudden, that I had played Santana so hard. I throw myself at her, hugging her really close. Am I being cruel, hugging her now, knowing she realizes this is all a lie? Is it a lie?

I sniffle, kissing her neck softly as she holds me back in tenderness. Shouldn't she want to kill me for what I did? I swallow, burying my face in the nape of her neck. "Do you do this often? Capturing girls, claiming them, and then setting them free?"

Santana lets out a somewhat forced chuckle, "No. None of them have really... made me... fall in love."

It stings even more to hear her say these words. I don't answer.

"Hey, Q... can I ask you something? I need you to be truthful."

"Uh... okay..." I don't want to pull away from her hold. Thankfully she doesn't push me away either.

"Did you... ever... for one second with me... maybe... just one moment... that you thought maybe you could love me?"

I find myself mute, unable to speak and unable to control my tears. I'm a cruel bitch. I should never have played with love in the first place... "Yeah... a little..." a lot.

Having this conversation with Santana completely unhinges the barrier I put between myself and my emotions. It's frightening, because I suddenly realize that Santana is more than just a pawn to me. I want to be with her.

"You hate me don't you?"

"I don't. I could never." Santa kisses me again on my forehead. "Alright... Quinn... shh... stop crying. Let's spend the day having fun then? If we're meant to be, fate will bring us back together. Remember that."

I wipe my tears with the back of my hand as I pull away. Santana takes my hand in her's. It's amazing how she can act as though nothing happened. She guides me along the busy streets, still laughing and joking as though her heart was never broken by me. As though she never knew of my intentions.

What am I doing to her? What am I doing to me? What am I doing to us?

I follow Santana around, laughing and smiling when I'm meant to, trying to stop my tears when I feel them surfacing again. Maybe I am the one taken captive after all. Maybe we both are, by each other. After all, sex doesn't come without attachment.

Santana holds me really close as we pass by the dark alleys of the town. Out in the open streets, she holds me by the hand, but in these dingy and dangerous places, she holds me by the waist. I keep wondering, wouldn't be it easier for her if she just decided to let us get robbed and mugged and maybe get me killed accidentally? At least she'd have my body with her to prove to Captain it wasn't her fault...

A man eyes us with a piercing gaze as we pass by another alley. He whistles, and Santana only pulls me closer. She wasn't lying when she promised me protection, was she?

Guilt fills my entire body from head to toe. It makes words catch in my throat, makes my laughter strangled, my thoughts a mess. I'm not as strong as I thought I was against my own emotions. Tears threaten to spill again, and I find my fingers clutched around Santana's pants.

She takes me to a street vendor selling flowers, and picks out a bouquet of forget-me-nots with a few roses for me. The silver coins jingle as she hands them to the vendor, before whipping around and handing me the flowers.

She smiles in silence, and I try my best to smile back, but torn between smiling and crying, I find only a lopsided curl on my lips.

If this is her final attempt at making me stay, I can say almost for sure that it's working. But I can't let it work.

"Should I get a parrot?" Santana asks light-heartedly as we pass by another street vendor with a dozen cages. The birds inside are cawing and making a lot of noise.

"Why do you want one all of a sudden?" I muse out loud.

"Keeps my cabin from getting too quiet. Especially if it talks."

"Oh." I murmur softly, "We could get one if you wanted to."

"Or how about this little blue thing instead? Parrots are a little squawky." Santana nears the cages, finding a smaller songbird, a shade of blue that matches my dress almost perfectly.

"Santana..."

"Do you think it'd be nice to keep her in my room?"

"Santana."

She turns to look at me, an apologetic look painted over her face, "I have a feeling you can sing, too."

I pause for a moment before smile softly, "What will you name it then?"

"Q, maybe?"

"Nothing more original?" I tease, tightening my hold on her fingers. I don't look her in the eye because I'm afraid of what I'll find there.

"Maybe 'Princess'." She stares straight at the bird, sitting dutifully in its cage. "But maybe I'd let it perch in my cabin on a stick instead of being stuck in a cage..." She peers a little closer, "Her wings are clipped, she'll be fine out of a cage too."

A jingle of silver sounds again and Santana holds the cage in her hand. The bird chirps every now and then, but offers nothing like a song.

Dusk falls too soon. It feels like too little a time before we are due to part. I find myself in Santana's arms two streets away from the dock.

I'm shaking.

"Quinn... I have something to give you. I want you to remember me."

"What is it?"

"Here..." She takes one arm off of me and digs at her sash, before pulling out a thin blue ribbon with *the key* tied onto it. She ties it around my neck, before kissing me lightly on my lips. "Remember me, alright? Remember who gave you this key." She touches it, smiling at me, "Don't you dare forget me."

"I won't," I choke, overcome with emotion once more. I hold her hand tight, unwilling to let go.

"Quinn, I have to go now. You should, too. Before they send someone out to find you."

"Santana..."

"Remember, we'll meet again if fate wants us to..."

"And if it doesn't?"

"It will. Trust me." Santana takes a step back from me. I refuse to let go, though. Our arms stretch out. "Quinn, we both need to go." She takes another step backwards. I shake my head and bite my lip. I don't want her to go. "Be good. We'll see each other again." She takes another step back. We don't say goodbye. Neither one of us wants to fully recognize that this is our first and last time parting.

Our arms are fully outstretched now, our fingers just touching, but neither one of us wants to let go. I watch in silence as Santana smiles sorrowfully at me, before pulling away from me completely and disappearing into the mist of people.

I want to turn and run away, the way I'm supposed to, the way I planned, but I find myself frozen solid. I don't want to be apart from Santana.

I know the life at sea isn't really for me. I also know that as the heiress of Fabray and Co., I ought to be running home, into the arms of my family and my fiancé. But life doesn't give second chances, does it? If I run away from Santana now, I may never have a chance to run into her arms again.

I know now why it's been increasingly hard for me to imagine my escape through the three weeks. It's because I don't even want to escape anymore. Santana treats me like a person, almost like a lover, and more or less, I've fallen for her. To her, I'm an individual that she has come to love.

I want to be by her side. I don't want to go home to luxury or to a good life. I'd rather have it hard with Santana than easy with anyone else.

I need Santana. Everything else seems grey and meaningless. Only Santana can bring anything colorful and good into my life. She makes me feel alive. Nothing makes me feel fuller, happier than when I'm with Santana.

My head spins as I stagger around, trying to find my balance as I'm pushed around by the crowd. I'm not quite sure how long I've been standing on the same spot, but the people around me seem to increase by the second. Someone pushes me to the side. My bouquet of flowers crashes to the floor.

I hope it's not too late.

I pick up my skirts, and run after Santana at the dock. I move quickly, trying to avoid knocking over parcels and boxes, or people in general. Having been running around barefoot on deck, the heels I have on now are only a bother, slowing me a great deal. I kick them off, my feet on the bare ground. I feel a surge of courage fill me as I push my way to the large ship docked at the harbour.

The key Santana tied to me hits my skin with every step, but it's steady rhythm only reminds me what I'm doing this for.

The smooth road of the town gives way to the rocky and uneven road of the harbour. Every now and then, I wince as a small pebble or a shard of something presses deep into my skin, threatening to break it. But nothing can stop me now, as I look desperately around me for a familiar face in the crowd—the only face I want to see.

I see a shadow on the stern of the ship. A familiar shadow, with her raven-colored hair billowing in the wind, stands lonely against it. She looks crestfallen, broken, as though a piece of her has been ripped out. Her tears glint in the fading sun. In her hand she holds a small piece of blue, cage-less and singing.

"Santana!" I call, anxious as I see the crew load up their final carts. The wind carries my voice away. She doesn't hear me.

"Santana!" I call again. This time I see her perk up, but shaking her head. From the corner of my eye, I can see the crew gathering rope and preparing to raise the plank—the only connection between land and sea.

"You dope, you're not imagining my voice! Santana!" She turns around this time, searching for me. She seems almost as desperate as I am.

"Down here!" I watch in anticipation as Santana leans over the side of the ship, looking at me. She looks weary.

"What are you doing?" she hisses, drying her eyes with the back of her hand as if to make it seem like she never cried, "You should be gone by now! They can't see you or you'll be taken back!"

"You forgot something..." I murmur, just loud enough for her to hear.

"Wait there, I'll come down." She turns in a swift movement, shoving the bird into a very confused Marley's hands, jogging towards the plank that connects the ship to the ground. I watch as she runs towards me, and I, to her.

"What did I forget," she murmurs wistfully, reaching out to hold my hand, but then remembering that I am no longer her's, and withdrawing her hand again. I reach out to take her hand, but she only pulls back further. I can't help but notice how her fingers land just where my name ought to be on her hip.

"Something important that you need to take with you on the ship."

"Quinn, I don't have time to screw around. If you want to escape, you really have to go!"

"Do you want me to go, Santana..." I whisper, taking a step closer to her. She takes a step back.

"No... I mean... yes, if that's what you want... but..." She takes another step back as I move another step forward. "Just tell me what I forgot already."

"Close your eyes." Step forward.

"Stop the games, Quinn." Step back.

"Just close your eyes." Step forward.

Santana moves a step back as she frowns, hesitantly closing her eyes. Suddenly, the shouting of the crew and then yelling of the vendors are drowned out by the soft crashing over the ocean waves. Everything else seems like a blur.

Feeling timid, shy, like a little girl again, I take a step closer to Santana, leaning in and kissing her on the cheek. She flinches, wanting to open her eyes and move away, but my fingers find her's and I hold her tight, refusing to let her go.

Finding her ear conveniently close to me, I smile, "You forgot me."

Note: continued on <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10316108/>

AU, by team-valkyrie

Quinn walked briskly across UCLA's spacious campus, trying to locate the nearest coffee shop. For some unknown reason, probably to annoy her, her usual joint was closed for the day. On top of that, she was late for a lecture. But there was no way she would survive the rest of the day without coffee so she sacrificed the lecture for caffeine.

Quinn finally found an empty Starbucks, thanking every god that answered her prayers. Usually she would refuse to go there because she didn't think the coffee was very good and it was overpriced. But, desperate times call for desperate measures. She quickly went in and headed straight for the counter. When her eyes fell upon the barista, she froze. There stood the most gorgeous woman she had ever met. The woman was obviously Latina. She was slightly shorter than Quinn herself. Her long, raven locks were pulled up into a ponytail and her expressive coffee brown eyes had a mischievous glint that matched the smirk on her face.

"Hey, my name is Santana and I'll be your barista today. What would you like?" When she heard the girl speak, Quinn felt herself melt. Santana's voice was sultry and husky, the type of voice that would make anyone fall to their knees before the goddess, including Quinn.

"A tall hazelnut macchiato please," Quinn said, trying her hardest not to stutter. She mentally praised herself so keeping her composure.

"Sure thing," Santana said with a smile. She cashed Quinn's order and proceeded to make the coffee. "So cutie, what school do you go to?"

Quinn was slightly taken aback by Santana's flirtatious tone. She quickly decided to go for it, since the hottest girl she had ever met was clearly flirting with her. "UCLA. You?"

"Oh cool, I go there too. My classes are in the afternoon, which is why I work in the morning. What's your major?" Santana asked.

"Really? Wow, I didn't know. I would have for sure remembered you if we had met," Quinn murmured before she could stop herself. She went on, trying to hide the blush of her cheeks. "My major is photography, what about you?"

Santana once again chuckled and shot the girl a knowing look. "Oh yeah? Why's that blonde? My major is music, which is probably why we haven't met before."

Quinn blushed deeper but worked up the courage to say what was on her mind. "Because you're the most beautiful girl I've met and I would have remembered you."

"I think you're beautiful too," Santana said with a bashful smile. "We should hang out sometime."

Santana finished the drink and grabbed a sharpie before writing some numbers down on it. "Here's my number if you ever want to hang out. We could go grab dinner or something."

It was Quinn's turn to smile, overjoyed with Santana's proposal. "I'd like that very much. I'll text you sometime." Quinn gave Santana one last smile and turned to walk out the coffee shop.

Halfway to her class, she took out her phone and sent someone a text.

Quinn (11:07 a.m): I'm free this Friday if you want to hang out :)

Cute barista (11:08 a.m): Sounds like a date ;) I'll text you the details later, have a great day :) xx

Quinn let a dorky smile when she read the text. Despite being late, she couldn't be more happy she went to Starbucks.

Redemption, by tehedward

Santana ran as quickly as she could down the separatist ship's corridor. She had to hurry, she had to get there as fast as she could otherwise Quinn would die. Too many had already died in this force forsaken war and she wasn't about to lose Quinn. Especially not to some Jedi hit squad because the council was too lazy or too... too, just too whatever, to try and save and redeem her Quinn.

Jedi are not supposed to form attachments. Attachment can lead to possessiveness, which can lead to jealousy, which can lead to anger, which leads to hate. She had heard the speech at least a thousand times growing up in the temple. And she could see where they were coming from, a Jedi had access to powers and abilities that were beyond what the normal person could do. And when a Jedi turned dark bad things happened.

But Santana didn't care, she was going to find her friend, save her and then they were going to run away together. The Clone Wars may not be over but they were done. Santana was done fighting for a Republic that didn't even exist anymore. She was done giving up a little more of her morals and her soul just so that she could win a battle. She was done with fighting, she was done with killing, and she was done watching the people around her die.

She would save Quinn. The council may have given up on her but Santana hadn't. Quinn's fall had taken them all by surprise but honestly Santana almost couldn't blame her. Quinn and her master had been stationed at Feros 3, a miserable dust ball of a little planet that was unfortunately extremely important strategically. If you had control of it you had control of one of the great hyperspace lanes.

Though the planet was habitable they had found no evidence of life on the planet. It was barren or so they had thought. The fighting between the Republic and the Separatists had been brutal. And due to blockades and the needs of other more inhabited planets supplies had been slow and rare in coming to Feros 3 until finally they had stopped coming all together.

The fighting got worse and worse, eventually they had run out of most of their ammo and the fighting had moved to hand to hand combat. Both Separatist and Republic space forces had long since shot each other down to the planet and so inch by inch Quinn lead the Republic forces to a bloody land victory, her master having been killed earlier on in the fighting, and finally the last commander of the droid army had been captured and every single droid had been either deactivated or destroyed. If it had ended there, Quinn probably would have been granted the rank of Jedi Knight, she would have been a war hero but unfortunately once the battle with the Separatists was over the real war for Feros 3 had begun.

The planet ended up being the home to large hulking beasts that tunneled beneath the surface. Their bodies had a natural electric pulse running through them and combined with the fact that they usually stayed far beneath the surface, so their scanners hadn't picked them up. Quinn had to watch as over the course of three weeks every other living person on that planet

was torn apart and devoured. They couldn't evacuate, because all ships capable of interplanetary flight had been destroyed. Quinn had sent out a distress call but they never heard anything back.

One by one every person under Quinn's command was killed. And the death of each person had chipped away a little bit more of her friend until finally...

Santana had been light years away but she had still felt her friends fall to the dark side. Video surveillance recovered showed her friend doing things with the force that she didn't even think were possible. She had watched the footage, horror struck, as Quinn fried some of the creatures with lightning. Others she would lift in the air and tear them apart limb from limb, some she would just look at them and their heads would implode.

The devastation had been terrible. And to make matters worse it wasn't a republic ship that answered Quinn's distress beacon but a Separatist one. Count Dooku himself had felt Quinn's fall through the force and had gone to investigate the source of the disturbance personally. He had found Quinn and taken her on as an apprentice.

It was a turning point in the war and not for the better. Quinn led her new droid forces from one planet to the next. Each one was given one chance to surrender and when they refused, they always did, Quinn brutally and ruthlessly suppressed them. Ten different star systems, Republic held star systems, had all fallen to Quinn within just two standard galactic months. It was the most progress either side had made in the war in over two years.

It had been decided just recently that she could no longer be allowed to continue on like she had and so a hit team being led by Master Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker were to find her and take her out. Santana had been horrified, the Jedi weren't assassins, they were keepers of the peace but nothing she said or did could convince the council to reconsider. Santana had even gone to Master Yoda and begged him to do something. But unfortunately there was nothing he could do.

"To my council on the matter, they have listened not." He shook his head sadly at this, but then a little smirk had appeared on his little green face. "However, something there is, that you may be able to do."

Yoda had arranged for it so that Santana was a part of the hit squad, they were sending 7 Jedi after Quinn including herself, Master Kenobi and Master Skywalker. Master Yoda had warned her that anything that she did outside of completing the assigned mission, which had been approved by the senate, would be considered treason. He then also told her that in doing this, in trying to redeem her friend she had become a true Jedi.

In a private ceremony he cut her Padawan braid and knighted her. He wished her luck and also wished her and Quinn a long and happy life together. She hugged the little troll fiercely not even bothering to hold back her tears, knowing that whether she was successful or not in her efforts to save Quinn this would be the last time she would ever see the diminutive Jedi Master.

The battle to engage Quinn's fleet was all a bit of a blur, Santana had just trusted the force to guide her and she didn't bring herself back into focus until her and the hit team breached Quinn's ship, the Deliverance. From there Santana took off, leaving the others to fend for

themselves. She broke rank, caring for only one thing, finding her friend and getting her out of here before she was murdered. Because that was the only way she could look at this, the sanctioned murder of her best friend.

Count Dooku, Assajj Ventress, General Grievous, all of them were to be captured if possible, but Quinn Fabray got a death sentence, not a chance, not on her watch. Not if there was a chance for Santana to save her, and Santana knew there was more than a chance. Despite everything, Santana knew Quinn hadn't fallen completely, there was still good in her, she could feel it.

She could feel Quinn's presence just ahead, a couple of body guard droids try to block her path but Santana leaps through the air over their heads, activating her blue double bladed light saber and decapitates them, all before nimbly landing on her feet, not once breaking pace in her sprint towards Quinn.

In the background she can hear the battle for the Deliverance echoing. She comes across four more body guard droids but she quickly dispatches them before taking a moment to calm herself. This was it, she opens the door and steps into room that Quinn is waiting in. The door shuts behind her as she enters and it's unsettlingly quiet in here. The room is large and spacious with huge view screens that surround the walls and the ceiling giving a real-time feedback of the battle that is raging outside around them.

Separatist and Republic star fighters and ships explode silently all around them. And standing in the middle of the room is Quinn. Santana deactivates her light saber and begins to walk towards her friend... okay who did she think she was kidding. She loved the other girl, she was either going to die or leave the order today, she may as well be completely honest. And she knew Quinn felt the same way about her, nothing had ever come of it before, both of them too committed to the order to ever break the code like that, but today was different.

"You shouldn't have come here Santana." Quinn says softly, turning to face her. Her face is completely blank, Quinn is doing her best to show no emotion. But her voice and her eyes give her away. Her friend is in pain, and Santana can neither see nor sense any anger in the girl. Just a deep and all-consuming sadness. Quinn isn't consumed with anger or hatred, she is consumed with sadness and guilt and that is how Santana knows Quinn can be saved, that she hasn't fallen completely.

Quinn needs someone who can and will forgive her for her perceived failure at Feros 3 to forgive her for tapping into the dark side of the force and for turning her back on the Republic and the Jedi Order. Other's may not be able to, Santana will be the first to admit that Quinn has caused a lot of damage since her switch, but Santana could and was willing to forgive Quinn of anything. And in Santana's eyes, the Republic and the Order turned on Quinn first. She could be saved, she just needed to be given the chance.

"Yeah, I'm a little hurt that you decided to have this party without me. Love the new look though... very punk-rock." Santana teases, trying to lift the tense atmosphere.

Quinn had in fact changed her look. Her hair was dyed pink and was cut short. It had that just got out of bed but I still look good kind of style to it. She had surprisingly gotten a lip ring and a nose ring as well. Her black shirt was cropped short exposing her midriff and she was wearing a long black skirt that had a slit up the side. All in all not bad, but not really her.

A ghost of a smile flickers across Quinn's face at Santana's words, before she hardens herself again. "Because of our past together, I'm going to offer this once instead of just killing you, turn around Santana. Leave here, forget all about me and never come back. Save yourself."

Santana smiles at her friend. "Funny, I was about to offer you the same chance. Leave here, turn away from this place, run away *with* me and never look back. Save yourself."

"I..." And for a moment Quinn looks like she desperately wants to take Santana up on her offer. But in a moment it's gone and she's all business. "I have a job to do, leave now."

"Not without you."

"Don't make me destroy you."

"The Jedi have sent a hit squad after you, don't you get it!? They're on their way here, right now! And I am not letting them kill you! You are my best friend, I need you, I love you! Damn it, let's just go!" Santana yells.

A real smile crosses Quinn's face but she shakes her head. "I love you too, I always have but... it's too late for me now, I've done too much to ever go back. Please leave. Abandon this war, the things that my master is planning... you have no idea. Find some place far out in the outer rim, forge a new life for yourself away from all of this and forget all about me. Be happy Santana."

"Not without you!" Santana yells.

Tears begin to fall from Quinn's eyes. "You stubborn fool." She says fondly.

"I'm saving your ass whether you want me too or not!" Santana activates her light saber. "The only choice you have in the matter is whether or not you walk out of here of your own accord or if I drag your unconscious body out of here."

Quinn doesn't say anything, she just gets into her stance as her light saber glides into her hand and activates, its red beam humming sinisterly as it bathes Quinn in its haunting red light.

Neither of them move for a couple of seconds, both of them allowing themselves to fall deeper and deeper into the force and then in a flash, as if somebody had wrung some kind of starting bell, the two girls leap into action.

Santana had always been the better duelist of the two. Her saber skills were praised throughout the entire Jedi Order. But Quinn had a stronger connection to the force and Santana was beginning to see that that made all of the difference. It was all she could do to use the two blades of her light saber to hold off Quinn's attack.

Quinn was everywhere and nowhere, making a counter attack almost impossible. Anytime she made a move to strike, Quinn would be gone, no longer where she had once been. Stepping to the side or leaping over Santana's head and striking at one of her blind spots.

After what felt like an eternity of furious battle Santana made a mistake. She raised one of her blades to block high, but it was a feint on Quinn's part and she finds her saber cut in half leaving her with only one blade. Quinn continues her onslaught forcing Santana back further and further, forcing her to all but retreat. When she tries to jump away she feels a concussive blast of the force, hit her hard, slamming her into the screens mounted on the wall. The screen she hits cracks and the image is lost as it goes to static and she falls to the ground in front of it. Her light saber clattering off to the side somewhere in the distance.

Santana manages to push herself to her hands and knees and she looks up to see Quinn slowly making her way towards her. Santana closes her eyes and she can feel herself begin to fall into despair. She failed. She wasn't afraid to die, she was more than willing to die if it meant that she could save Quinn but that wasn't going to happen. Quinn would kill her now and then there would be no one left to try and help her, she would be forever lost to the darkness.

Santana gets up onto her knees and stares up at Quinn. Her own teary eyes meeting the scared and confused gaze of her friends. Santana could see the despair, the war going on behind Quinn's eyes as she struggled to do this and it broke Santana's heart. She could be saved, if they would just try they could reach Quinn and turn her away from her current path. She had been unable to, but somebody else could do it, but they wouldn't, they wouldn't even try. They had written Quinn off as un-savable and it just wasn't true. Even now as she was about to die she had faith in her friend.

Santana forces a smile onto her face as Quinn stands before her. Tears streaming down her face as well as she prepares to strike the final blow. "Make it fast Querida, do what you got to do and then you get out of here. And remember, I love you and I forgive you."

Santana closes her eyes and prepares herself to become one with the force. She hears Quinn's anguished cry and the hum of a light saber being swung. However nothing happens, and after a few seconds of just sitting there, the only sound is the hum of Quinn's blade, Santana opens her eyes.

Quinn's light saber has to be less than a millimeter away from her neck, but Quinn is standing there frozen. "I'm sorry..." Quinn whimpers before she deactivates her blade and allows it to clatter to the ground as she falls to her knees and begins to sob.

Santana moves in a flash and gathers the crying girl into her arms. "It's okay, it's all going to be okay."

Once Upon a Time, by vodkaonmytongue

"Once Upon a Time there was a little town called Lima, Ohio, in which the residents were actually characters from various fairy tales and other stories that were transported to the "real world" town and robbed of their original memories by the Evil Queen Santana, using a powerful curse obtained from Sue Sylvester. The residents of Lima have lived an unchanging existence for 28 years, unaware of their own lack of aging. The town's only hope lies with a bail bonds-woman and bounty hunter named Lucy Quinn Fabray, the daughter of Snow White and Prince Charming, who was transported from the Enchanted Forest of William McKinley within the fairy tale world as an infant before she could be cursed. As such, she is the only person who can break the curse and restore the characters' lost memories. She is aided by her daughter, Beth , with whom she has recently reunited after giving her up for adoption upon her birth, and her book of fairy tales which holds the key to ending the curse. Beth is also the adopted daughter of Santana, mayor of Lima, providing a source of both conflict and common interest between the two women..."

Note: this goes with the art found on <http://vodkaonmytongue.tumblr.com/post/84527782569/day-5-au-once-upon-a-time-once-upon-a-time>

Help Me Hanna!, by wonderlandwaitforme

(BlessYourSoul)

Pretty Little Liars/Glee crossover

"Lucy Quinn Fabray, as I live and breathe."

"Hanna! I didn't know this was your school!"

"It is, unfortunately. What are you doing here?!"

"My dad got a job at the police station. What about you? I thought you lived in Connecticut?"

"My parents got a divorce, so I moved here with my mom."

"I'm sorry to hear that. I haven't seen you in ages, I've missed you."

"I've missed you too."

Someone clearing their throat beside them caught their attention. There stood four girls Hanna had been walking down the halls with when she'd jumped the hazel eyed blonde. The group consisted of a short girl with long brown hair, a kind smile on her face and an edge to her clothing, next to her stood a girl who'd dressed quite proper considering they were only in school, then there was a tall, tanned girl with a kind expression, dressed a lot more casually than her friend. And finally, the one who cleared her throat was a gorgeous Latina, a smirk firmly planted on her face. She was the first to speak.

"So are you gonna introduce us?" she asked impatiently, eagerly wanting to get to know the blonde. Why? She didn't know.

"Oh yeah, sorry. Guys, this is Quinn, Quinn this is Aria, Spencer, Emily and Santana. My best friends."

"It's nice to meet you all."

"So, how do you two know each other?" Aria spoke up. The two blondes looked at each other before Hanna turned to reply.

"We met at fat camp, we shared a cabin." At that Santana snickered, earning her a glare from Hanna and a slap on the arm by Emily. Muttering an 'ow' she stopped laughing, but continued to smirk.

"So you're like thin Quinn now huh?" Santana asked, making Quinn a tad uncomfortable, uttering a quiet 'I suppose'. The girls frowned at Santana's lack of tact while Spencer asked.

"What classes do you have?" Quinn just handed her, her timetable. Spencer's eyebrows rose, impressed. "Looks like I have some competition." She said in faux seriousness, making Quinn look up alarmed, her expression faded when she saw the challenging smirk on Spencer's face. She smirked back. "C'mon, I'll show you the way to Ms. Norbury's class." And with that they walked away.

"Please don't tell me we have a Spencer clone but blonde." Emily complained.

"No, Quinn's totally chill, intense, but chill." Hanna stated.

"She seems nice." Aria said. "And I'm assuming she's smart if Spencer deems her as competition.

"She's beautiful." Santana whispered, not realizing what she'd said. All eyes fell on her. "What?" she asked, confused.

"Someone's got a crush." Hanna sing-songed.

"No I don't" Santana quickly replied, though the blush on her cheeks gave her away.

"You totally do! Look at that blush." Emily contributed.

"It's okay if you do." Aria said gently, placing a comforting hand on the Latina's shoulder.

"You don't have a problem that she's a girl."

"Oh honey." Hanna said sadly. "Of course we don't. If she was a jerk, then we'd have a problem, but Quinn's a really nice person. She helped me lose weight without telling me to stick my fingers down my throat or starve myself like some people did. She supported me and we got there together."

"Do you think she'd say yes if I asked her out?"

There was a chorus of "Most definitely!", "Who wouldn't?!" and "Go for it."

Later that day, Santana found herself wandering the halls after the final bell had rang when she stumbled upon a frustrated Quinn trying to open her locker. "Here let me help." She opened the locker with ease, stepping away whilst Quinn kept and grabbed some books and placing them in her bag.

"Thanks." Her voice was soft.

"No problem." She scratched the back of her neck nervously. "Look, I'm sorry about the comment I made before it's just that I don't think about what I say a lot of the time and my brain to mouth filter is, like, non-existent."

"It's ok, don't worry about it. It's not like anyone's innocent of making the odd silly comment." Santana smiled, *she is chill*.

"So, uh I-I wanted to ask if you know, y-you'd uh, maybe like to go out with me? On a date. You don't have to say yes, because you don't know me, and I wouldn't mind if you said no. It's just you're really beautiful, and your eyes are like gold, and this was stupid. I should just go b-"

her mini rant was cut off by Quinn placing a chaste kiss on her cheek, making Santana blush to the tips of her ears.

"I thought that's what dates are for? Getting to know each other." Santana gaped.

"So that's a yes?"

"Uh-huh. Pick me up at 8." She winked before she strutted down the hall. When she was out of sight Santana did a little victory dance, until she realised she didn't know where she lived. Searching for her phone she quickly dialled the number.

"Hanna! I need you help!"

You're My Number One Pick, by WordsHaveMelodies

"Good morning Santana," your assistant Tina calls as you exit the elevator, "Here's your coffee and your itinerary for the day."

"Thank you Tina," you respond on autopilot as you continued walking, reading the latest email from Artie and sipping on your Vanilla Chai Latte, "Could you have Blaine and Mike meet me in the office?"

"They'll be right up."

As you walked into your office, shrugged off your jacket and took a glance at the description in your hands, you had to admit that you loved your job. You really did. It's not even remotely close to what you thought you would've been doing after you graduated top of the class at Washington State University but it had been as fulfilling as ever. You weren't just Santana Lopez anymore. No, according to Tyra Banks you were *the* Santana Lopez: a renowned Fashion and Celebrity photographer. She had even invited you to be a judge on her America's Next Top Model show and everything.

"You rang boss?" Blaine says walking into the office ahead of Mike, "What do you need?"

Blaine was solely in charge of your lighting and you and Mike worked together to create prop ideas whenever a shoot required them. Mike was also the one who you would let monitor the screens whenever you were shooting. He and Blaine being the consummate professionals that they were (insert eye roll here) would ALWAYS interrupt the shoot to squabble about when they thought you got the perfect shot or not. You'd never admit it publicly less you damage Blaine's very huge ego, but Mike was usually right.

"I have a little surprise for you both," you liked rewarding them for some reason, "You won't be working today but instead you'll both be my wingmen on today's photo shoot. I'm shooting the Victoria's Secret catalogue today and I'm allowing your requests to come in and observe the master at work."

"Is this a joke?" Blaine asks, "Are you really going to let us like see how you do it?"

"Please say it isn't," Mike says before you can reply, slowly settling into the chair in front of your desk, "Don't tell Tina this but I DVR the Victoria Secret Fashion Show every year and I watch it whenever she's not around."

Blaine quirks his eyebrows in silent protest at Mike's revelation and you quirk your eyebrow in amusement at the two of them. How you ended up with these two working for you, you would never know.

"So do I," you divulge with a wink, "It'll be our little secret Mike." and you're even more amused when Blaine cuts in to prevent you from high fiving each other.

"You two are big little children," he however is clearly not amused in the slightest; "I'm telling Tina the first chance I get."

"Then I'm telling Sebastian about you and Kurt," and Blaine's face is priceless, "Imagine the fallout from that conversation."

"You wouldn't dare!" Blaine practically squeals and if you were drinking something, you would spit it out, "I call your bluff Chang," his hands folding over his chest, "You wouldn't."

"Tell my secret and I tell yours," Mike says with the most care free of shrugs and you laugh then because you'll never get tired of this, "All of them."

Blaine starts rambling on about bromanship and the importance of secrecy as you recline your chair, prop your feet up on your desk and take another sip of your coffee.

You could watch them fight all day.

—

"Quinn, did you hear about the new changes?" your fellow Victoria Secret Angel Brittany Pierce asks on entrance into the suite.

"Nope," you ask plopping another grape into your mouth, "Care to enlighten me?"

"They're pairing us up and spreading out the shoots before we do the collective one," she takes the couch seat next to you, "You and I are up first today."

"We should go get ready then," you say glancing at the clock, "Do we get to drive ourselves?"

"I knew you would want to so I asked Mercedes and she said ok," this is why you loved Brittany; "The Benz is downstairs."

"You're my favourite Britt," you say placing a quick kiss to her cheek before standing, "Let's go then."

"Wait," her hand reaching out to pull you back, "There's something else that you should know."

"Like?"

"Santana is the photographer," and you could feel the grapes trying to make their way back up, "She called me like 5 minutes ago to ask if I was coming in today."

This could not be happening. You had the biggest crush on Santana Lopez still after all these years and she didn't even know that you existed. You both went to Washington State together but she was super popular and you were not. You were a nerd with your glasses and dresses and you never got invited to any of the cool kid parties. She was a cheerleader and she was perfect. She wasn't just pretty though, she was smart too. She was in all of your classes and she always beat you by at least one point in every test. Maybe if you were focusing on the paper and not the girl sitting two rows across from you, you would've been able to beat her just once. It came as no surprise that she was given the Valedictorian position over you. What did come as a surprise was her talking to you for the first time ever afterwards.

"Hey blondie," and you looked all around because there was no way that the Santana Lopez was talking to you, "You got a pen I could borrow?"

"Pen?" you ask dumbly.

"It's a type of apparatus used for writing," you still couldn't believe that she was talking to you, "Might you happen to have one?"

"Oh," you say thrusting the pen towards her, "Here."

"I thought you might respond to the big words," and she smiles at you before turning and signing the clearly besotted guy's yearbook.

She takes a picture with him to and you'd never wanted to be a guy more in your life.

"Congratulations by the way," you say when she turns back to you, "On valedictorian."

"Thank you," and you smile because she does, "Congratulations on being my runner up."

"It was my pleasure really," and she chuckles lightly, "I wouldn't be second best to just anyone."

"So I'm your number one pick?" she asks running a hand through her now capless hair, "Good to know."

"HEY SANTANA! PARTY AT MY HOUSE LATER!" Noah Puckerman screams down the hall and you grimace at the noise, damn football players.

She waves at him before turning her attention back to you,

"Thank you for the apparatus." she says holding the pen out to you, her smile more of a smirk this time.

"You're welcome."

You became privy to the fact that she was a photographer when Brittany worked with her on her Sports Illustrated cover. She gushed all about the hottest photographer that she had ever seen and when she'd described her, you nearly died and killed Brittany for thinking she was hot at the same time. They were friends and you were fine with that because you trusted Brittany and it let you keep tabs on her without resorting to Google.

"I think I'm going to be sick," you lament to Brittany, "I can't do this."

"Yes you can," she says with a laugh while dragging you to your feet, "It'll be fine."

You loved working with Brittany. There were a lot of crazy models in the industry who were after photographers just to get on the covers but after a minute of meeting her, you knew that she wasn't one of them. There had been a spark between you both at one time but nothing happened

with it and now you were both honestly just pretty good friends. You hung out and had dinners and partied with each other in Vegas sometimes. Her best friend however, you wouldn't let that moment past if it ever presented itself. You'd never met her because somehow she always had to work whenever you both were hanging out but you'd seen pictures and boy, oh boy was shorty a 10.

"Brittany just texted," you direct to Sam and Joe who would be doing Blaine and Mike's jobs today, "They'll be here in 2."

"How is it that you have a Victoria Secret model for a best friend," Mike asks from his spot behind the monitor, "We need to talk about your karma."

"Models," Tina corrects from her spot next to him, "She's friends with Chanel Iman and Cara Delevingne too."

"True," Blaine interjects, "She got Cara to wish me a happy birthday on twitter."

"Can I get one from Candice or Alexandra?" Mike asks before backtracking under Tina's glare, "On second thought ya'll don't even have to tell me happy birthday."

Even the security guards posted at the door to the studio laugh at that.

"Santana!" Brittany's voice breaks and you don't miss the jaw of every man in the room hitting the floor, "It's been too long."

"Yes it has been," you say returning her hug, "Where's the next angel?" her eyes rolling as you ask it, "I thought there's supposed to be two of you."

"She'll be here she was just-" you don't hear the rest of her reply.

In walks the missing Victoria Secret model and your jaw looks pretty much like theirs looked a couple seconds ago. You'd fire somebody if they were looking at her the same way.

"There she is," Brittany says while discreetly using her finger to push your jaw up and your mouth shut, "Santana Lopez meet Quinn Fabray."

"It's a pleasure to meet you Santana," her left hand pushing her shades into her hair while her right hand reaches out to shake yours, "I've been looking forward to it."

"So have I ." you say taking her hand in yours.

There's something about her, you don't know what exactly but this feels like a reconnection more than a connection.

"We should get started," Tina's cuts in and you're thankful for her, "We've got a lot of frames to do."

"Yes," Blaine nudging your shoulder to pull your attention from Quinn's eyes, those eyes, "Lot of frames to do."

"If I didn't know Santana any better I would say that she was distracted," Brittany whispers while you took a break on stage, "Usually she's more vocal than this."

"Or maybe she's worked with you enough times to know that you know what to do," you respond, your eyes never moving from where Santana's head was bowed and focused on her laptop screen, "Her lack of direction has nothing to do with me."

"It has everything to do with you and you know it," she whispers again, "She's hit Sam more times than I can remember her ever doing in my presence for staring. Clearly, she's more upset at him staring at you."

"She didn't even remember me," and you feel like that nerdy girl pining for the hot cheerleader all over again, "You said Quinn Fabray and she didn't even flinch."

"Quinn," Santana's voice stops your conversation, "They want some of you and Brittany separately so-"

"Yeah sure I'll go chill in the back and-"

"No," she interrupts your interruption and there's something behind her eyes, "I want to do you first."

"Wanky!" Brittany and Mike say at the same time and Santana's smiles briefly before glaring at them both.

"Wanky?" you ask as she takes your hand to help you down off the stage.

"It would be highly inappropriate for me to tell you now."

"Dude I remember where I know her from now. I went to college with her," you whisper to Mike as you changed out the battery, "She used to sit like two rows across from me in like every class."

"Did Washington State manufacture beautiful women or something?" Mike whispers, "She's like super hot."

"She wasn't always," you tell him truthfully, "But I always thought that she was you know?"

"Are you going to tell her?" Blaine cuts in, "I'm nowhere near attracted to her but Mike's right, she's super hot."

"And now I remember why men are disgusting," and you smack them both because you can, "It's about more than just her hotness you idiots. I don't want her to be just another model I sleep with."

"Then ask her out," Sam cuts in, "Before I do."

And you smack him then, because you could.

The shoot's done and Brittany's looking over the pictures with Santana and the others outside. You were tempted to join them just to have 5 more minutes in her presence but you needed to be strong about this. She hadn't remembered you. There was a part of you that always hoped that if you ever met again that she would remember that day in the hallway and tell you that she thought you were awesome or whatever, but it hadn't happened and you needed to get over it.

"Hey blondie," Santana's head poking into the changing room, "You got a pen I could borrow?"

"Pen?" you ask dumbly.

"It's a type of apparatus used for writing," she says walking further in, "Might you happen to have one?"

She sends you an amused smile then and you stare at her in confusion for a moment before it clicks in your head.

"You remember?" you ask in disbelief, "Or did Brittany tell you?"

"You told Brittany about me?" her smile getting bigger, "And yes, I remember. I don't think I ever really forgot, I just needed to be reminded."

"When did you?"

"When you thought I wanted Brittany to go first," and you frown because she does, "I should have told you this then but I noticed you staring at me and I always thought, she's beautiful but she just doesn't get how much yet. I got to admit I never thought you'd end up a Victoria's Secret model but here you are. I knew that one day you'd figure out that you were too good to be second best to anyone."

"You weren't just anyone though," and she looks at you in confusion then, "You were *the* Santana Lopez and everyone wanted you or to be you, hell I know people who went to college with us that still do."

"You used to call me *the* Santana Lopez?" and there's that look again.

"I still do," you respond honestly, "What can I say; you've always been my number one pick."

"That's why I picked you first today," she says with a shrug, "I think you could be mine too."

"Quinn are you oh..." Brittany says walking into the room, "What's going on in here?"

"I was just about to ask your best friend to have dinner with me," she responds before turning her smile to you, "*The* Quinn Fabray actually."

"I'm already annoyed at how hot you two are going to be." Brittany says folding her hands over her chest.

You had been hot together and a breakup, reconciliation, 1 year engagement, 3 year marriage and daughter later, you still were.

"Do you still love me?" Santana asks joining you on the balcony, "You know, with all that we've been through?"

"Of course I do," You respond revelling in the feel of her hands wrapping themselves around your waist and her lips pressing a kiss to your cheek, "You're my number one pick remember."

AU, by WriteForYou

Have you ever felt so lost about who you are? Have you ever felt so...so dead inside?

You see, I don't know who I am. And I am completely dead inside...no, seriously I'm dead. I have no heartbeat. I'm a dead Corpse. I have no recollection of my past life or who I was or what my name was. The only thing clear to me is the excruciating hunger to eat anything with a heartbeat when I need it. Of course, I feel conflicted about it. I don't like to eat humans and I always feel bad right after. Unlike the Bonies who have no remorse or control. But I have to in order to survive.

After some catastrophe, that caused this apocalyptic world, most of us liked to reside in this huge high school. Don't know why, though. This place seems like a prison to me.

Today is a typical day for me. Dragging myself through the hallways, occasionally bumping into others, making disgruntled noises and groans. Unable to express or formulate words. I like to fantasize about what my life was before of all this. I like to think I had a happy family, plenty of friends, and outstanding grades with colleges at my feet. I must have been some cheerleader in high school since I'm wearing a red uniform with the letters 'WMHS', whatever that means.

I end up sitting down in the cafeteria by one of my best friends. He has dark brown hair and a built physique like an athlete. He's tall so he might be a basketball player...but for some reason I see him as a football quarterback in our past lives. Our usual conversations consist of us trying to talk to each other but it just ends up as us moaning and sighing. Sometimes we are able to formulate a complete word or phrase (after an extremely long pause that is).

I look at him in his brown eyes. "Hungry." I drawl.

He cranes his neck slowly to me and rasps, "The mall..." We languidly get up and make our way to the Lima Mall where most humans go to in order to retrieve supplies in order to survive.

"Fuck." I say out loud.

"What is it?" Sam comes swiftly to my side. Brittany comes by me soon after with a quizzical expression.

"They're coming." I point to the group of Corpses making their way towards us.

"Shit." Sam curses. "Grab your things and head through the back door!" He orders the group. We all rush to the back door trying to escape the electronic/video game store that we thought was our safe place in the city. I guess they must have picked up on our scent.

"The door is locked!" Mike yells while jiggling the door knob. I push past the group and shove Mike out of the way. I take in a deep breath and kick the door open. Expecting to be able to make a quick escape out of the mall, I find myself face to face with a Corpse with a piece of his skin peeling off.

"Holy shit!" I jump back. A bunch more Corpses come through the back door and the front of the store trapping us inside.

"Shit!" Brittany says as we all tread backwards.

"We got to shoot these motherfuckers!" Sam screams and starts shooting each corpse multiple times with his Aug. We all follow his lead, shooting each Corpse in our way. Our number begins to dwindle and panic starts to sink in as blood curling screams echo throughout the store. My ammo was running low so I jumped behind the counter and to reload my gun. Sam and Brittany quickly jump over and crouch beside me.

"Where's Mike and Mercedes?" I ask while fumbling with my ammo.

"Dead." Brittany quivers. She reloads her gun and stands up and starts shooting the Corpses heading toward us.

"Listen," Sam touches my arm and looks at me softly. "If we don't make it out of here..."

"Don't say that. We will." I snap at him and reload my gun.

He pushes me down before I could help Brittany. "Just listen will you!" He whispers harshly. Sam cradles my face and look at me seriously with his green eyes. "If we don't make it out of here, I want you to know that I'm still in love with you." He says sincerely.

Ah, fuck. I thought. Sam and I used to date before the world started to get infected and humans became Corpses. I broke it off with him because I wasn't seriously into the relationship and was too focused on trying to survive from getting eaten each day. He's looking at me with his big blue eyes that are expecting me to say 'I love you' in return. I do love Sam, I truly do. But not the way he wants me to. I look up and see Brittany shooting and screaming with all her might and look back at Sam. *This might be the end for all of us.* I shiver and look at Sam who is still waiting for my response. *If this is the end then might as well keep it on a happy note.*

"I love you too." I grab the collar of his shirt and kiss him. Thinking it would be the last kiss I would ever have...even if I didn't feel no sparks. Breaking the kiss apart, Sam smiles at me warmly. We nod at each other and stand up with Brittany and start shooting. The number of Corpses were increasing and I could hear the terrifying shrills of Bonies approaching. All of sudden, a loud crash is heard as a jeep drives into the store running over a herd of Corpses in front of us. Inside the jeep were our friends Rachel, Tina, and Kurt.

"Get in!" Rachel screams at us. We all jump over the counter and started to run to the jeep. I was almost towards the jeep when suddenly I was pulled backwards and thrown to the ground.

—

Ouch. I cracked my neck and rolled my shoulders. The huge vehicle sent me flying forward onto the ground when I was about to eat the brains on this Asian dude. I turn my head looking for my best friend and saw him shuffling away from the humans. I should have done the same...but the pain in my stomach was unbearable. I was on the ground behind a fallen shelf, watching as the only three remaining humans here were trying to get into the jeep with the other

humans. Acting out in frustration and hunger, I stand up and grab the closest beating heart and throw her on to the ground.

Staring intensely at the person beneath me I feel a foreign sensation beat in my chest. Under me was a tanned girl with beautiful long hair and dark chocolate eyes. Her chest was heaving up and down as small beads of sweat trickled down her face. A burning sensation coursed through my body and I can feel my lips dry (well as dry as they could go).

"Get off her!" A blonde guy, with abnormal sized lips, whacks me with his gun which sends me tumbling off the girl. *Shit that hurt.* Groaning, I get up and tackle the guy into the shelves and onto the ground. My stomach growled loudly and I let my hunger control my actions.

I'm not happy with what I have to do next...but I can't help it.

I start smashing the guy's head against the ground. Over and over and over, until I hear a loud and sickening crack. Pulling out his brains, I start to devour it despite the horrid guilt that sank in. I couldn't help it though, the brains were the best part. Eating the brains, you were able to see parts of the human's memories and obtain some of their knowledge. I almost feel alive again when I eat human brains. I close my eyes and like a movie, I saw this blonde haired guy's memories vividly. I saw in sheer perfection the tanned girl's beautiful face smiling and running through a meadow of flowers. She threw her head back and let out a loud laugh that made something stir in my stomach...and I'm sure it wasn't due to hunger.

"Come on, Sam!" The girl exclaimed while giggling. I'm assuming the guy I just killed was named Sam and he must have been that girl's lover. *Great...*

"Sam!" A loud cry was heard from behind me.

—

I stood horrified at Sam's dead body and cracked skull. The scene was so vulgar that my stomach began to churn and I had to swallow the bile pushing up my throat.

"Sam!" I let down a stream of hot tears and pointed my pistol at the zombie leering over Sam. The Corpse whipped her head around and stared at me with the most beautiful hazel eyes I've ever seen. The Corpse was wearing a red cheerleading uniform and had messy short blonde hair that went past her ears but hovered above her shoulders. Her eyes were dull but I could still see the guilt-ridden expression in those hazel eyes. I falter and freeze on spot, taken back a little.

"Santana! Let's go!" I hear Brittany yelling at me. I turn my head and see my friends waving their arms at me. Before I could jog towards them, I'm tackled onto the ground behind the counter with my gun flying out of my hands.

"We have to go!" I hear Kurt yell while shooting his RPK.

"But Santana..." Brittany wails.

"I want to save her too, Britt. But we're outnumbered with low ammo...and it's too late." Rachel says brokenly and I hear the roars of an engine getting fainter and fainter. I unscrew my

eyes and find them locked onto hazel eyes once again. I shiver slightly under the blonde's intense gaze.

The blonde haired Corpse brings her pale bloody hand towards my face. I tremor uncontrollably thinking that I was about to die a slow and excruciating death. I should have shut my eyes close but I couldn't help but keep them latched on hazel eyes that enticed me so. Her hand hovers over my face and she then smears blood and some sort of pungent juice on my cheek.

"What are you—" She puts her soiled finger on my lips and shushes me. *Eww gross.* The cheerleader Corpse crawls off of me. Grabbing me by the wrist, she pulls me up with her and stares at me intensely.

"S-safe..." Her chapped lips quiver. "Me...w-won't hurt y-you..." She pulls me toward the back door. "C-come..." The Corpse cheerleader has a tight grip on me so I couldn't get away. Plus, I had no weapon and I was surrounded by hungry Corpses. What else was I supposed to do other than comply?

This Love (Will Be Your Downfall), by xsummer-rainx

Blonde hair.

Hazel eyes.

A beautiful figure.

Dangerous.

Quinn Fabray.

Santana's eyes narrowed at the woman that strode past. Quinn walked with an air of confidence. Her presence parted crowds and made boys' hearts melt. Her eyes aloof, a piercing green with a cold hard glint in them.

Quinn Fabray.

Fabray.

Santana sighed leaning against the cold metal of the street light. She was well acquainted with the name. The Fabrays were well known to their family.

Their history went back way too long. Their family business was always threatened by the Fabrays. The Fabrays always found a way to clash with them.

The Fabrays were their enemies.

"Santana."

Santana's father addressed her, a deep and smooth baritone. He calmly placed his fedora onto his head, and tilted it towards the black Jaguar waiting, its powerful engine purred.

Santana nodded and followed him into the sleek vehicle.

—

The large dining room was set up for a meeting. The glass table seated all the important people within their 'business'. They were seated in leather black chairs, some held a cigarette between their teeth. The faint wisps of cigarette smoke drifted towards the slightly opened window, carried away by the wind outside.

Antonio sat at the head of the table.

"The Fabrays are in town." Antonio Lopez's eyebrows were furrowed as he addressed the rest of his family.

A murmur spread through the members. It grew before tapering off again, mouths pulled into a thin lines and scowls etched onto faces of stone.

"This is our territory, I thought Russell knew that. We had a deal with them." Santana's cousin Carlos's voice was sharp. It crackled with sparks of rage that was threatening to ignite.

"I guess he is up to something then. Is he breaking the truce? They must be confident enough to do so."

"Be on alert. The Fabrays are dangerous and ruthless."

"I heard Russell was expanding his drug trading to these regions."

The Lopez's were hit-men; silent, efficient and extremely dangerous. Even the worst of them was still an efficient killer. The ability to assassinate, ran through the Lopez bloodline, just like the adrenaline rush the act itself brought.

But that was not their only speciality.

Even just in Antonio's backyard, beneath the first few feet of soil lay a basement-like structure. In the cool and dry air below there were boxes. Heavy duty metal boxes that housed many different varieties of weaponry. Machine guns, shotguns, handguns, anything that the US Government could get their hands on, the Lopez's already owned. They were specialists in handling the equipment that was so often used to end the lives of those who wronged them. It was also where the bulk of their business lay-the mass selling and trading of these prized weapons.

The Fabrays were the best in their own ways. They were smugglers. Drugs, people, weapons, and anything that they wanted. They used the guise of the Fabray goods shipping company to smuggle stuff across borders, across oceans and into foreign countries.

They loved the Drug Trade.

"Fucking Fabrays, they think they can just mess with us."

"We'll show them." Carlos snarled.

The table roared in agreement. Santana sat at her place to the left of her father. Her expression unreadable.

—

"Lopez." Quinn was curt.

Santana's palm met the metal of the locker door and gently pushed it shut. It clanged.

She turned around.

Santana gazed into those eyes. They were green today with a ring of brown. A combination that was impossibly beautiful.

"Fabray." Santana nodded at Quinn.

They weren't meant to even speak.

It was in the code.

Her blonde hair was out today, falling perfectly onto her shoulders.

Quinn's demeanour suddenly changed, a small smile graced her lips. A light danced in her eyes.

Santana's memory brought back the countless smiles that had been thrown her way. Some tight lipped, others attempts to woo her, sent under the cover of bright lights and the thumping of the bass. Smiles that started with a twitch of pink lips and ended with the peaking of white teeth. But never had one like *hers*.

Santana decided that a smile would never look better on anyone else.

"Quinn. Call me Quinn."

An alarm went off in Santana's mind. A warning that should have sent Santana's defenses on alert. Should have forced her to utter harsh words, that would cut like daggers at the blonde.

Despite everything, Santana offered her hand to Quinn.

"Santana."

Quinn smiled shyly again. Her head tilted slightly, eyes flickering to meet Santana's.

"Will you show me around this town?"

Had it been anyone else Santana's sharp tongue would've uttered a string of harsh words without hesitation. But instead she crossed her arms and paused. She tilted her chin upwards slightly as though she was contemplating her choice.

There was never a choice when it came to Quinn.

Santana knew her father would kill her.

But she couldn't stop herself if she wanted to..

"There's nothing to see in Lima...but sure..."

—

Quinn watched as Santana walked around the corner. Was Santana alone? Quinn mentally cursed at herself, Santana would bring company (definitely a bodyguard.) She *was* Quinn Fabray for christ's sake.

But she was alone.

Santana was dressed casually. She wore a cropped top that revealed her caramel skin and toned abs. The sweats that she wore sat low on her hips, the peak of the Latina's hipbones in plain sight.

Her hair was out, the gentle Summer breeze played with Santana's raven locks, a few strands danced in the wind.

She was gorgeous.

A goddess.

But she was Santana Lopez.

A Lopez.

She was the enemy.

"Quinn?" Santana had reached her and stopped.

"Hey..." Quinn replied hesitantly, suddenly she was nervous and unsure. *What was she doing? Why was she talking to Santana?*

Santana stood there looking slightly bemused, a casual air of nonchalance surrounded her. The corner of her lip twitched slightly, an indication of Santana's amusement at Quinn's sudden quandary.

"Relax Quinn, I'm not going to shoot you or whatever."

Quinn frowned slightly.

"And what makes you think I haven't planned to kill *you* instead Santana?" Quinn stated.

Santana rolled her eyes playfully. *"Please."*

She dragged out the word.

Quinn's eyes were immediately drawn to Santana's mouth as she enunciated the word. She watched the full lips as they moved and formed the word that easily rolled off Santana's tongue.

Santana's voice was slightly raspy yet Quinn liked the sound. It was like the texture of honeycomb; the slight crunch and sweetness that followed, all combined with the taste of caramel. It was so...Quinn shook her head and pushed the thought away.

"Like I wouldn't be able to take you Fabray." Santana's voice broke Quinn out of her reverie.

Quinn scowled at Santana.

"Don't call me that."

There was a pause.

"Please, Santana."

Something in Santana's eyes shifted, the seemingly permanent scowl and prideful sneer faded and her whole face softened. "Okay."

They stood there looking into each others eyes.

"Let's go." Santana broke eye contact first. She subconsciously reached out and closed her fingers around Quinn's forearm, gently tugging her forward.

Quinn's body erupted in goosebumps. A tingle of warmth shot up Quinn's arm from where Santana's hand was touching her.

Santana jolted at the skin to skin contact and loosened her grip. She withdrew her hand allowing it to fall limply by her side.

"Sorry. It's a habit." Santana mumbled quietly.

"It's alright."

"Well..." Santana trailed off before tilting her head indicating that Quinn should follow her.

She shouldn't follow Santana.

But she did.

—

Santana's eyes flickered sideways and through her lashes she admired the beauty of the blonde beside her. Santana bit her lip, the dimples on her cheeks becoming more prominent.

Quinn.

Why couldn't Santana control herself. It was like whenever Quinn was around she lost her mind. What she was doing now was a great example of that.

She was breaking all the rules in the Lopez Rule Book.

She was befriending a Fabray.

She was showing a Fabray around town.

She was alone.

She was unarmed.

But the glow on Quinn's face as she laughed at Santana's commentary was worth it. Quinn managed to beam at her with the force of ten thousand fucking suns and had somehow managed to make her blush just by offering a simple compliment. She was Santana Lopez and she *did not blush*.

The way her had eyes gleamed, hanging onto every word that came out of Santana's mouth and the radiance of warmth that Quinn's presence brought. The way the soft sunlight had illuminated Quinn's profile, her cheekbones glowing.

It was totally worth it.

The more time Santana spent with Quinn, the more complicated it all got and the more confused Santana became.

Her head screamed at her to stop but her heart thudded loudly in her chest, a personal drumbeat, urging her on.

How could someone be so absolutely flawless?

How could someone be her saviour and yet at the same time be the death of her?

Quinn's laughter softly chimed in her ears.

"Santana! Eat your ice cream, it's melting all over your hands!"

How the fuck did Quinn manage to make a giggle sound so melodic?

Santana's attention snapped down to her hands. The ice cream had melted dripping down the sides of her cone, onto her hands...and just at that second, right onto her shirt.

"Shit."

Quinn rolled her eyes, reached forward and stole the ice cream from Santana's now outstretched hand.

Santana eyes followed Quinn's pink tongue as it poked out of her mouth and skillfully caught the dribbles of melting ice cream running down the sides of the cone. She watched as Quinn swirled the ice cream in her mouth.

Santana felt her own breathing hitch. She clenched her hands into fists by her sides, her nails leaving crescent shaped imprints in the soft flesh of her palm.

Quinn closed her eyes and hummed contently.

"You *were* right, this *does* taste better."

When their gazes met Quinn's pupils were dilated. Quinn's eyes were predominantly brown today, sprinkled with specks of gold. A kaleidoscope of colours that shifted depending on the angle on the light that hit it.

Quinn quickly averted her eyes shyly.

"I think I need to change." Santana blurted.

Quinn licked at Santana's ice cream once more and nodded. "Okay. I'll wait here."

"There's no one home..." Santana started. She quickly shut her mouth, before opening and closing it a few times and then finally continuing.

"...You can come over, so you don't have wait here by yourself.."

Suddenly all her thoughts were in a state of disarray. Santana struggled to make sense of what had happened.

Wait.

Quinn's eyes widened a little before she bit her lip again. A crease appeared between her brows.

"...It's fine if you don't want to though...I get it, the Fabray and Lopez thing." Santana ran her hand through her hair.

They were silent for a while. Each unsure of what to say. The rules they were breaking were suddenly flung to forefront of their minds, the final syllables of their last names still hung in the air between them, ringing in their ears. The tension grew, slowly permeating into the air.

They were walking on a thin line.

"It's your loss, Q" Santana added after a while, shattering the atmosphere and the unseen tension that had been building.

"I'll be back in ten."

Quinn quirked an eyebrow at the Latina. "I'm counting."

Santana.

No, Quinn. Finish your homework.

Quinn sighed at the half finished French homework that lay before her.

"Une rose par n'importe quel autre nom sentirait aussi bon."

Quinn closed her eyes and rubbed her fingers into her temple, trying to ease the pressure that seemed to be building up. It was barely eight, but her head was already reeling.

It didn't help that Yesterday kept playing through her head like a video tape stuck on repeat.

Quinn was playing with fire. (In the form of Santana Lopez.)

When did it get like this?

Texts (1)

Unknown: Q..? Hey, its Santana. I got your number off your friend. -S

Quinn typed out a simple response.

Hi Santana, you know you could've always asked me yesterday ;) -Q

Quinn sighed. Her hand hovered over the reply button.

She shouldn't be doing this?

She hit the send button.

In moments like this they were just Santana and Quinn. Nothing more and nothing less.

Not the daughters of Antonio Lopez and Russell Fabray.

Not the beautiful, ruthless and untouchable daughters of powerful mafia bosses.

Not sworn enemies.

Santana and Quinn lay on Quinn's queen sized bed. The other Fabrays were out of the state (in Florida) for at least a month. (Quinn stayed back for school...not for Santana or anything..)

Quinn's hair was splayed out on the pillow, forming a golden halo around her head. Santana lay nestled under the mess of covers. The digital clock on the bedside table flashed. 10:00am.

Santana shifted closer to Quinn, before kicking off the covers and rolling over onto her back, her arms crossed behind her head. Santana's eyes stared at the smooth white texture of the ceiling, tracing the outlines of the shadows which danced there and noticing the thin cobwebs in one corner.

"I'm meant to hate you, right?"

"Yeah, I'm meant to hate you too." Quinn replied softly.

Santana tentatively reached out and she traced her finger down the length of Quinn's arm. Her finger glided across smooth skin, mapping out unseen patterns and lines.

Quinn shuddered at the contact. Santana's finger left behind a trail of goosebumps on Quinn's skin.

"But I don't want to and I can't seem to."

Santana's fingers brushed the back of Quinn's hand and paused.

Quinn laced their fingers together.

"Me either."

Quinn's hands were soft, they entwined with Santana's tanned ones perfectly. Santana still shivered at the contact. No matter how many times Quinn's skin made contact with hers, there seemed to always be sparks that jumped between their bodies. It was like their touch was electric.

Her heart was beating erratically in her chest and her breathing was irregular.

The butterflies in her stomach returned.

Santana's eyes fluttered shut. She breathed in the vanilla and honey scent as she nuzzled into the crook of Quinn's neck. Slender arms wrapped around her, pulling her impossibly closer.

Santana's fingers found the corner of the covers. She twisted and tugged, fiddling with the material in her hands, bunching it up before letting it fall haphazardly again. Santana lay there contently basking in Quinn's warm glow. The blonde's nose brushed Santana's skin before soft lips pressed at the nape of her neck.

Santana's heart was melting from one simple touch, and she knew was falling for Quinn Fabray.

—

It was raining outside. The rain pattered incessantly against the window panes. To Quinn, it didn't matter what the weather was like. It was going to rain tomorrow no matter what happened today.

Quinn could hear the light footsteps of the Latina as she came up behind Quinn and felt the warmth that radiated off Santana as she slipped her arms around the blonde's waist. Quinn felt a hot puff of air caress her cheek before she was surrounded by the smell of Santana's shampoo. A warm weight rested itself on her shoulder.

"What are you thinking about?"

Quinn sighed, her chest rising then falling as she expelled the air from her lungs. She leaned back into Santana's body.

"The meeting tomorrow."

Tomorrow things would change.

Santana didn't offer her grand words of promise. She didn't lie and say everything would be okay. All Santana did was press a simple kiss into Quinn's hair. To Quinn, the gesture spoke volumes. It was better than any spoken words of comfort, better than what a few words could've offered.

But even that couldn't stop the feeling of sadness, like waves greeting a shore, wash over Quinn. It wouldn't stop the sun from rising again tomorrow. Nothing would.

They would have to forget each other.

"Stop thinking so much."

The words were whispered into her ear. She could almost hear the small smile that would have accompanied the words had they been facing each other.

Santana pulled away, Quinn immediately felt cold at the lost of contact. Santana's hands rested on either sides of her arms, gently spinning Quinn around to face her. Santana's eyes were open and honest. Brown pools of melted chocolate that glistened with emotion.

It was too much, Quinn felt her own tears welling up. The pain, desperation and sadness that once was settled heavy in her chest threatened to spill unbridled from her eyes.

"Why can't we can't have a happy ending." Her voice was thick, she tried to swallow the lump that had formed in her throat. The silent tears rolled down her face.

Santana closed her eyes, her voice cracked when she replied.

"We can't."

They had agreed on this and Quinn had dreaded this moment ever since they had agreed.

After tonight Santana was a Lopez and Quinn a Fabray.

They were to hate each other. To never see each other again, to eventually forget everything that happened between them, and to somehow muster the ability to feel pure hatred for one another.

"We can't." Quinn echoed defeatedly.

Her eyes dropped to the floor, downcast. She blinked back the fresh tears that had formed. Her body felt weak, her mind felt drained, it was like she no longer had the energy to keep doing this. There was no use. Everything was doomed from the start.

"Quinn, look at me..."

Santana's mocha eyes sought out her hazel.

I love you, Quinn.

The forbidden words were left unspoken. They didn't need to be. Quinn could see them written so plainly on Santana's face, flittering behind the multitude of emotions the Latina also currently felt. The words were conveyed by the steady gaze of Santana's eyes, eliciting a soft smile from Quinn.

Santana stepped forward, closing the distance between them once again. Quinn snaked her arms around Santana's waist, resting them just above the brunette's waist. Quinn leaned forward resting their foreheads together, their noses barely brushing.

Santana's eyes flickered to Quinn's lips and her tongue flicked over her own lips as she wetted them.

Quinn could feel Santana's breath tickling her lips, she could see the steady rise and fall of Santana's chest and knew that the heart that beat inside Santana's chest belonged solely to Quinn.

They wouldn't have tomorrow but they had tonight.

And for now, it was enough.

—

"Russell Fabray."

"Antonio Lopez."

The two men sized each other up, eyes sharp and ready to pick out the other's weakness. The tension was so thick it could be cut with a knife. Antonio tilted his hat, his voice's usual warm tone was cold. Russell's blue eyes were icy and stone hard.

The men on both sides gripped the barrels of their guns tightly, knuckles turning white. At the request of both the families, The Fabrays and Lopezs had gathered at an abandoned warehouse out of town.

In neutral ground.

Russell was flanked by his men. They were all dressed in simple black, the colour of death. Hands were gripped menacingly on their rifles and handguns. Quinn stood to her father's right, impassive. She was dressed in a simple black dress, her eyes were lined with black eyeliner.

She was absolutely stunning.

But she was Quinn Fabray.

Santana felt slightly overdressed in her flowing red dress. Despite how impractical her dress looked, it was well designed. Should the situation arise, the bottom of her dress could be removed in an instant, (leaving her with a short and tight dress) and revealing the handguns strapped to her body. But at this moment they remained hidden. This was no tea party. Business had to be dealt with and given their past history, it was bound to end in bloodshed.

Santana's emotions were hidden behind her mask, locked deep behind the facade she had created. A emotionless, cold and distant. To the outsider, she was the perfect representation of the Lopez clan.

Attractive. Confident. Sexy.

Cocky. Fiery. Intelligent.

"We do not mean to disrespect you but...why are the Fabrays on our turf? I thought we had come to an agreement, Russell."

Antonio's voice echoed in the warehouse, ringing in everyone's ears. Beneath the polite words there was an underlying hint of anger. A challenge.

Russell smiled but it never reached his eyes. His smile did nothing to melt the frigid blue of the orbs. When he spoke his tone was oddly even and calm.

"We had a major operation that needed to be completed in this region. The client insisted we personally complete the job. This is a temporary arrangement. We do not mean to trespass."

Santana felt her eyes drifting over to Quinn, a sharp ache pierced at her heart when she saw the blonde. Over 24 hours ago she had been tangled in Quinn's arms, lost in their own thoughts, encapsulated in a contemplative silence. In less than a day she had lost it all. Now standing before her, regarding the scene unfold with disdain wasn't the same Quinn. In her place, Santana saw was someone else. The irony of all this was the fact that the Santana that stood in her own place was too a different person entirely.

Santana's stomach dipped uncomfortably but she was not able to pinpoint the exact cause of it.

Quinn looked the same as when Santana had first caught sight of her.

Beautiful. Dangerous. Deadly.

Calculating. Manipulative. A heartbreaker.

The single braid of messy golden hair fell across Quinn's left shoulder. In some places strands escaped, golden tresses sticking out in all directions, but Quinn still somehow managed to make the slightly ruffled hair look good. The uncomfortable feeling in her stomach intensified and Santana shifted through her emotions, her thoughts trying to discern what she should have been thinking from what she as Santana, a Lopez shouldn't be feeling.

She should be feeling confident, cocky, and pure hatred towards the Fabrays.

She shouldn't be feeling the gentle tug that drew her towards the blonde or the ripples of desperation and sadness which spread like waves across her heart; like they would across the surface of water.

Amongst the swarm of emotions that threatened to overwhelm her, there was one particular thought which confused her. It occurred to her that foreign sensation in her stomach because she felt intimidated.

She felt intimidated by *Quinn*. The carefree smiles that once lit up Quinn's face was now replaced with a mask much like her own. Quinn's walls were suddenly up, locking her out, and frankly it intimidated Santana. The way Quinn was able to shut down so fast; to slip into her role so easily. Santana felt naked behind the flimsy mask that she knew sure Quinn could see right through.

They had promised to forget. It was one simple job.

Why was it so hard?

The hazel eyes sought out brown. When their eyes met, Santana's heart beat quickened, and her heart thudded loudly in her chest. She could feel the way her dark brown eyes pleaded with the hazel, glistening over with unshed tears. She didn't know what she was pleading for. Maybe Santana was begging Quinn for confirmation that this all to be a bad dream and that she would wake up still encompassed by the blonde's scent. Maybe the chocolate orbs were searching for a glimpse of softness behind the guarded eyes. Santana watched as the walls momentarily crumbled and conflicting emotions flashed across the blonde's eyes. Quinn turned her head away jaw clenched.

"We respect you. You are the best in your area. We would've liked a heads up on this though."

Santana's attention was drawn back to the conversation between the two leaders.

At Antonio's words, anger flashed in Russell's blue eyes. The man's nostrils flared and he clenched and unclenched his jaw several times. He snarled at Antonio, seething with rage.

"What about our man that was killed? Did you give us a heads up on that one?" Russell spoke through gritted teeth.

Surprise flashed across Antonio face for a split second before it disappeared again. The older Lopez narrowed his eyes, disbelief coloured his face.

"Who?"

"Dave Karofsky." Russell's tone was clipped. "My son-in-law."

The last part of Russell's reply was spat at Antonio laced with venom and deep hatred.

Dave Karofsky. The man had repeatedly insulted the Lopez clan. He had never been quiet about his loathing for the Lopezes. Russell was well aware of the man's nightly actions, often arriving home late after a drunken fight with someone who had been unlucky enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The increasing tensions between the two clans further fueled Dave's thick headed and brash actions.

At Dave Karofsky's name Antonio just knew who did it. He turned around and glared at his nephew. His brown eyes were dark.

Dave Karofsky had met his match in the equally hot headed Carlos Lopez. The Lopez was well known for his hatred towards the Fabrays. He was cunning and quick with his sharp tongue,

shooting out harsh words that often hit a nerve at his opponent. But he could be deceptively charming, like a snake. And he was even quicker with his gun.

Carlos's laughter suddenly rang out, the chuckling sound of a manic, startling a few of the men. It was the laughter of someone who wasn't the slightest bit remorseful. Carlo's head was thrown back and in that moment he looked completely unhinged and crazy.

"Karofsky was a wimp. He died begging for mercy!"

Carlos's eyes were glazed over. His lips upturned into a sneer.

"Begging for his life. On his knees. Where he belonged. It wasn't too hard to convince him to do what he did with me. He seemed to enjoy himself, especially what he did for me with his mouth and tongue. It was obvious. Dave was gay."

The sequence that followed seemed like a choreographed scene from a movie. The mechanical cocking of several guns, followed by the simultaneous sounds of gunshots ringing. A blossom of red blood from Carlos's body as he jerked backwards, metal bullets burying themselves into his flesh and vital organs.

Carlos was dead within a heartbeat.

And suddenly the bloodshed began, the men dived for cover, using the abandoned metal containers, a retreat from where they fired rounds after rounds of bullets. Antonio's men were quick and they returned fire.

Bullets flew, they ricocheted off the walls and the metal railings around the warehouse. Sparks jumped wherever the bullets met metal. They kicked up dust where they landed on the ground. The warehouse was filled with the smell of gunpowder and sounds of chaos. The shouting of men mixing with the gunfire that incessantly rang from their machine guns.

People were cut down with bullets, falling mid step, in an explosion of blood and pained cries.

Blood splatters covered the walls and the red liquid of life (or death in this case) seeped into the ground, permanently staining the floors of the warehouse.

Santana's reflexes kicked in, she dived to the side and nailing one of Fabray's men with a bullet into the head. An instant kill. The impact as she collided with the hard ground jarred her body. Santana gritted her teeth and resumed a crouching position.

Her eyes desperately searched for Quinn, flickering around the warehouse. Amongst all the hatred that filled the room and fueled the current battle, all Santana could think of was Quinn.

Quinn needed to be safe.

Fuck this shit.

Fuck this fucking family feud.

Santana grip on her handgun tightened. To her right lay a dead man, Santana shoved her handgun into the holster at her hip and grabbed the discarded machine gun, ignoring the crusted blood at its muzzle.

When her ears picked up Quinn's panicked voice, Santana rolled out from where she had taken cover. She watched as Quinn took down two of Antonio's men using the butt of the rifle she held. They landed with a thud at the blonde's feet.

Santana was suddenly by her side, she caught the blonde, ensnarling Quinn's wrist with her hand.

Quinn eyes widened in surprise. Santana's grip on her wrist was firm as she dragged Quinn around the corner. Their footsteps were light and soft in comparison to the chaos unfolding around them. The concrete pillar was cold to the touch and Quinn shivered as it made contact with her back. A warmth pressed itself up against her front and she was suddenly surrounded by Santana's scent. Santana raised a finger to her lips silencing any protests that were about to escape from Quinn's mouth.

Quinn closed her mouth, focusing on steadying her own heavy breathing. Santana's body was flush against her, the Latina's chest rapidly rose and fell, blowing warm air onto the bare skin at the juncture between Quinn's neck and her collar bone. Quinn felt her own pulse quicken. She wasn't sure if it was due to their close proximity, the way tingles dancing across her skin where Santana's breath hit her. Or if it was the adrenaline rush that still coursed through her body, her reactions to the gun shots that continuous sounded, a defense mechanism.

But for some reason, even under these circumstances, she felt so at peace. She was in Santana's arms again and that was where she belonged.

They locked eyes.

Santana watched as Quinn's hazel eyes became stormy.

Quinn could feel those chocolate orbs regarding her. It was as if Santana could see right into her soul. Deciphering the multitude of colours and emotions that swirled in Quinn's eyes. The stony wall that Quinn had erected had long crumbled to dust and in that moment, Quinn knew Santana could see everything. Santana eyes held her gaze, seemingly shifting through her thoughts and carefully picking out the emotions that lay beneath the ruins of her walls. She could feel Quinn's fear, hear her desperation, taste sadness on the tip of her own tongue, and see the inner turmoil, a hurricane that destroyed all in its path.

The war between her love for Santana and her loyalty to her father was destroying her.

The Santana Lopez she knew, the one she fell in love with was nothing like what her family had painted her out to be. This Santana Lopez had caused Quinn to question everything she believed.

Everything her father had taught her. Drilled in from a young age, embedded so deep within her mind that she was so sure the thoughts had been her own. The same thoughts that the Fabray's as a collective shared, something resemblant of a family trait.

Quinn wasn't meant to talk to the Lopez heir. She wasn't sure what had possessed her that fateful day. Thousands of outcomes could have resulted from that interaction. Every single one that Quinn had imagined would have been more believable than what had actually happened. She had prepared for Santana's inevitable hostility and she had planned it out. She was Quinn Fabray after all and she was going to show Santana Lopez who was in charge. Show her why the Fabrays were so well known. She had planned to undermine Santana's position within the "high school hierarchy". To make her life living hell.

At most they would just pass each other in the hallways. Never sparing each other a second glance. She was never meant to allow herself to get close.

And they would have become the enemies they were destined to be.

She hadn't planned on this happening.

"I love you, Santana."

Santana's eyes widened. Quinn watched as both panic and then pain flashed across those wide brown orbs.

"We can't." Santana whispered, her voice barely audible. Santana's eyelids fluttered shut, hiding her emotions away from the hazel pair watching her. The words that came out of her own mouth stung at her tongue and stabbed at Santana's heart like a dagger.

We can't.

Santana felt her throat close up, her lips began to quiver slightly and a heavy weight rested itself on her chest. Santana felt like she was going to combust. Her brain seemed to be in a swirling mess of conflicting emotions, each as strong as the other.

Quinn. Her heart bloomed in her chest before constricting painfully. She was in love with Quinn but she would never have a chance to be with her.

We can't.

"I love you, Santana." Quinn said louder, her slightly husky voice never wavered.

Santana exhaled and Quinn could almost taste the frustration on her breath as it ghosted over her own lips. Santana brown eyes were met with a mess of green and brown. Quinn's gaze sent a warm tingling sensation surging through her body. It hit her with so much force leaving her breathless. The blonde's love for Santana was reflected so clear in those shining hazel orbs.

Santana's eyes flickered down to Quinn's parted lips. There was a sharp intake of air as Quinn's breathing hitched.

Then Quinn leaned forward.

Santana's pulse quickened and she closed her eyes. Her stomach dropped and Santana felt like she was suddenly in freefall. The world around her disappeared and she was surrounded by the scent of vanilla and honey. It was just Quinn and herself.

"Santana Lopez!" Puck shouted at her, but she didn't hear it. The world around her was muffled, the only sound she could hear was the beating of her heart and the sound of blood coursing through her veins.

Fuck it.

Santana took a deep breath and closed the distance between their lips.

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Santana Lopez, by Brittanyismyunicorn

Quinn's P.O.V

I'll never understand this country's obsession with Halloween. It's a just another day but I guess indulging in candy and dressing up is part of the fun. I like Halloween but it's not my favorite day of the year and this year I have to help Puck with his Halloween party. It's at his grandmothers ranch so we're setting up things on the yard to scare people later tonight. There's this old barn in the back of his grandmother's house that he wants to make into something of a haunted house but it's not really working out.

"Q, What would I have to pay you to keep you in this barn and scare the shit out of people who come near it?" Puck asks as he pours fake blood on the ground.

"You definitely don't have enough." I tell him.

"How about an I owe you?" He asks and I shake my head.

"Fine. I'm going to go head to the store to get some more decorations. We need more lights and I have to get another fog machine. Coming with?" He asks and I shake my head.

"I'll finish setting up what we have here." He nods his head and walks past me out of the barn and to his car. As he pulls off I get to work laying down skeleton pieces and fake guts...though they look incredibly convincing.

"That shit is creepy as hell." I jump in surprise and turn around to see a girl standing at the doors or the barn.

"You scared the shit out of me." I say and she chuckles.

"I can tell. You shouldn't be so jumpy." She says with a smirk on her lips as she leans against the door frame.

"Are you Pucks friend?" I ask as I walk towards her. She shakes her head.

"Neighbor. I was just walking and noticed you. I guess you guys are really into Halloween huh?" She says and I shrug my shoulders.

"I'm not but I do like a good party." I tell her.

"You're throwing a party?" She asks.

"My friend is. I'm just helping out and attending." I say and she nods her head.

"It's just you and him setting up?" She asks.

"No, our other friends are coming. It's just a long drive here from where we stay." She nods her head.

"You should come to the party." I tell her and she glances at me then looks to the other side of the barn.

"Thanks for the invite but I'll pass."

"Why? It's free food, free drinks." I say and she shrugs.

"If I come, will you keep me company for the night?" I chuckle lightly and nod my head.

"Sure." I'm sure she's flirting with me but I don't mind. She is pretty cute.

"Good, I'll meet you back here around...10?" I nod my head and turn back to the box of decorations.

"Since you're here, want to help me set this up?" I ask.

"As fun as that sounds, I don't do labor but I will watch you climb that ladder if you need to get on the top level." I look up at the smirk on her face and she continues.

"For support, make sure you don't fall and hurt yourself."

"You just want to look at my ass." I say and she shrugs.

"I was going to do that anyway. What's your name?" She asks me.

"Quinn, what's yours?"

"Santana. So you have a boyfriend or anything?" She asks and I shake my head.

"I'm very single. How about you?" I ask.

"I've been single so long I wouldn't remember how to be in a relationship." I nod.

"I know the feeling." I've had my string of relationships but none of them have been worth anything. At least I still have time since I'm only twenty-two. As we continue talking, I really notice Santana's features. High cheek bones, small stature, nice...um...she's well endowed in the chest region. She's honestly gorgeous, how could she be single? Santana is pretty funny, I think we have the same sense of humor. She's easy to be around too and though she said she doesn't do work, she did help me out. The only thing I didn't like is that she had to leave. It was right before Puck got back and everyone else showed up to help.

"Good job Q." Puck says as he looks over the barn. I roll my eyes and start to walk back to the house.

"Yeah yeah, the neighbor helped though." I say as Puck catches up with me.

"Cool. Let's finish up inside." He says as he puts his arm around my shoulder.

The party is a huge hit. There's people having fun in the house and people in the backyard and by the barn enjoying the scenery and effects to scare the shit out of them. I went back there once and jumped out at a group of people which made them all run away. It was hilarious. Now it's around ten and I'm going to meet Santana by the barn. It's completely empty now because

everyone is inside having a good time. I walk to the barn doors and before I step inside, I hear a voice.

"You're late." She says and I turn around.

"I'm not. It's like 9:59." I tell her but she shakes her head.

"It's five past ten." She tells me and I check my phone for the time. She's right.

"Oh, well it's just five minutes." I say and she nods then shrugs.

"Nice costume." She says, comment on my sexy police officers costume.

"Plan on using those handcuffs tonight?" She says referring to the handcuffs hanging off my waist and I chuckle.

"No not really."

"Maybe I'll change your mind by the end of the night." She says with a smirk then walks past me and into the barn.

"You don't want to go inside?" I ask. She shakes her head and sits on a barrel of hay.

"I don't like being surrounded by people. Let's just sit out here for a little." She pats the empty space next to her and I shrug and sit down.

"Enjoying your night?" She asks me.

"Yeah, this party has been really fun. You want me to get you a drink or something?"

"No, I don't drink."

"Water?" I offer but she shakes her head. Falling into conversation with Santana is really easy. Something about her just makes her easy to talk to. I hadn't noticed we'd been out here an hour until I got a text message. Puck wants me to come inside but...not yet. Santana and I begin a game of twenty-one questions and we haven't stopped. The last turn was mine and I asked when her first kiss was.

"I was nine. My friend Carl, I always hated his name but he and I were always together when we were younger. We lived a few houses from each other and every day after school we'd race home so we could do our homework then go outside. We'd always go to this little pond not too far from here and skip rocks since there wasn't much to do for fun. Anyway, we were skipping rocks one day and he just kissed me." She says.

"He just kissed you? Out of nowhere?" I ask and she nods.

"I punched him in the stomach and ran home. It didn't feel right and I didn't like it."

"Was it because you were young or because it wasn't a girl?"

"Probably because he was a guy. I've always had a liking for women and it's always gotten me in trouble."

"How so?" I ask.

"Well there was this guy. Big fella with more brawn than brain and he had a temper to go along with it so he was feared by most people, but not me. He was dating this beautiful girl named Joanna but everyone called her Pinky because it's the only color she wore. I was a tutor back then for anyone who'd pay me. Pinky had trouble with math and came to me. After tutoring her a few times, she kissed me and every time she came to be tutored...well she came in more than one way. Her boyfriend eventually found out and one day while I was walking home -"

"Quinn!" I hear from my right. I turn my head and see Sam standing there.

"What?" I say.

"Puck says come on already." I roll my eyes and stand. Sam walks out the doors and I turn to Santana before leaving.

"I'll be right back, unless you want to come?" I ask and she shakes her head as she stands.

"It was nice meeting you Quinn." She says then kisses my cheek. Her lips were cold and slightly clammy but oddly soft. The kiss was brief and light but I missed the contact once it was gone.

"See ya later." She says then walks out of the barn. I follow but when she turns the corner, I keep walking and run a little to catch up with Sam.

"Who were you talking to?" He asks me.

"Santana, duh. I know you saw her when you came in." I say and Sam doesn't respond. We enter the house and walk into the dining room where everyone is gathered. Puck is standing on top of table with a drink in his hand.

"Alright, everybody shut up!" He says and the murmured voices slowly come to a stop.

"Now, I'm going to tell you guys a story. A true story." He says then climbs off the table, Sam cuts the lights from behind Puck and a picture is projected onto the wall in front of everyone. It's just a picture of the neighborhood from a long time ago, from what I can tell.

"Fifty years ago in this neighborhood on this day, my grandmother's best friend was murdered in the field right next to this house, well her body was found there anyway." Puck says and then the picture changes to a girl smiling, who looks just like...oh my god...

"Santana Lopez was murdered in 1964 for being a lady lover by this douche." Puck says then the picture changes to a young guy, tall with a very muscular build.

"James Caldwell. This guy probably invented fucking steroids." The crowd laughs a little and Puck continues.

"His girlfriend was Joanna Richards but also known as Pinky. She and Santana started lady loving and James, being the big roid raging jackass that he was, got pissed about it. Who gets pissed about their girl being with another chick? But anyway, on Halloween night 1964, Santana was walking home minding her own business, when bam!" Puck says loudly and some of the crowd jumps then laughs at themselves.

"She's hit by a car. A car driven by James Jackass himself but Santana survived the impact. She was dazed but she fought James once he walked up to her but she couldn't fight a bat. James beat her mercilessly until her life was taken and her limp body laid on the concrete. Then he picked her up and tossed her into that field where she was found the next day." A few people say 'Aw' and others shake or bow their heads.

"It's fucked up I know." Puck says.

"So now, every Halloween Santana comes back for revenge. She kills men brutally, no one being able to determine the cause of death after their remains have been found and she seduces women and they're never seen again. So some of you fuckers are going to die tonight." Puck says in an eery voice.

"But until then drink up bitches!" Puck says as he raises his cup and the room erupts in noise as everyone cheers and begins to drink again.

Holy fucking shit...

St Patrick's Day Experiment, by buffy46143

"Santana, why do you even want to go?" Quinn asked through the phone as she sat on her Yale dorm room bed, drawing doodles absentmindedly in her notebook.

"Because it's New Orleans and it's St. Patrick's Day, Q. We could go for Mardi Gras, but your spring break is perfectly timed with another New Orleans party holiday and I think your break should be an actual break. Not just you holed up in your 6x6 cell of a room by yourself while the rest of us are out enjoying our youth."

It had been two weeks since Valentine's Day when Santana and I hooked up and we'd managed to get back to our normal friendship if you could ever call what we had/have a normal. She'd found out about my spring break and the fact that I had no plans and for the last week had been trying to convince me to go to New Orleans with her. A girl she works with has an old college roommate that lives there and has offered a room to us if we want it. It's just like Santana to want to go to a strange city and crash in the guest room of someone she's only talked to on Facebook.

"Who else is going?" I asked her wondering if anyone else from the loft would be there.

"No one. Berry and Hummel are staying in NYC. They're not on break that week. One of the benefits to dropping out of school. It affords me the vacation time I deserve."

"So, just you and me?"

"Yes Fabray, it's just you and me, but don't go thinking I'm trying to get back in your pants or rather those school girl type skirts you're always rocking. Been there. Done that."

"Whatever Santana."

"It's a free place to stay along the parade route. You've never been there. I've never been there. We have two freshly tested and approved fake IDs and a street named Bourbon awaiting us. Just say yes already, Quinn. You know you'll eventually give in anyway because you know I'm right and we'll have a blast."

"I'll let you know."

"Whatever Quinn." She mimicked my earlier response with sarcasm.

I hung up on her as I often did when she got snarky. I don't like rewarding her bad behavior by staying on the phone. I smiled at my phone at the thought of trying to punish her by hanging up on her. Santana probably thought of that more as a reward.

Since our hook-up, things had gotten back to how they were before in my life with the exception of talking to Santana more and ending that thing with the professor for good. I was glad I'd gone back to Mr. Schu's wedding even though I thought it was dumb for a former student to go back to their choir director's wedding, it turned out to be a good thing. I had a fun night with San and it sort of, I don't know, reinvigorated me or something. The truth was that I

would go to New Orleans with her because of two reasons. 1. I had nothing else to do and 2. I missed her. When we were in high school, there was the Unholy Trinity, but that always included Brit. This would really be the first time we'd spend any significant time together just the two of us. Well, there was the wedding, but other than that, our friendship always seemed to include our other best friend or the myriad of guys we dated. I was actually excited to see what kind of trouble she'd get me into on this trip. I swiped my phone and went to my messages. I typed, "*I'm in*" to her and clicked send. It took only a minute for her reply.

Santana: *Of course you are.*

"Smart ass." I said to myself and went back to my doodling.

"Fabray, how much crap did you bring?" Santana asked as she helped me drag my stuff from the train to her car, which we would be driving to New Orleans from New York because that was cheaper than flying and we'd have a car down there since we were still too young to rent one. Plus, she really wanted to road trip it.

"I don't know. Enough stuff for the week. There's a day outfit and a night outfit for all 5 days. I didn't know if we'd go anywhere fancy so I brought a nice dress just in case and then shoes to match." I paused from defending myself. "Wait, why am I defending myself to you? How much crap are you bringing, Lopez?"

"Twice as much as you, obviously."

I laughed at her as we shoved my big suitcase into the trunk next to her suitcase, which looked to be about the same size and then I took a look in the backseat and knew she was right. There were two more bags there and a cooler, which I guessed she had filled with snacks for the trip.

"You ready?" I asked her as she closed the trunk.

"For a 19 hour road trip with you? Please, I'll never be ready."

"We really should have just flown." I remarked thinking about how long 19 hours really is.

"Probably, but neither of us has ever been on a real road trip before unless you count one with New Directions, which I of course do not count. We've got music, air conditioning, my dad's gas card, snacks in the back and two hot college age chicks heading to a party town. Besides, it'll really be more like 17 hours. I drive fast and we're only stopping to pee and grab food to eat in the car. I want my spring break to start as soon as possible." She hopped in the driver's seat and I slid into the passenger seat. She turned the car on and the radio instantly started blaring R&B. She turned it down and looked at me. "Where to, Fabray?"

I looked at her, confused because she knew where we were going. Then, it dawned on me because I knew what she wanted me to say.

"I'm not saying that, San."

"Come on."

I rolled my eyes and looked out the side window, propping my elbow against it.

"Big Easy." I said reluctantly toward the glass.

"Fabray, don't call yourself that. You're not easy. I don't care what that professor you banged told you."

"Bitch." I called her and smiled through the window, rolling it down so I could feel the air on my face as we started driving out of the Manhattan traffic toward our destination.

We were about 8 hours into the long drive when Santana pulled over at a rest stop in the Deep South and got out to stretch her legs. We made an agreement that neither of us would fall asleep while the other was driving, but I had a long day of classes before we left and then got little sleep preparing for the trip, so I woke up after about an hour long nap to the slowing car.

"Where are we?" I asked through squinted eyes before putting my sunglasses back on. We had started early in the morning so it was only about 5 and the sun was setting. I looked through the windshield at Santana who was stretching her body in front of the car. Her shirt lifted just enough for me to see the small of her back.

"We are in the middle of nowhere. The land of Confederate flags and people who if they found out I like girls, would probably hang me so you'll understand why I don't want to be here longer than we have to be." She paused and turned back to me and smiled a mischievous smile. "Think I could get any of these lonely truckers to buy us something from the vending machine?"

"Gross, San. We have snacks and you really need to be careful about who you're flashing those assets to. We are in the middle of nowhere, remember?"

"Don't get jealous, Q. I'm not going to do anything with them. Just use them for Cheetos and Diet Coke."

"Go to the bathroom and grab me something to drink. I'll take over from here." I paused as she rolled her eyes. "And thanks for letting me sleep a little. I was exhausted."

"Don't get used to it, Fabray. There will be no sleeping on this vacation. You and I are going to actually have some damn fun. So, don't go planning any museums or historical tours or anything that I would consider boring."

She turned and walked toward the restrooms. I didn't have to go so I just watched to make sure no one was following her in. She jokes about it, but you never know in a place like this. A few minutes later, she was back at the car with drinks and snacks to fill our now empty cooler and we were on our way, this time with me driving.

A couple of hours later, Santana was asleep next to me using one of my hoodies as a pillow against the window. We got stuck in traffic on a bridge and there was no escape so I just listened to the music that I had turned down a little so it wouldn't wake her and I looked over to watch her scratch her nose. I smiled a little because she really did look cute when she slept. Maybe that's because when she sleeps is about the only time she's quiet.

"Stop staring, Fabray. It's not gonna happen again no matter how much you want it to." She opened her eyes and looked at me.

"I wasn't staring. I was just looking over. You're the one that said there would be no sleeping on this trip." I shoved her shoulder and the cars moved along and soon we were out of the traffic and I started thinking about how I really was staring and wondered why.

"You must be Quinn and Santana. I'm Katie." A short, blonde greeted us immediately as we exited the car we parked on the street between two other cars and the thing barely fit. Quinn made a note to have Santana try to move it since it was her car and she'd never hear the end of it if she scratched it trying to maneuver it out of the tight space.

"Hey, I'm Santana obviously and this is Quinn. Thanks for letting us stay here. That's pretty awesome of you."

"Of course. Courtney said you guys were just looking for a place to crash and that she owed you for saving her from the creepy guy in the fedora. She said you'd fill me in on that, but I've got the extra room since my brother moved in with his girlfriend and the parade is just on that street." She pointed toward the corner. "You can hang with us if you want. We usually start drinking early around here."

"I like the way you think, Katie." Santana stated while I just shook my head at her.

We were standing in the middle of the road and a car was approaching on the narrow, uneven street so we moved to the sidewalk and started unloading our bags. Katie was kind enough to help and we made our way to the other side of the street and into her apartment after taking a few steps on a small, cement porch. The door creaked as we entered. The floor was uneven just like the street outside. There were steps to the left leading upstairs. As I brought in my first bag, I looked up and noticed there was a loft and to the left looked to be a bedroom. The living room was small and there were two futons with an old TV. It had been a while since Quinn had seen a TV that wasn't a flat screen. Katie dropped a bag inside another room, which was straight ahead and Santana followed her in. Quinn set her big bag down so it would be easier for her to move past the futon on the left and between the coffee table and the other futon.

"This is the guest room now that my brother's not here. The bathroom is through there. Feel free to use the closet or any of the drawers. He left most of his old furniture behind since his girlfriend had nicer stuff. It's no taj mahal. The apartment building barely made it through Katrina and the landlord is just above slum, but NOLA is home and I've been here for a while now so, you know, I'll probably die here." She joked while San and I looked around. The bed was a full and the dresser lined the other wall. There were boxes in the corner that probably belonged to Katie's brother. There was no TV or really anything else in the room. The bathroom was to the left and Quinn looked in. It was small. It had one sink immediately on the left, the toilet and then an old tub that had rust around the drain. Using this tiny space with Santana was going to be complicated and Quinn was trying not to be a spoiled brat, but she was used to better accommodations at her dorm at Yale and that was saying something. She tried not to show it to

Katie though because she was nice enough to let them stay for free. "My room is up stairs and you probably noticed I'm a bit of a hoarder. The loft is filled with bins of my crap I need to sort through and decide what to do with. Actually, half of it belongs to my ex-boyfriend who used to live here. That's also a story for another time. I'm sure you two are exhausted."

"Yeah, it took forever to get here. This one drives about 50 on the freeway." Santana pointed at me.

"There was a police officer following us for the last 200 miles. Didn't really want to start my spring break with a speeding ticket or in jail when this one over here inevitably says something snarky to the cop." I pointed at her and got squinted eyes back.

"Snarky, really Fabray?"

"How long have you two been together?" Katie asked.

"What?" I asked her.

"You guys make a cute couple."

"Q and I are not a couple." Santana explained.

"Oh, Courtney just mentioned you were..."

"Gay? Yeah, I am, but Quinn's just my friend."

"Oh, I guess I just assumed and then you two act like... never mind. Well, are you cool sleeping in the same bed because the futons are pretty comfy. I can make one of them up for you. You'd have the TV. There's cable. I just don't watch much myself so I don't have any of the fancy channels." With that sentence, Katie's southern accent was more prominent.

"It's fine. We've shared a bed before." I offered trying to get out of this conversation that had suddenly brought me back to Valentine's Day.

"Okay. Let me at least show you the kitchen and then I'll leave you alone and I have a spare key you can borrow so you can come and go as you please." She showed us the small, tunnel like kitchen and the tiny dining room that was behind the staircase in front of the kitchen. "There are chips and some drinks if you want anything. Tomorrow, I'll start making the real party food for the parade. If you want anything else, the Walgreens is within walking distance and they're open for another hour or so."

"I'm starving actually. Is there anywhere we can get a pizza or a burger or something?" Santana asked. "I'm in the mood for something greasy. It's vacation and I've been off carbs for too long."

"There's a bar across the street. Go up to the second story. You can order there. Food's pretty good. There's another bar about a block over. Same kind of food, but it's an Irish place so they have good deals this week and their fish and chips are pretty good."

"Cool. Thanks."

"Is it safe?" I asked.

"It's about 100 yards away. You can see the apartment from the first one and the other one is brightly lit. Just keep your purses in front of you."

"Yeah, yeah. Quinn, we won't take candy from strangers and I'll go Lima Heights-"

"Santana, do not say anything about Lima Heights Adjacent." That was her go-to bad-ass phrase and I was tired and not in the mood. "It's night time in a strange city. I just want to be smart."

She looked at me and gave me a look that told me she understood. It was a look I don't often get from her.

"We'll take care of each other, Q. Deal?"

"Let's just get something quick. I'm tired."

"I'll show you guys the way. I'm going to get to bed. I have to work tomorrow."

"We'll be quiet when we come in."

"No worries. You're on vacation and it's not like I actually care about my job. I manage the coffee place around the corner."

"Everything seems to be around the corner here." Santana told her while shuttling my big suitcase into the room we'd be sharing.

—

"Welcome to New Orleans."

"This humidity is going to kill my hair. No me gusta." Santana expressed while taking a hair rubber band out of her purse and throwing her hair into a loose ponytail as we walked across the street, past the car and right toward the bar. There were indeed two stories and the top story was at least partly open to the outside. I looked toward the bouncer that was carding a couple of guys as they entered.

"San, they're carding."

"So, we've got our fakes."

"They worked with a hotel bartender in Lima Ohio. This guy probably sees fakes everyday."

"Quinn, calm down. If the IDs don't get us in here, there are a thousand other bars in this town that won't card. I don't even want alcohol right now. I just want food."

"What if he calls the cops?" I was walking behind her slowly as if she could shield me from the bouncer, but given the fact that I'm a lot taller than her, it was a pretty terrible plan on my part.

"What happened to the Quinn Fabray that was in that hotel room that night? I miss her. This new version of you is less bad-ass and more whiney grandma."

We approached the bouncer before I could retort and Santana confidently pulled out her ID and passed it over to him. He looked at it with a flashlight before handing it back to her. Moment of truth.

"You're good." He mumbled and then put his hand out to take mine. I less confidently pulled mine out of my wallet from behind my real driver's license and passed it along.

"Go ahead."

"Thanks buddy." Santana pulled me by the arm inside as if he might change his mind and we walked through the skinny room that had the bar on the left and a row of small tables on the right.

"There." I told her as I spotted the staircase toward the back and we made our way past a crowd of people already decked out in green. "I guess they really do take this holiday seriously around here."

"I'm surprised you don't. You're pasty enough. You've got to have some Irish blood in there somewhere." She joked as we made our way up the stairs speaking loudly over the rock music.

"I'll hop on later and let you know."

We walked up to an outdoor counter where a guy in a dirty apron was preparing bar food. He took our order and we sat at the only available deck style table available.

"That girl is staring at you, San." I told her keeping my glance on a girl who looked to be a little older than us. She was sipping on her beer while staring in our direction. I could tell she was checking out Santana.

"I don't feel like being social tonight. I just want food and sleep."

"Really? She looks cute and I think she's walking over... yeah, she's definitely walking over here."

"Crap."

The girl with a pixie cut approached from behind Santana and looked at me first before looking at her.

"Hi, I'm Jane."

"Hey." I greeted while Santana looked up at her and hesitated before looking at me and getting a "just go with it" look on her face.

"You guys from here or..."

"Babe, do you want a beer? I can go grab you one." Santana said while looking at me. "We're just here for spring break." She said to Jane. "Beer, babe?" She repeated while looking at me with pleading eyes.

"No, I'm good. Thanks, honey." I replied, drawing out the honey for emphasis knowing she'd hate being called that. "We're just getting our food to go. Long trip. We're exhausted." I told Jane

knowing it was a little rude, but that it would probably be better than whatever Santana would tell her to get her to go away.

"Oh okay, well I'll let you two get back to it. Have a good break." She walked off quickly back to her table.

"What was that about?" I asked Santana.

"I told you I wasn't in the mood to be social, Q."

"You didn't have to be a bitch though."

"I work at a bar, Quinn. Forgive me if I'm over people hitting on me left and right all the time and especially when all I want to do is grab some food and go."

"You're not forgiven. You need to learn actual grown up ways to deal with things instead of just going to the be a bitch place."

"Lecture me after I've eaten. It's for your own good, Fabray."

I found myself once again rolling my eyes at her. This was going to be a long vacation.

Our food arrived and we grabbed the brown bags and started the walk back toward the apartment. We weren't sure if Katie would like us eating in the bedroom, but we didn't want to wake her if she was already asleep so we made our way to the bedroom. After eating, we started to unpack our stuff for the night and clothes for the next day. We'd deal with the rest later. I let Santana use the bathroom first to avoid any conflicts I was too tired to deal with and we fell asleep.

I woke to Santana's arm over my stomach and her head next to, but not on my shoulder. I slid out from underneath her and walked over to the bathroom to take a long shower. The door didn't have a lock, but I figured when Santana heard the shower running, she wouldn't just walk in. I was wrong.

"Fabray, how long you going to be in there?"

"Santana, I'm in the shower. Get out." I sort of yelled at her.

"Not like I haven't seen it before. Just let me hop in with you and we can kill two birds with one stone."

"Get out!"

"Not what you said on February 15th before we checked out."

She left the room and closed the door behind her. I finished up and she showered. She made sure to let me know that the hot water ran out on her and that it was my fault. Katie was already at work when we were done getting ready. We decided to leave the car where it was so as to not lose our prime parking spot and walk around a little. Katie did say a lot of stuff was just around the corner.

We left the apartment with our hair pulled back since it wouldn't look any better down with all the humidity and made our way toward Magazine Street.

"So, I think we should grab breakfast and then hit the French Quarter." Santana told me as she pointed across the street at a restaurant. "That looks good."

"That's fine, but the Quarter isn't really that close so we'll need to take the bus. I looked up the stops and everything before I left school so we just need to find the closest one to here."

"I am not getting on a bus, Fabray. We'll take a damn cab."

—

Our breakfast was amazing. We each got something Southern and shared it and after a couple cups of dark roast coffee for energy, we were in a cab headed to the French Quarter.

"San?"

"Yeah?" She was staring out the window at the massive amounts of tourists lining the streets.

"Why did you really want me to come with you?"

"Here?" She looked over at me. "I told you. It's your break and you seemed like you could use one and a free place to crash."

"That's it?"

"Yeah, why?" She sat up and leaned more toward me. "Alright fine, no one else wanted to come with me. Rachel and Kurt couldn't and I can't exactly bring Brittany and I don't really have a lot of other friends. Courtney was originally going to come with me, but she had to back out. She has another job and they wouldn't give her the time off."

"So, I was your last choice? Nice, San."

"What? You asked. Besides, it's not like that." She paused. "You were the most awkward choice."

"Oh." Now, I understood.

"I haven't had a one-night stand with any of them and then tried to have a friendship after the fact." She paused again as the cab pulled over. "Also, I kind of thought it would be cool if we spent some actual time together after what happened. You know, friends getting back to being friends." I paid the driver and we got out and stood on the sidewalk. "If we're on this topic though, why did you agree to come with me?"

"Same, I guess." That was a mostly honest response. "We've changed since McKinley and glee and-"

"You wanted to test us in the outside world. Make sure we could work... as friends."

"Yeah, it's just that sometimes you're friends with people forever and sometimes you lose touch and sometimes you realize you're just different people and you probably aren't going to be living in the same retirement community in Florida when you're 80."

"I will never live in Florida, Fabray. So, if that's your plan, we might as well just part ways now."

I laughed and we started walking down Canal Street taking in our surroundings as we went. It was only noon, but people already had their alcohol and bad behavior on display. We wandered around taking in the sights and sounds of the city. There was a jazz band playing loudly in the street and we stopped to listen. I bought their CD and Santana laughed at me and called me a "typical tourist." We made our way down Bourbon and it was like a whole new world opened up before me. This place definitely wasn't like Lima or New Haven. It had a spirit all its own and while I was slightly grossed out by the smell of stale beer and whatever was mixed with it, I was having a good time.

"Q, we have to go in here and have a hurricane."

She pointed at a sign for Pat O'Brien's.

"Why?"

"Because they're famous for them. Come on."

We headed inside to the courtyard where there was a giant fountain that had water spewing, but also a flame inside it. I had to admit it looked pretty cool. We sat down and the waitress brought us hurricanes. The problem with hurricanes is that even though there's alcohol in them, you don't really taste it. So, after I ordered my second, I started to feel it without realizing it and Santana ordered us our third in to go cups because in this city, we can walk around and drink.

We walked into another bar called Cat's by the locals, but the sign says The Cat's Meow. I was fascinated by these buildings. They all had two stories at least with balconies where beads were hanging, it appeared, year round. We noticed there was karaoke and drunk Santana doesn't take any coaxing to get up on stage so after getting another drink from the bar and having her name called, she hopped on stage and took the microphone.

She sang Valerie because that was her go-to song and I stood to the side and watched her perform to the crowd's delight. The girl really has stage presence. I don't really sing anymore so when she asked me to join her, I declined. I had to admit performing was fun and I missed it sometimes, but the real reason I stayed in glee club was because it was the one place I felt like I could belong. I made a lot of mistakes. There was the pink hair, the tattoo, the trying to get Shelby arrested for child neglect, trying to give my baby to Schuester's wife, and now that I'm thinking of those two things back to back, I really do sound horrible, but glee was the place that kept taking me back. I felt like I was on chance number 15 by the time we graduated, but they still liked me. Santana was kind of the same. Different mistakes, but we were both a part of New Directions and as she finished her song and everyone applauded I remembered how much fun she can be when she's happy.

"You up next, Q?" She asked as she hopped off the stage and approached me and took her drink from my hand.

"No, I'm good. You were great though."

"Of course I was."

We made our way up stairs where there were barely any other people and watched over the railing at the performers below for a while before heading out to the balcony for some much needed air and the view.

"Admit it, you're having fun."

"I am, yes."

"I knew I could get you to let loose again."

"It's not that hard after like 5 drinks, San."

"Just give me credit, Quinn."

"Fine. You win. You are the sole cause for all the fun I've ever had in my life ever."

"That's better."

We left Cat's and started toward what Santana called the gay part of Bourbon Street and I could see the rainbow flags on telephone poles, as we got closer. It was nearing 8 and we hadn't had dinner and after all the drinks I'd had I was definitely more than drunk. Santana would also fail a Breathalyzer.

We made our way into the gay bar and Santana, feeling particularly social saw a girl she thought was hot and approached her immediately. I was left at a table on my own while she flirted. I'm not surprised. I kind of figured this would happen. I'm not one to generally flirt with someone at a bar, but San definitely is and especially when she's drunk.

"Hey, can I get you a drink?"

There was a girl standing in front of me with her jet-black hair in a French braid. My eyes attempted to focus, but my current state was making it difficult to focus on anything.

"No thanks. I need to sober up a little." Great, Quinn! Tell a stranger your super drunk in a bar in a strange city.

"Water then?" She asked seeming nice, but a lot of people seem nice when you're drunk.

"Yeah, that sounds good."

"Are you here by yourself?" She asked in a genuinely concerned tone.

"No, my friend is over there talking to a girl."

"Oh, got it."

I squinted at her trying to process.

"Got what exactly?"

"You're the straight friend tagging along, right?"

"Oh, yeah. I guess."

"Your friend ditched you to flirt."

"Yeah, but it's fine. I knew it would happen."

"I'll be right back."

"Okay." I said to the air since she had already turned to walk toward the bar. A few moments later, she brought me a cup of water. I sat it on the small table in front of me. My brain was telling me not to drink it since a stranger had given it to me. I remembered the videos they made us watch in health class about not taking open drinks at parties.

"I'm Sam." She told me when she noticed I wasn't going to take a drink.

"I know a Sam." I stated loudly as if it was something to declare. "He's a guy though."

She laughed at me and took a drink of her beer.

"Yeah, it's a pretty common name. Where are you from?"

"Ohio, but I go to Yale."

"So, you're a smarty, huh?"

"She's a genius." Santana had apparently noticed Sam and I talking and made her way back over to the table leaving the girl she was talking to alone.

"This is Santana and I'm Quinn. Santana's gay."

"Jesus, Quinn. Hold your liquor a little better."

"You two are funny."

"We're a regular laugh riot, but we're leaving."

"Why? I'm talking to Sam." I told her trying to figure out why we'd be leaving when we just got here.

"This place is boring. I want to go back to Cat's."

"Well, I want to stay here."

"I can make sure she gets back alright if you want to go." Sam looked at Santana and then back to me. "I promise I'm not a crazy person."

"It's okay. I'll just go with her."

"Don't act like I'm forcing you, Q. If you want to stay, stay. I'm just over it. We can just meet back at the apartment."

"I don't think we should separate, San."

"Then fucking come with me."

There was something in her voice that told me she was upset.

"Sam, it was nice to meet you. Sorry, I'm a little tipsy and didn't actually drink the water you brought me because it could have had drugs in it."

She laughed again.

"There are no drugs in your water, I promise."

"That's exactly what someone trying to drug my hot friend, Quinn over here would say."

"I guess you're right. It was nice meeting you too. I'm here for the next few days if you guys are around." She wrote her number on a napkin and handed it to Quinn.

"Cool. Thanks. Bye."

Santana took my hand and we left the bar, making our way back toward Cat's.

"I was thinking maybe we just hit up Cat's for another couple of drinks and then-"

"San, what happened back there? We weren't even there ten minutes and you're ready to go. I thought you were talking to that girl."

"She was lame. A math major at USC. Who majors in math? Just use a calculator."

"Really?"

"Yes, really." She paused to look at me and then stopped walking. I stopped to and leaned against the wall of a building to make sure I could stand upright. "Look, she was rude and I didn't really want to talk to her anymore no matter how hot she was."

"What did she say?"

"She told me I was probably one of those girls who would be gay until graduation."

"She what?" I was growing upset.

"I walked up and did my thing. It's been a while since I've flirted. Well, I never really had to flirt before. I mean, I dated Brit and then hooked up with you and that's the experience of my dating girls. Well, unless you count Dani and I wouldn't since we barely even touched each other and she was always off doing her own thing and then she just kind of disappeared." She paused to, I guess, remember her brief relationship. "Anyway, when I walked up and started talking, it was fine until I told her how old I was. I should have just told her 21, but I said I was 19 and she said she was 24 and she told me that she didn't hook up with girls that young. It's not like I was planning to fuck her, but some making out would have been fun. She seemed kind of stuck up. A little like you in that way."

"Hey!"

"Sorry. Anyway, she said I was probably just some straight girl experimenting or maybe bi and she doesn't do bi girls."

"Those were her words?"

"Yeah, but I threw some patented Lopez bitch remarks right back at her and then joined you and your new girlfriend."

"Sam is not my new girlfriend. I don't have an old girlfriend." I was very drunk.

"Come on, Quinn. Let's get you some food and head back to the apartment."

"It's not even 9 yet."

"Yeah, but we've been at it all day and I'm kind of ready to call it a night. We can stay out if you want to though. I kind of just pulled you away. Sorry, I just didn't want to be there while that judgmental bitch was there."

"I understand. Besides, I did get a number. That makes one of us." I joked with her.

"Who writes their number on a napkin anymore?" She joked back and we headed to where we knew the cabs would be lining up dropping off people for their night of debauchery just as we were wrapping ours up. We had the driver stop at a hole in the wall restaurant off of Magazine that we knew was close to Katie's apartment. We ate quickly and walked the rest of the block to Katie's.

"Hey, you two. You're back early." She was sitting on one of the futon's with her laptop.

"Yeah, we're exhausted. Good time though."

"Well, rest up because tomorrow's going to be long too. It's an all day, all night affair around here."

"I can't believe I'm about to go to bed and it's only 10pm."

"You're a regular party animal, Lopez." I walked past Katie and into the bedroom where I promptly fell onto the bed face down. I heard Santana say good night to Katie and close the door behind her when she got into the room.

"Fabray, you are a mess. You can't sleep like that."

"It's fine."

"No, it's not. You're taking up the whole damn bed."

She moved my legs and I was then forced to roll over and to one side of the bed. She lay down next to me.

"You still drunk?" She asked me.

"Yeah, a little."

"Me too."

"Wanna just fall asleep in our clothes because I don't even want to move to put on pajamas?"

"Hey Quinn?"

"Yeah?"

"Would you have done anything with that girl tonight?"

"Who? Sam?"

"Yeah?"

"Anything like what?" I looked over at her without moving my body. She rolled onto her side to face me.

"You know what I mean."

"Oh, no."

"Really?"

"San, I talked to her for like 3 minutes. She seems nice, but I wouldn't have done anything with her."

"Because she's a girl or because you just met her?"

"My brain is not working at full capacity. Spit it out, San."

"Since Valentine's Day have you thought about... God, this is lame. Have you thought about..."

I rolled to face her.

"Are you asking me if I'm gay?"

"No, I just... I don't know. Forget it. Just go to sleep."

"Santana, stop. Just tell me what you want to know."

She paused and I could see in her eyes that she was trying to find the right way to say whatever she was trying to say.

"Did you like it?"

"Sex with you?"

"We never talked about it. You got on your plane the next day and I got on mine and we've talked since, but not about that."

"San, you know I did. I mean, we did it more than once."

"It's different hearing you actually say it though."

"Well, I did. Happy?"

She leaned in.

"So did I."

"San..."

"I didn't want to say anything because you said you didn't want to do it again, but-"

"You're taking it out of context."

"No, I'm not, Fabray. You were pretty clear after the first time."

"Why are we even talking about this?"

"Because I'm vulnerable and drunk and I just want to know if you've thought about it since then."

"Of course I've thought about it."

She leaned in further, sliding her body over a little until she was a few inches away.

"And?"

"We can't do it again, San."

"Why not?"

"Because it's not what either of us actually wants."

"You don't want me?" I could tell she was being facetious, but there was a seriousness in her voice too. It was the vulnerability that comes out when she's drunk.

"Taking things out of context again, San." I looked into her eyes. "I don't know what I am."

She looked confused.

"What?"

"I liked what we did. What does that make me?"

"Quinn."

"San-"

"No, I'm serious. You can just be Quinn for now. You don't have to make a grand declaration or anything. At least not to me."

"Then, why did you ask?"

"Because I've wanted to do it again and I didn't know how to tell you or if I should tell you. I don't want to ruin this." She pointed back and forth in the small space between us. "I might just be drunk or maybe just horny. It's been a while."

"So, you want sex?" I stated directly.

"Not when you make it sound like that. I just liked it too and I thought maybe I'd see if you had thought about doing it again."

"I don't do friends with benefits, Santana."

"You don't really do relationships either, Quinn. Most of the ones you've had were pretty terrible and admit it, you didn't actually love any of them."

"I've got a new outlook on relationships. I'm not going to let anyone define me or use them to try to make me happy. I'm going to be happy and then find someone who adds to that. I'm over just dating to have someone on my arm."

Santana smiled at me.

"I wish you luck, blondie." She rolled away from me.

"What? That's it? The discussion's over?"

"You've pretty much made your opinion clear."

"Then, I must still be drunk because I feel like things just got a whole lot foggier."

"I was just testing the waters, Quinn. You're hot and I'm hot. The sex was hot is all I'm saying."

I had a feeling that wasn't really all she was saying, but that she was done talking. I rolled over and faced the wall, but my eyes were still open contemplating what had just happened. The alcohol was starting to wear off, but I felt like I would need to wake up tomorrow after sleeping it off before I could begin to really understand it.

When I woke, I was still in my clothes from the night before and I smelled like cigarette smoke. I made a mental note to give Katie money in case she wanted to dry clean these bed linens after we left and I headed to the bathroom to shower and get ready for the day. It was only 8am so I decided to let Santana sleep in. Also, I wasn't really ready to talk to her so I thought it would be best to stay away from her and just hope she was drunk enough that she'd forget about the whole, awkward thing. I went to the kitchen and found Katie there.

"Happy St. Patrick's Day!" She said loudly.

"Yeah, you too." That was my groggy reply.

"Oh sorry, you hung over?"

"No, I'm okay. Just still half asleep I think. Can I help with anything?" She was in the middle of making what looked to be like three things.

"Nah, I'm good. I'm just finishing up the 7 layer dip and the crock pot is already on for the meatballs I made earlier."

"Earlier? How long have you been up?"

"Since 6. I told you things start early today. We're going to start setting up for the parade if you want to help with that. I've already got the chairs outside. I just need them down on the corner before everyone else marks their spot."

"Okay. That seems easy. I can do that."

"And we have a cooler of beer mostly. If you want something else, Walgreens is already open."

"Yeah, I don't think I'm going to drink today."

"You have to drink today. It's a requirement of being in NOLA on St. Patrick's Day."

"I don't know. It didn't seem to work out so well for me last night."

She paused what she was doing and looked at me.

"What happened? Wait. You don't have to tell me. Probably personal."

"It is and it's a long story."

"Is it about you two?" She asked and nodded toward the bedroom. I could hear the shower running behind the wall, which told me Santana was awake and getting ready.

"Yeah, she's just hard to read sometimes."

"She's got a thing for you, doesn't she?"

That was surprising.

"What?"

"I haven't spent much time with you two, but she seems to stare at you a lot. That's why I thought you guys were together. Well, one of the reasons. Courtney mentioned something when she was asking if it was cool if you guys crash since she couldn't make it."

"What did she say?"

"Just that Santana was cool and that she wanted to bring you and that she was pretty sure you two were together or would be together soon. Santana talks about you at work, I guess."

"You sure that was me? She was dating someone for a minute."

"No, I'm sure it was you unless Santana knows another Quinn." She paused as I leaned against the doorframe. "You're not into it and she is. Awkward."

"It's not like that. It's complicated. We have a complicated history."

"Trust me. I get it. My ex and I... well, he's horrible. So, you can imagine if I stuck with him for 3 years that it was complicated."

"Yeah, I just need to talk to her sober, but I really don't want to talk about it at all at the same time. So, that makes it kind of hard. I'll figure it out though. I'll take the chairs out to the corner."

I rushed toward the door because I was getting to the part of the conversation I was trying to avoid. The part where I talk about feelings and Santana and I also wanted to get out of the apartment before she finished with her shower.

—

I stood on the corner and set the chairs up, marking our spot as I was watching others do the same. There was a little shop we had passed the night before that I wanted to go into, but it was closed then. It had some locally made jewelry and sunglasses that looked cool. So, I headed in and started looking around. I found a necklace that I liked and held it up in front of a mirror to get a better look.

"Looks good, Fabray. You gonna get it?"

I turned around to see Santana standing in the doorway.

"No, I was just looking around." I set the necklace back down and walked to the sunglasses.

"Katie said you were out here marking our territory. I was worried you were peeing all over the sidewalk or something." She walked over toward the sunglasses rack.

"Ha ha. I set the chairs up and then wanted to come in here. You got ready fast."

"Turns out when you're not bothering with your hair, you can get ready about 30 minutes faster. Who knew?"

I laughed at her and followed her glance to a pair of sunglasses.

"Try them on." I told her and pulled them from the rack.

"I already have like 10 pair."

"Since when do you turn down buying an accessory? Just try them on." I opened the glasses and slid them on over her ears grazing them in the process and wishing I had sunglasses on because I could tell my eyes were probably wide with surprise at the touch and the feeling it delivered. "They look good." I told her.

"Of course they do. I make everything look good." She looked at herself in the mirror.

"You going to get them?"

"No, but they do look good on me." She took them off and put them back. "We gonna talk about the thing we're not talking about?" She asked, still looking at the sunglasses.

"I don't really want to."

"Neither do I."

"Okay. So, are we just forgetting about it?"

"Sounds good to me." I knew I had a few more days of vacation with her on top of a long drive back to New York. Now was not the time to dive into questions about our friendship, the two-time thing we had and/or my sexual orientation.

"Okay. Well, that's settled then."

"Hey, they've got a bathroom in here. I'm gonna go. Meet you back outside?" She asked.

"You're like 2 minutes from Katie's. Why not go there?"

"Because there happens to have food all over the place that needs to be made and her friends just showed up to help. I think I'm going to stay outside for a while."

"Until all the work's done?"

"Yup."

"Do you think we're taking advantage of her being so nice?"

"Nah, I got her a pretty nice hostess gift."

"You did?" I was shocked that Santana had even thought of it.

"Yeah, Court mentioned her ex took her iPod when they broke up. So, I got her a new one and wrapped it. I put on the card that it was from both of us."

"You got her an iPod?!"

"I had a lot of frequent flyer miles from going back and forth to Lima all the time this year. Turns out, you can convert them to points and those points get you things. I used some of them and paid the difference." She told me and I know I looked surprised. "What? I can be thoughtful sometimes. Go outside. I'll meet you there."

I walked back to the chairs and started people watching. I took out my camera and started taking pictures of people dressed head to toe in green. Some of them brought their dogs and some of those dogs had been dyed green. A few minutes later, Santana emerged and sat next to me. We sat quietly for a few minutes just watching the crowd grow until Katie brought out her friends and introduced them all to us. David and Connor were students at LSU. Vicky was in law school at Tulane and Alison was a dental assistant. We all stood around and talked for a while taking frequent trips back to the air-conditioned apartment for food, cool air and drinks. By noon when the parade actually started, I was already exhausted. I had had 1 beer and the rest was all water in a red solo cup so it appeared I was drinking the hard stuff. Santana had a few more than that.

The parade was in full swing. Guys walked past with flowers. They'd give you one for a kiss on the cheek. Beads were thrown from floats. Santana kept piling them up on my neck, thinking it was hilarious and they started to actually weigh me down. She was very clearly enjoying herself and I watched as she talked to David about how one of the people on the float had thrown a can of Mountain Dew and he caught it just above her head. I heard him say something about saving her life. I thought about how he was barking up the wrong tree because he wasn't getting any from her even if he did save her life.

There's something about Santana Lopez that I don't know that I fully understood before. She is an enigma. My normal reaction when faced with puzzles is to solve them, but I've been trying to solve Santana for years and I've never been able to. One moment, she's the biggest bitch in the world and the next, she's buying a stranger an iPod to say thanks. Maybe she's not meant to be understood. Maybe that's the point.

After the parade, Santana was definitely drunk and was ready to go to dinner and then back to Bourbon Street for a night of more drinking. I was already exhausted from being in the sun all day, but I didn't want to miss out on the fun so I tagged along as we took a cab with Katie and her friends over to the Quarter. We all piled out of the van and walked immediately into party central. The music was loud, the people were obnoxious and it still smelled like beer.

We made our way over to Cat's where Santana performed yet another song and we all had Jello shots on the balcony. I noticed David was getting pretty close to her and his arm went to her back. I suddenly felt very protective. I'm sure David is a good guy, but I didn't like him touching her like that.

"You don't seem like you're having a lot of fun." Connor had walked over to me and handed me another shot he had just purchased from a passing waitress. "Maybe this will help."

"Thanks." I downed it and followed it with a drink of the beer I'd been holding onto for an hour.

"Q, I told you this would be fun." She told me once we were back inside and David and the rest of the gang remained outside.

"Yeah," I replied sarcastically.

"What's wrong with you? I thought you were having a good time."

"I am."

"You don't seem like it. That Connor guy seems into you."

"I've said maybe 10 words to him all day."

"He's a guy, Quinn. They're not known to be into girls talking a lot."

"I guess you would be the expert on guys now." I was surly and I could tell.

"What? Because I'm letting that Dave guy flirt with me? He's buying me drinks. Not like I'm going to put out or anything." She looked at me like she was really looking at me. "Are you jealous, Quinn?"

"No. I'm not jealous. I just don't think you should lead him on."

"He knows I'm gay. I told him a few minutes ago. I figured I'd let him know so he can go find a girl he has a chance of sleeping with tonight, but that's not why you're upset. You're freaking jealous!"

"I'm not jealous, San. I'm tired and a little tipsy and it's been a long day."

"Sure, Fabray. Whatever you say. I'm going back out there. You coming?"

"In a minute."

She walked back out to the balcony and joined in the festivities of throwing beads down on the crowd below. I stood there wondering if she was right. I could feel the alcohol really starting to kick in. I saw David's arm go back to her back and I rolled my eyes. That guy just wouldn't quit. My protective instinct came back out and as I was about to take a step back outside, I stopped.

"Crap." I said it out loud, but it was really more of an internal conversation. I wasn't being protective. I was jealous. I didn't like his hand on her even though I knew nothing would happen. I stayed inside until they all came in and said we were going to do a pub-crawl. I wasn't sure how much more I could take it was only about 9, but this had been the longest day.

We walked from bar to bar. They're literally right next to each other so it's convenient. I had a shot here and a shot there and at about the 4th place, I knew I was drunk. Santana had the same number of drinks as I did, but she's always been able to hold her liquor better than I do. By the

time we were at bar number 5, I was ready to dance, but the place didn't have a dance floor so I walked over the San preparing to tell her I wanted to go somewhere else.

"Hey stranger." It was Sam and she was holding a beer.

"Sam!" I yelled over the music.

"Quinn!" She mimicked back.

"I'm drunk again."

"I can see that." She laughed.

"I promise I'm not an alcoholic or anything. I don't get drink like this all the time."

"You don't get *drink* like this? I think you mean drunk and you're on vacation. Have fun!"

"I am having fun."

"I can tell. Where's your friend?"

"Over there. I was going to tell her that I want to dance, but you can't dance here."

"You can go somewhere else and dance if you want."

"I shouldn't. She's mad at me."

"Why is she mad at you?"

"Because she thinks I'm jealous of some guy, but I'm not."

"You're going to have to explain that one to me."

"He had his arm around her for drinks." I paused. "No, I mean he was getting her drinks and had his arm around her. He thought he could sleep with her."

"Oh." She laughed again. Apparently, I wasn't making sense.

"Santana's gay." I told her.

"I know. I remember."

"I'm not, but I like her. That's why I was jealous."

"I thought she was mad at you because she thought you were jealous."

"Right. I wasn't then, but I was later. I can't tell her. We're friends."

"Why don't you let me get you some water?"

"I think I want to sleep now." I went from wanting to dance to wanting to crash in under a minute. "But it's too early."

"Do you need some coffee maybe?"

"Yes! Coffee!" I shouted triumphantly as if I had never had coffee before and thought it was the greatest idea ever.

"Come on. I'll take you to Café Dumonde. They've got good coffee and beignets."

"Okay."

"Do you want to tell Santana?"

"I'll text her."

We left the bar and made our way to the café. It was pretty packed, but Sam told me it's always like this when she comes to town.

"I live in Atlanta. I come here once a year. My sister lives here."

"Cool."

"You're not really listening to anything I'm saying, are you?" She laughed as I shoved a beignet in my mouth. There was powdered sugar everywhere.

"I am." I wasn't. I sipped on my coffee. My phone rang. I held it up and looked at Santana's face. "It's Santana."

"You gonna answer?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I don't want to talk to her."

"Did you text her to let her know you were here?"

"No."

"You should answer the phone, Quinn. She's probably worried about you."

"Fine." I looked at the phone and through blurry eyes, I slid the thing that made it so I could talk. "Hello."

"Quinn, where the fuck are you?"

"Café with Sam."

"What?! What café and why are you with Sam?"

"I wanted coffee. She brought me here."

"Oh my God, you can't just leave like that, Q. I've been freaking out. Looking for you all up and down the damn street. Why didn't you let me know?"

"I forgot. Don't yell." I told her.

"I'm coming there. Do not go anywhere and put that Sam girl on the damn phone."

"No. I don't want you to talk to her. You'll be nasty."

"Lucy Quinn Fabray, your drunk ass better hand that girl the phone right the hell now."

"She wants to talk to you. I'm sorry." I handed Sam the phone.

"Hello?" She paused. "Yeah, she's fine. She told me she was texting you." Pause. "I'll just bring her over there." Pause. "Give us about 10 minutes." Pause. "Yes, I promise." She hung up and handed me the phone.

"What did she say?"

"That she will have her abuela put a curse on me if I return you in anything less than pristine condition. I told her I'd take you back. You ready?"

"She doesn't even talk to her abuela anymore. So, you're fine." I nodded my head as if to assure her that no curse would be placed.

We headed back over in a cab and I was starting to sober up a little thanks to the carbs and the coffee.

"Sam?"

"Yeah?"

"What do I do about Santana?"

"Do you like her?" She asked me.

"I like things about her. There are things I could do without."

"That's everyone who's ever liked anyone."

"She can be mean."

"So can I. So can you."

"Hey!"

"Did you really forget to text her where you were going?"

I paused to consider it.

"No. I just didn't."

"That's kind of mean Quinn. Like her as more than a friend or not, she sounded scared to death on the phone."

"Yeah, I'll probably pay for that one later."

"Come on. Let's get you back to her before she calls the cops."

The cab pulled over and we walked back in the direction of Cat's. I could see her standing in the street as a crowd dissipated to let a mounted police officer through on his horse. She was staring at her phone as if she was waiting on either a call or text from me or checking the time to see if it had been more than ten minutes. She did look scared. She finally looked up and saw me. I could see her sigh and her shoulders released the tension they were holding. Her hair was somewhat messy from the day and night of partying, but she was beautiful. My eyes seemed to focus only on her and my feet began to push me forward. Sam was standing next to me as we approached.

"As promised." She told Santana when we were only a few feet away.

"Quinn, you can't just run off like that. I thought something had-"

I pulled her in and my lips were on hers' while my arms went around her neck.

"Well, I guess we have our answer." Sam said.

Santana pulled back.

"Quinn, you can't just freaking kiss me! You're drunk."

"I wanted to kiss you. You're drunk too."

"I sobered the hell up when I realized you were missing and you said you didn't want... and now you're fucking kissing me in the middle of the road."

"You said... last night..."

She pulled away entirely and we were just standing in the road.

"I'm going to go find my sister. You guys good to get home?"

"We're fine. Thanks, Sam. Sorry I was pissed at you earlier."

"It's fine. I get it." She paused and looked Santana and then to me and then back to Santana.
"Take care of her."

Santana looked at me.

"I will."

"Quinn, if I don't see you again while you're here, it was... interesting spending time with you."

"I'm sorry, Sam. I'm not normally like this." I was also pretty sober now that I just tried to kiss Santana and had been rejected pretty publicly.

"We've all been there. When you like a girl, it makes you do crazy things."

Santana looked at Sam and then back to me at that comment. Sam said goodbye and walked back into the bar.

"Where's everyone else?"

"Looking for you. I sent them a text that you were on your way back so they'd know you're okay. I told them I was just taking you back to the apartment."

"I think that's a good idea."

"Let's go."

We walked silently past the crowd of not so silent people back toward Canal Street so we could catch another cab to Katie's apartment. We sat next to each other also in silence as I watched through still somewhat blurry vision, the lights and the people of the city pass us by.

Santana paid the driver when we got to the corner and we walked into the apartment feeling the blast of the AC hit us immediately.

"I think I'm going to sleep out here tonight." She told me.

"We're not even going to talk about it?"

"No." It was definitive and she walked into the bedroom, grabbed some stuff and went to the bathroom to get ready for bed. I waited for her to finish before walking into the bedroom and sitting on the edge of the bed. She came out of the bathroom in shorts and a tank top and threw her clothes from the day on top of her suitcase. "Good night, Quinn."

"Why is it we can only talk about this stuff when it's on your terms?" I asked. I had sobered up completely and was now more confident.

"What?" She turned back and stood in the doorway.

"Last night, you ended the discussion and tonight you just decided we're done talking about it. What if I want to talk about it?"

"You're drunk, Quinn. Just go to sleep. We'll deal with this in the morning."

"I'm not drunk, San. You can keep saying that if you want to, but I'm completely sober now and I want to talk about this."

She took a step into the room.

"About what? Last night, you said no. Now, you've suddenly changed your mind?"

"Last night, you were flirting with some girl at a bar and then you basically asked me if I wanted to have sex with you."

"And you said no."

"Because I didn't want to just have sex with you."

She took another step into the room and leaned against the dresser.

"I'm tired, Quinn."

"You were right earlier. I was jealous."

She perked up.

"You were?"

"Yeah, I didn't like the way he was touching you. I thought it was because I was being protective of you, but I realized it was because I was jealous."

She walked over and sat next to me on the bed. My heart started pounding in my chest and in the silence of the apartment, I was sure she could hear it.

"Can you tell me what you want?" She asked me and looked down at her hands in her lap.

"Can you tell me why you really invited me here?"

"You know I hate talking about lame feelings."

"Too bad, Santana."

"Fine." She paused and looked over at me. "Lie down."

"What?"

"Just lie down, Quinn."

I squinted at her and then finally just decided to trust her and I lay down in my spot nearest the wall.

"There."

"The day of the wedding, I prepared myself for misery. Seeing Brit with Sam, boy Sam not girl Sam." She looked at me and I smiled. "I wasn't totally over her and I knew it was going to suck. You and I hadn't left things on the best of terms and Berry and Hummel had their own agendas to take care of so I was basically on my own." She looked over at me. "Then you and I started talking and it was just like this natural thing with you. It felt like how it should feel to talk to someone you've known for years. I'd missed that. Berry and Hummel knew me, but they didn't really *know* me. You know me though."

"Yeah, I do."

"That night was... well, you know. And the next day, when I got on the plane it was like it dawned on me." Another pause with a deep breath. "I'm into you, Q." I smiled and laughed silently as she looked away momentarily. "I'm not ready to start talking love or anything crazy like that, but I like you and not just as a friend. I knew you only wanted it to be that night so I didn't push, but I invited you here for all the reasons I gave, but also because I thought maybe I could test the waters or something. See if there was a chance for us to try this. I messed it up last night talking about sex. I flirted with that girl to see if I could get a reaction out of you and then she turned into a total bitch and I saw you with Sam and thought maybe you could be into girls and that's why I brought it up."

"You're into me?" I asked her with a smile.

"Oh God, don't go getting a big ole head about it, Fabray."

"Why did you basically push me off you when I tried to kiss you?"

"Because you were drunk. That's how it started last time. If it's going to be real, I don't want it to start off that way this time. I wanted to make sure you really meant it."

"I did mean it. I was drunk, but I meant it."

"And you're not drunk now?" She asked with hopeful eyes.

I just shook my head no.

She moved until she was hovering over me.

"Just to be clear, I want to date you. Not just sleep with you. You got that part, right?"

I laughed and put my arms around her back.

"I got that part, yeah."

"And I have no idea how we're going to do this with you at Yale and me in New York."

"Oh my God, Santana! Just kiss me already."

She smiled and leaned down to capture my lips. It felt even better than the first time we kissed, which had been something I'd been thinking about last night. I knew it would continue to be complicated. We still had a lot left to figure out, but it felt good just to be kissing her and knowing that we both wanted more than just a two-time thing. She pulled back for a moment and looked at me.

"I forgot. I have something for you."

"What?"

She jumped off the bed and went over to her suitcase where she pulled out a small box.

"I got this for you earlier."

She sat down on the bed and I sat up to take the box.

"What is it?"

"I think if you open it, you'll figure it out."

I rolled my eyes at her and took off the lid. I smiled as I saw the necklace I'd looked at earlier today and did actually really like, but I'd gotten nervous with her standing there so I played it off.

"You got this for me?"

"Yeah, I could tell you liked it. You were smiling at yourself in the mirror and I knew that it wasn't because you like looking at your hot self like I do."

I laughed.

"Help me put it on?"

She nodded and I reached the chain around my neck and felt her fingers graze my skin as she connected it and I turned back so she could see. It was a clear heart shape about the size of a quarter with a tiny black and white map of New Orleans on the back of it, which was visible through the clear glass. Santana took it in her hand and then her hand moved to my collarbone.

"It looks great on you, Q"

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

I stared at her as her hand moved around to the other side of my neck.

"San?"

"Huh?" She mumbled. Her attention was elsewhere.

"You know what this holiday is all about, right?"

"Something about snakes or whatever."

"Actually, I think it's about getting lucky."

She lifted her head and her eyes met mine and she gave me a cocky smile.

"I love this holiday."

I laughed at her as she laid both of us back down and reconnected our lips.

New Year, New Us, by conceptoftwo

"Quinn? Quinn Fabray is that you?" I heard a voice behind me say; I could recognise that voice anywhere. A voice I hadn't heard in so long. I turned around to confirm my suspicions. I was right, stood in front of me was indeed Rachel Berry, a girl I hadn't seen in five years.

"Rachel" I said stunned, I knew she lived here but New York is a big city and I never really thought I'd run in to her, I guess I never really thought about running into anyone I knew here. "How are you?"

"Im good Quinn, how about you? How long are you in the city for?"

Well, I guess I should clean.

"I actually live here now" I said hesitantly knowing that it would probably cause some shock.

As predicted, she looked surprised. Not that I can blame her, I mean last she probably heard of me was that I was in Yale. To be honest, I never expected that I would end up in the city; it just turned out this way since my job brought me here.

"You live here?" she repeated back to me and I nodded in return. "Does Santana know?"

Santana. I haven't thought about her in a long time, or rather I haven't let myself think of her because it only results in me feeling the heartbreak all over again.

Santana and I dated all the way through senior year until my second year of college, we were completely head over heels in love with each other and everyone knew it. We were the 'it' couple, everyone thought that we were going to last forever and if im honest, so did it, so when word got round of our break up it was a shock to everyone.

I was in my second year of college at Yale and the workload was just getting heavier and heavier by the week, I could barely stand it. This meant that my weekly trip to New York to see Santana had to be cancelled and her visits to me were postponed because I never had the time. Two months went by without us seeing each other, in this time we barely even spoke and it killed me. It's not that I didn't want to speak to her; it's that I just couldn't. I was drowning in the work and if I put it off for even a second I would fail.

I felt so guilty, Santana called me all the time and I had to deny most of them, it killed me to not accept the call because there was nothing more I wanted to do that here my girlfriend's voice. I hated doing this to her, it wasn't fair to her at all.

"No, I don't think so" I quietly told her, it was still a painful experience to talk about Santana, mostly because I was still madly in love with her.

Rachel gave me a sympathetic look; she could probably see the look on my face which pretty much told her that talking about Santana was a sensitive subject.

"What are you doing now?" she asked.

"Right now?" she nodded. "Um I was just about to pick up lunch and then head home I guess" I shrugged, it wasn't the most exciting thing to do on a Saturday but since im not the best cook, takeout was always the best option.

Even thinking about things like that got me thinking of Santana. God, just one mention of her name and I feel like im revisiting memory lane.

I was in New York for the weekend visiting Santana, since I had the week off from college so obviously I was going to spend it with my beautiful girlfriend and also Rachel and Kurt since they all lived together, but still it was mainly for Santana.

I was at the loft waiting for Santana to come home from the diner; she got off at six so I wanted to have dinner on the table when she got in.

My phone ringing disrupted me as I was in the middle of making dinner. I went over to the counter and saw that Santana was ringing me. It's crazy that even after two years of being together even seeing her name on my phone gives me butterflies.

"Hey baby" I answered.

"Hey babe, I was just ringing to tell you that I got off work a little early"

"Oh okay, well I've almost finished making dinner so it will most likely be ready when you get here." I said, whilst stirring the pot of soup I make from scratch for our starter. I wanted this meal to be special so I tried to go all out, starter, main and desert.

"Im sorry, can you just repeat that for me" she replied, I was a tad confused at this. Did she not hear me?

"I've almost finished dinner and it will be ready when you get home?" I repeated.

"Alright, so im definitely not hearing things"

"What are you talking about?"

"You're cooking, Q" she stated the obvious.

"Yeah?"

"You're a terrible cook"

"I am not a terrible cook! How dare you"

"Quinn, do you not remember the time you tried and failed to cook us spaghetti?"

Ah the spaghetti incident. Yeah, that did not turn out so well. It turns out you actually have to push the spaghetti into the water, you can't actually just leave it stood up in the pan because the top half burns that way. And also the sauce I made was not great either, actually when I say not great I mean totally inedible.

"Okay, yes I do remember that. But that was one time. And I'll have you know I have had a cooking lesson so if you must know I know exactly what im doing" I said back.

"Q, that 'cooking lesson' was us watching a cooking show and we didn't even watch all of it because we started having sex like half way through it."

Okay, she got me there. I just know that if I could see her now she would have her infamous smirk on her face that drives me crazy.

"Well you know what Santana; you're not having any then. I will have it all to myself and you can just sit there and be jealous whilst I eat the delicious meal that I have slaved over all day"

"Alright alright, how about this? I promise that I will not make one complaint about your food, im sure it will be delicious" she reasoned.

"You bet your ass it will be. Oh and san?"

"Yeah?"

"I have whipped cream for dessert"

"Whipped cream on what?" she asked.

"Me"

"Fuck, can we just skip the meal and head straight for dessert?"

I chuckled into the phone. "Hmmm, only if you promise to eat every bite of what I've made you"

"Well you know me, I never back down from a challenge" she joked. "Anyway Q, im about to get on the subway, so I'll see you soon"

"Bye baby. I love you"

"I love you too"

She hung up the phone and I went back to preparing dinner. When everything was pretty much all set, the soup was done and the chicken was cooking in the oven, I went over to the bathroom to prepare myself, I wanted to look good for when Santana came home.

10 minutes later and my satisfaction for the way I looked, I was ready. I walked out of the bathroom to go back to the kitchen although I definitely wasn't prepared for what I would see.

A cloud of smoke filled the room. My chicken was burning in the oven, it seems like I left it in there too long. I opened the oven door and as soon as I did the smoke filled my eyes. This was definitely not my plan for tonight.

I took the chicken out to scan over the damage. It was ruined, beyond ruined. Nothing could be done to save this poor piece of meat. I just knew I was never going to hear the end of it from Santana. I looked over to the pot of soup and I noticed that I forgot to take it off the main heat; I prayed that it would still be okay. It was one thing ruining one part of the meal but a whole new level if I ruined all of it.

Crap, I sighed as I saw it. The soup had dried up and all that was left was just some clumpy vegetables all stuck together. I knew I was no Gordon Ramsey but I at least thought I could make some soup, apparently I was wrong.

"Wow, what the hell happened in here?" I turned around to see Santana standing at the door, staring into the room. "Did something happen to your precious meal?" there it was, the Santana Lopez signature smirk arriving on her face.

I nodded with a pout.

"Aw baby" she came up to me and wrapped her arms around my waist. "What can I do to help?" she asked.

"Make us dinner?" I suggested, knowing that if I did it would probably just be messed up again.

"I don't need to" she removed her arms from my waist and walked over the front door which she left open. She walked out of it. As she came back in I saw the pizza box she was holding in her hand.

"Santana!"

"Im sorry okay. I didn't want to take any chances" she chuckled.

"I can't believe you had that little faith in me"

"Im sorry baby, but the spaghetti fiasco is just constantly playing in my mind. Did you know I was sick for like a week after eating your sauce?"

"Yeah I do know you were a pain in my ass that week" I laughed at the memory.

"Yeah well, I just didn't want to put you through that again. Plus, I got your favourite anyway, Pepperoni and Bacon with extra bacon."

"Just because you got extra bacon im gonna let this go for now, but just until we finish eating" I said.

"Yes dear"

She placed the pizza on the table and we started to dig in. I took the first bite and I was practically in heaven. I should definitely ruin the meal more often.

"Quinn?" Rachel said, interrupting my flashback, I shifted my eyes back up to hers. "You kind of just spaced out there"

"Yeah sorry, um, sure I would love to go to lunch"

We walked over to this café down the street. Our conversation had been pretty good, we just talked about our lives and our jobs, so far no taboo subjects had been mention, and by taboo subjects I mean Santana. Although I was pretty sure that wasn't going to last long.

"So Quinn, I know this is probably not what you want to talk about but I have to ask; what happened between you and Santana? I mean one second you were all loved up together and the next Santana comes home from visiting you telling Kurt and I that you broke up. She never told us what happened."

My mind flashed back once again to that dreadful day. In all my 26 years that I have been alive, I can definitely say for certain that that was the worse day of my life.

Santana Lopez is calling you....

I really wanted to answer, I did, but I am in the middle of this paper that if I distract myself from one moment I will lose focus completely and I couldn't let that happen, not with finals quickly approaching

I rejected the call and a piece of me felt terrible about it. But I knew that once my exams were over I would spend every moment making it up to my beautiful girlfriend.

I put my mind in this paper, I was almost finished, and just one more paragraph and it would be over. However one more paragraph until I would have to write the next paper.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

I turned my head towards the door, who would be knocking on my door at 8pm on a Thursday?

I made my way over to the door and opened it hesitantly not knowing who could be on the other side.

I was stunned to see what I saw. On the other side of the door was a pretty angry Santana Lopez.

"Santana" I said surprised.

"At least you're still alive, that's good to know"

"What's that supposed to mean?" I asked as she walked inside the room.

"What that is supposed to mean is that you've been ignoring my calls for four days now Q and you've been putting off visits to me, you say no every time I ask to come and see you. Do you know how long it's been since I've seen you Quinn?"

I shook my head.

"Two months"

Two months? Oh God, had it really been that long? I guess I've been busier than I thought.

"What's your excuse this time Q?"

"Im so sorry Santana I've just been really busy" it's a pathetic excuse I know, but it's the truth. I've been so wrapped up in trying to be at the top of my classes that I've had no time for anything else.

"Too busy for me? Too busy for one simple visit?" she's clearly hurt by all of this and that's totally understandable.

"I've had no time; my workload is crazy at the moment"

"That's a pretty shitty excuse Quinn. What, you couldn't take one lousy weekend off?"

"I have to stay on top of my classes Santana, if im ever gonna..."

"If you're ever going to what? Finally get your fathers attention?" she fired back. "Is this what this is all about Quinn? Going to Yale, working so hard to finally prove to daddy that you're not the waste of space he's labelled you as? Because if that's true than that's pathetic and you're pathetic if that's the reason"

I couldn't stop the next thing I did; it was like I acted on autopilot from the moment she mentioned that I was doing this for my father's approval. With the way she was clutching her cheek I knew I hit hard.

"You don't know what I need"

"I don't know what you need? Quinn, im your girlfriend, I know exactly what you need. And what you need is to take a break; looking at you right now I can tell that you're exhausted."

"Santana" I sighed. "I just need to get through these last few months and then we can be back to how we were"

She took a long pause, like she was thinking about something important. I wasn't sure if I wanted to know what she was thinking about; I had a gut wrenching feeling that it wasn't going to be good.

"I can't keep going on like this Quinn" she finally spoke out.

"Keep going on like what?" I painfully asked.

She took a deep breath. "I can't keep being in a one sided relationship"

My breath hitched at this, it felt like my heart stopped beating. If she was talking about what I think she was talking about I don't know what I would do.

"Santana, no. We can fix this" I cried out, I knew the tears were falling from my eyes now as I could feel them falling down my cheeks. Just the prospect of us being over made me feel like my whole world was shutting down.

"Im sorry Q. But I can't do this anymore. I love you so much but these past couple of months have been hell for me. I needed you Quinn and you weren't there. I can't keep doing that."

She was in the same position of me. I could see that it was breaking her heart to say this.

"I think we need to have a break"

Those words. They brought my world down.

"No Santana, no. I know I've been distant but I won't be anymore. I'll come and see you every weekend again, like I used to. We can fix this, please" I pleaded; I wasn't ready to lose her. I was never ready to lose her.

I walked up to her and placed my hands on her cheeks to get her to look at me, I needed her to realise that we were forever and we just were going through a tough couple of months.

"Please Santana, please" I started placing kissing all over her face in hope it would remind her that we needed to be together.

Her eyes closed on instant of my lips on her skin.

I moved my kisses to her lips, hovering them over her own.

"Please" I pleaded once again.

Our lips connected in what was one of the most passionate kisses we had ever shared. Her lips enveloped over mine and sucked gently. I moaned into her mouth, her kisses always drove me crazy, but this one, it blew my mind. I couldn't believe I had gone two months without the feel of her lips on mine.

We started walking backwards and I fell onto the bed, she toppled right on top of me. Our mouths had not lefts each other's once. Her hands moved down the hem of my top, she ran her hands up and cupped my breast through the bra, my back instantly arched from the contact and my head rolled back from the pleasure it brought me. Two months I had gone without her touch. She took this opportunity to attach her lips to my neck, hitting that spot that drives me crazy.

When she removed her mouth from my neck I thought she was going to lean down and capture my lips with her own again. She didn't.

Her hands crept back from under my shirt and down on the bed to push her up off me. I hated the loss of contact.

"Im sorry. We shouldn't, I shouldn't have...."

My chest was heaving up and down. Out of breath from what we were just doing

She looked into my eyes and uttered those five words that would break my heart and leave me broken forever.

"I'm sorry Quinn, It's over"

"Wow" Rachel said. "Well I guess it all makes sense now, the way she was when she got back to the loft"

I knew I probably shouldn't have asked but I just needed to know. "How was she, when she got back?"

"She was devastated Quinn. She drowned herself in alcohol. She was such a mess."

I feel like crying, I feel like im reliving that day over and over again. I feel like my heart is breaking all over again.

"Did you even try and call her? To try and fix things?"

"I wanted to"

"So why didn't you?" she asked.

"Because I was scared. I was scared that she wouldn't want me back and a part of me hated her for what she suggested"

"Do you still hate her for saying that?"

"No" I admitted. "She was right. I just wanted my father to be proud of me once"

Rachel gave me a sympathetic smile.

"Do you know that when we were in high school he mistook Santana for the maid, and all the she was at my house he ordered her to get him something? She was so pissed off, so when we came out to my parents you should have seen the proud look she had on her face" I laugh at the memory.

"It's okay babe, you can do this" Santana comforted me.

We were about to come out to my parents and to say I was nervous was an understatement.

"You promise you'll still love me even if this all blows up in our faces?" I ask her, I need to know that I'll still have her after all of this.

"I will love you until we are old and wrinkly and we are slumming it in some old persons home"

Bless her for making me more at ease with the situation. As long as I have Santana Lopez I know that I can face whatever comes my way.

"Alright, let's do this" I intertwined our fingers together and led us both in the house.

"Mom, Dad?" I shouted as I entered.

"In the kitchen sweetie" my mother shouted back.

I took a deep breath.

"You can do this, I'll be right here by your side" Santana kissed my cheek.

We both walked into the kitchen. My mom was cooking dinner and my father was sat at the table reading a newspaper.

"Um, can I talk to you both about something?" my mom turned around.

"What's going on sweetie? You're not pregnant are you? Are you on drugs?" My mom started rambling

"No, mom. Not any of those, could you sit down" I signalled to the chair next to my dad.

I looked over to my dad; he had put the newspaper down. But he wasn't looking at me, he was looking at my clasped hand in Santana's.

"Why are you holding hands with the maid?" he mumbled.

I sighed at this. No matter how many times I told him Santana was not the maid he never listened. Even though he was my father, he was a complete asshole sometimes.

"She's not the maid daddy." I took a deep breath before saying the next thing. "She's my girlfriend"

Santana tightened her hand around mine.

"Girlfriend?" he muttered. "What do you mean girlfriend?" I could tell he wasn't happy about this.

"Were together. We love each other" I answered.

"No" he said.

"No?"

"She is not your girlfriend. I will not allow this Quinn"

"Dad"

"Enough Quinn, I will not allow my daughter to be a lesbian. This is an abomination. You are an abomination." He looked at me in disgust.

I could feel tears forming in my eyes, to be rejected by my own parents. I knew that if my father wasn't going to accept me, my mother would just be weak and follow his footsteps.

"You know what" Santana stepped up. "Quinn is many things, she's beautiful, smart, kind, and funny but she is not an abomination. The abomination here is you for being a close-minded asshole. How dare you speak to her like she is some dirt on the bottom of your shoe. I love your daughter, and if you think you can speak to her like that and get away with it you're very much mistaken."

"You are worse than she is" My father spoke to Santana, "you disgust me. You have corrupted my Quinnie."

"She hasn't corrupted me dad. I love her!"

"Get out. If this is the way you wish to act then you are no longer welcome in my house"

"Dad" How could he kick his own daughter out just because she loved a woman? How cold hearted could someone be.

"Get out. You are no longer my daughter"

There it was. I ran upstairs, quickly gathering anything I could as I didn't want to be here any longer than I had to. Santana and I walked downstairs ready to leave when she suddenly stopped me.

"Don't hate me for what im about to do" she said to me before walking off towards the kitchen again. I quickly followed her anxious at what she was about to do.

"Mr Fabray, I just want to let you know that I love Quinn more than anything in this world, and I will do anything to protect her from anything which will cause her pain. That includes calling out her asshole of a father for not accepting who she is. I just want to let you know that every day the world is changing and each day people are accepted for who they are because no one should ever have to hide who they really are. I really do hope that one day you change your views and see the real, amazing girl that your daughter really is." she turned around and started to leave the room, but she turned around at the door and back towards him.

"Oh and I fucked your daughter on that table you're currently sat at. Have a good day" she smiled a fake sweet smile at him.

We both walked out of the house.

"Do you hate me?" she hesitantly asked after what she just said.

I smiled at her.

"I love you"

A big grin broke out on her face. "I love you too"

"I actually tried to contact her when I came to New York three years ago. But when I got to the loft I saw her enter the building holding hands with another blonde girl"

"That was Dani" Rachel said.

"Who's Dani?" Im not sure I wanted to know but I just had to ask.

"Santana's ex-girlfriend" At least she said ex. Apart of me can sigh with relief and settle the feeling in me from all those years. "They didn't last very long"

"She sure does have a thing for Blondes huh" I tried to make a joke out of things.

"Yeah" Rachel chuckled. She looked like she was about to say something but then decided against it. I decided not to ask, she would tell me if she thought necessary.

We talked casually some more, until it was about 2pm.

"So Quinn, as you know it's New Year's Eve tomorrow, do you have any plans?"

Honestly, I didn't. I didn't really have many friends here. I guess you could say I've distanced myself all these years, afraid of being hurt again.

"I don't have any plans"

"Were having a party tomorrow night at the loft. You should come. Some of the glee members are going to be there, I'm sure they would love to see you again"

But which glee members? Was she going to be there?

"Is she going to be there?" I quietly asked.

"Yes"

My heart felt like it was going to explode. If I went I would finally get to see her again, after all these years. Something about that prospect made me incredibly nervous and incredibly happy. Maybe, this time that we had would bring us back together and we would jump back in each other's arms.

"It starts at 8, I really hope you'll be there Quinn. Anyway I have to go, I have rehearsal. It's been great catching up with you. Here" she handed out a card with a number on it. "Now that I know you're in the city, you're not getting rid of me that easy"

I smiled at her. It was nice knowing that I have a friend here, even after all these years she is still the same Rachel Berry.

"Bye Quinn"

"Bye"

She left the café. I quickly followed her and went back to my apartment. It scared me that tomorrow I was going to be face to face with Santana once again. Conversations were being thought out in my head of how tomorrow would go.

Sleep didn't come easy that night; my mind was going into overload of every type of situation that could happen. Even when I did sleep, I dreamed of her. Although, that wasn't really any change. I always dreamt of her.

The next morning I woke up, I knew that today was the day I would see her again. That scared me. Would she still be my Santana or would she have changed completely into a person I wouldn't recognise?

During the day I got some work done. Im currently a free-lance writer for the New York Times. I always used to love writing and now I get to do it for a living. I have a great job, in a city I love, but it's all missing something. Missing something to make my life perfect. I know exactly what it is. It's the same thing I let leave my dorm room five years ago. The person I let walk out of my life because of my stupid judgement and views.

It got to 7pm and I started to get ready for the party at the loft. I knew I had to look good for tonight since it was the first time she would be seeing me in five years. I chose a black dress with a black jacket because I knew I looked good in this outfit. I just hoped she would think so too.

I got to the loft at around 9pm, because I had many internal battles of me stopping myself from going and not going. I knocked on the door and my nerves were seriously kicking in.

The door opened and I expected to see Rachel's face as the door was opened. It wasn't her. It was the girl who has had my heart for all these years.

As soon as she opened the door the smile she had on her face had turned into that of clear shock. She stared at me, mouth open slightly. Her eyes gazed deep into mine, not believing that it was me that was stood in front of her.

"Hi" I whispered. Five years of no contact and that's all I have? Hi? Really?

"Hi" She repeated back quietly. God, one small simple word and it goes right through me. Hearing her voice again after all these years feels like home.

"Baby" a blonde girls arm went around her neck. Santana tore her eyes away from mine to look at the girl neck to her. "Who's this?" the girl asked her.

She brought her eyes back to me.

"Um, this is... this is.." she couldn't find her words so I decided to give them to her.

I held my hand out to the blonde to introduce myself. "Quinn." the girl shook my hand.

"Im Amber, Santana's girlfriend"

Well that hit me like a ton of bricks. My heart felt like it was going to beat out of my chest. Santana has a girlfriend. What was I expecting, it's been five years. Life isn't like a fairy tale, we weren't just going to jump back into each other's arms and pick up where we left off before the bad patch.

"Anyway, im going to get a drink babe. It was nice meeting you Quinn" Amber walked off towards the kitchen.

Now it was just me and Santana once again. It was kind of awkward because I was still stood on the outside of the room and not into the actual loft yet.

I completely understand why she is behaving like this. I at least got a day in advance to prepare myself for our first interaction.

"So, are you going to let me in or..." I joked.

"Um, yeah sorry" she moved aside and I walked in the loft. I looked around and it was pretty packed. I saw a few faces I recognised and a lot that I didn't. Apart of me wonders that if Santana and I had stayed together would I know most people in this room? How different would my life be?

As soon as I walked in I turned to face her again.

"How are you?" that seemed like a good enough question to start off with.

"Im good. You?"

"Good"

I hated small talk in general but small talk with Santana I would have that for hours just because it was her.

"What are you doing here Quinn?"

"Rachel invited me"

"Since when have you been talking to Rachel?" I could tell by the tone of her voice she was started to get a bit worked up. I didn't want to do anything that would make her angry.

"I bumped into her yesterday"

"Oh. Wait, you live here? Like in New York?"

"Yeah" I said hesitantly.

I know Santana well enough to know that she looked hurt.

"For how long?"

"About three years"

"Three years and you never once tried to look me up"

"Santana."

"You know what. I, I can do this right now" she said as she walked away leaving me stood alone watching as she left. This is not how I wanted out reunion to go.

It was now 11pm and I hadn't seen Santana since. Over the time I had caught up with some of my old glee club members. I was currently talking to Tina who was telling me about how she and Mike got back together and moved to Boston. They're both here visiting for the week and checking out some dance studios for Mike to work in.

I excuse myself from the conversation and walk over to the bathroom to just recompose myself. Next to the bathroom is Rachel's bedroom, it's still got a curtain around it just like I remember. As I exit the bathroom I hear two voices talking, or more like arguing. I instantly recognise that those voices belong to Rachel and Santana.

"What the hell were you thinking by inviting her here Berry!" Santana starts off.

I know straight away that they are talking about me. I also know I shouldn't stay and listen but I just can't help myself.

"I was thinking that you're still madly in love with her after all these years"

"Im not, Im not in love with her"

"Santana, you're one of my best friends and I've never seen you look at anyone the way you looked at Quinn. Do you know that all the girls you go for are blonde, they all wear dresses, you go for the same type of girls who resemble at least one small quality of the girl you love but not one of them will fill the hole in your heart that you have for her"

I can't listen to anymore. I walk away but instead of going back to where everyone is I walk out on to the unoccupied balcony because I really need fresh air right now.

A few moments later I hear someone come out of the window to join me. I keep my gaze forward and the person comes to stand next to me.

"Im sorry for the way I acted before. I guess I was just in shock that you're actually here" Santana said.

"It's okay. I guess it was kind of a shock"

"You can say that again"

"I guess it was kind of a shock" I chuckled out and she laughed in response. It feels good to hear that laugh again.

"Alright, smart ass"

We fall into a comfortable silence and just stare out at the view in front of us.

"Hey" Santana turned to me. "Can I show you something?"

I nodded at her.

She makes her way back inside and I follow her. Although on her way out im having a hard time trying not to stare at her ass as she goes through the window.

We walk over to what I still assume is Santana's corner of the loft, which used to be Kurt's but now I assume Kurt has moved out to someone different.

"Didn't this used to be Kurt's corner?" I asked.

"It did, but about three years ago he moved in with Blaine into their own apartment. So now it's just me and Rachel"

"How are him and Blaine?"

"They're good, they're actually married now"

"Wow, really?"

She nodded.

"Good for them" I'm sorry I missed that, I guess lots happens when you disappear for five years.

Santana turned around from grabbing something from under her bed. I notice she has a small rectangular box in her hands.

"Here" she handed me the box. I opened it and inside was all my articles that I've ever wrote for the New York Times. Each and every one that I've ever written is in this box.

"I buy the times every week to look for your articles. I knew you lived here, in New York. I guess I just walked off before because I needed a reason to recompose because seeing you again

just makes my mind go all crazy. Anyway, I guess I kept these because if I ever saw you again I just wanted to say how proud I am of you. I know writing is all you've ever really wanted to do and im really glad that you got what you wanted."

"Thank you Santana."

I decide that now is the time to be bold. To fight for her the way I should have five years ago.

"Can I tell you something?" I asked.

"Anything."

"You were right." I said and she tilted her head confused. "I was looking for my father's approval"

"Quinn, we don't have to do this. I should never have said that"

"No, it's okay. You were right and I just needed you to know that. Can I also tell you another thing?" she nodded and I started to walk closer so that I was stood close to her. I could hear her breath hitch as I got in close distance with her. This was all the courage I needed to continue.

"I regret everyday not fighting for you. For not begging you stay. For not following you to New York to be with you"

With every word I say I moved closer and closer to her, so now I was directly in front of her and my lips hovered over hers. I felt her breath on my lips, all I wanted to do was close the distance and connect our lips but not yet, I needed to say one more thing.

"I never stopped loving you Santana. Im so sorry for everything."

She lifted her gaze from the ground and up to my eyes and then down to my lips, like she was having an internal debate at what to do next.

Before I know it those lips which I had craved for those long five years finally connected with mine. The memory I had of them in my head did not do them justice because the way they felt on my own felt like heaven. Her tongue softly outlined my bottom lip and I parted my lips, welcoming her tongue into my mouth. Her tongue massaged my own and her hands came to cup my face as the kiss was deepened. When breathing became an issue for both of us we separated. Our foreheads leaned against the others.

"I love you Santana. I always will"

She removed her head away from mine and stepped back.

"I have to go" she just left, left me standing there alone after the amazing kiss we just shared. Maybe we weren't meant to be, maybe she just needed closure and that's how she got it. But all I needed was for her to say she loved me back.

I found myself back on the balcony by the time it was two minutes to midnight. I couldn't be in that room when all those couples in there were happy and loved up because it just made me realise that I wasn't either of those things.

"Fabray, what are you doing out here all on your own?" Santana walked out into the back yard and over to where I was standing

It was New Year's Eve and we were all at Puck's annual New Year's Eve party.

"It's New years and I had no one to kiss so I just figured I would just stay out here and not look alone and feel sorry for myself" I said to her.

"Well, I have no one to kiss either so how about I make a proposition to you. For each foreseeable new year to come, I'll be your New Year's Eve kiss for as long as you don't have one. That way you'll always have me" she smiled at me.

"Okay, you've got yourself a deal" I agreed. I could think of a lot of things worse than kissing Santana Lopez.

When I think back to our first kiss we shared all those years ago. It reminds me of a better time, that was the beginning of our relationship.

"What are you doing out here all on your own?" I hear Santana say as she comes out of the window and onto the balcony next to me again.

"Had no one to kiss so I figured I'd just stay out here till the moments passed"

"Well, I remember making a promise to a girl a long time ago that if she never had someone to kiss I'd always be available"

I turned towards her.

"What about your girlfriend?"

"Why do you think I ran off after we kissed? Because when I say that I love you I want it be in a moment where we were both single and not in a relationship with someone who's not you"

"10"

"9"

"8"

"You still love me?"

"I do" She moved closer so that she's stood directly in front of me once again.

"4"

"3"

"2"

"1"

"HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

Santana captured her lips with my own, I don't know how but this one feels even better than the one we had just previously shared. This one felt like everything, it could be because it was

New Year's or it could have been because it was Santana, Santana the love of my life who just told me that she loves me.

"I love you Quinn. I never stopped either"

Identical smiles arrived on our faces. Five years of waiting for this moment and it's everything I ever wanted.

Maybe we did need that time apart. Even though it was filled with heartbreak, it brought us both to this moment and there wasn't anything else I wanted other than to be standing on this balcony in Santana's arms.

"New year, new us right?" I said.

"Whatever happens, all I know is that as long as I've got you, my life will be perfect"

Me too.

Angels & Devils, by DefyingGravity1402

Then - Nationals, junior year... absolutely the lowest point of my life, and yes, that's even taking into consideration my idiotic drunken one night stand with Puck at the beginning of sophomore year and the nuclear fallout it created. Honestly, looking back I think my breakdown had been a long time coming. To an outsider, I'm sure it looked like I was just being a spoiled princess - hurting and acting out over losing my boyfriend to an irritating, opinionated, overbearing diva (for the second time) but I truthfully couldn't care less about who Frankenteen wanted to be with. I mean, sure, it smarted a little that he chose her over me, but it's not like I really ever wanted to be with *him* specifically anyway. Like I told Santana and Brittany – I just wanted *somebody* to love me.

"I think I know how to make you feel better," Santana said, as she and Brittany tried to cheer me up in that God-awful hotel room. As Cheerios, we'd been used to five-star luxury, and that room was far from it. It smelled like cats and had a revolting stain on the carpet that I didn't even want to think about. We sat at the foot of the bed, the two of them flanking me, just as they did when I was head cheerleader, ruling the halls of McKinley.

"I'm flattered, Santana, but I'm really not that into that," I responded automatically. I'd meant it too, at the time. I mean, I guess I'd considered the option, it's hard not to when my two best friends had been ramming their fluid sexuality down my throat (not literally) since I was fourteen. And, I guess I'd always appreciated other girls physically, but I'd always figured it was just jealousy or envy. I never questioned my sexuality up until then. Of course, Santana tried to deflect and insist that she wasn't even thinking about *that* but in the months ahead I'd have cause to wonder and question more times than I could count...

—

Now - Halloween, senior year... just had to fall on a Monday, didn't it? I hate Halloween. I freaking hate it. I mean, like Mondays aren't bad enough without half of the student body regressing to acting like demented five year olds, leaping out at each other from behind classroom doors or from around corners, wearing ridiculous horror movie masks... and, oh my God, is Rachel really dressed as Little Red Riding Hood? Does the girl seriously want to be ridiculed at every possible opportunity?

"Quinn!" Oh crap, she's waving at me, is it too late to pretend I haven't seen her? I'm still pontificating when Rachel bounds over to me like a toddler on a sugar high, bouncing on her heels, while I glance around furtively to make sure none of the jocks are holding slushee cups – I don't want to get caught in the crossfire and there's no way she's going to make it through the whole day in that outfit. "You haven't responded to my invitation," Rachel chastises, drawing her lips into what I'm guessing is supposed to be an adorable pout. "I need to know numbers."

"For what?" I ask, feigning innocence although I know very well what she's talking about. I received the e-vite, and the text message, and the hand-written pumpkin-shaped invitation she slipped into my locker. And even though I'd been pretending not to listen when she'd reminded

us all during Glee Club on Friday, how could I not be aware of Rachel's upcoming Halloween party? Did I say I hate Halloween?

Rachel must know I'm playing dumb, but she doesn't call me out on it, simply rolls her eyes and proceeds to rhapsodize about how amazing her party is going to be. Her Dads have formed a decorating committee and she's planned several thrilling party games, she's been cooking for two days straight and... suddenly I'm really not listening any more.

Santana has turned the corner and is walking towards me, deep in conversation with a couple of junior Cheerios. She's wearing her omnipresent red and white cheerleading uniform, with its sinfully short skirt and fitted top making the most of her impressive assets. Her legs are toned and tanned and for someone so petite it's astounding how they seem to go on for miles. Her hair is, as usual, scraped back into an immaculate high ponytail, but I can't help but imagine it loose, cascading in a tumble of glossy curls over her shoulders, brushing the swell of her breasts. I surreptitiously wipe my suddenly sweaty palms against my skirt, and my heartbeat automatically speeds up and becomes erratic, as it does whenever I catch sight of her these days. I guess I should explain...

Then - start of summer vacation, junior year... after we got home from our not too stellar twelfth place finish at nationals, I was still pretty much a basket case. I mean, seriously, how was a haircut going to be the answer to all my problems? But Santana and Brittany stuck to me like glue, the unholy trinity back together, and I began to feel like maybe, just maybe I was going to be okay. Who needed guys when I had friends like these – willing to give up their summer plans to babysit me and my insecurities? We hung out at the mall, went to the movies, arranged a trip to Six Flags, and slept over at each other's houses every weekend. I was a perpetual third wheel but neither of them seemed to care. I began to notice that they weren't quite as touchy feely as usual when I was around, but I guess I put it down to them being considerate of my feelings – not wanting to flaunt their happiness in front of their pathetic and loveless friend.

Two weeks into summer break, everything changed. Brittany was away on a family vacation so it was just Santana and me. I didn't mind in the slightest. I loved Brittany dearly and she was a lot of fun to be around, but she was exhausting too. With Santana, everything was just so much easier. We were lounging by my pool wearing bikinis, idly watching Puck clear out the leaves and assorted detritus. He was wearing nothing but a pair of low-slung jeans, and kept glancing over at us, obviously (and unsuccessfully) trying to impress us with his muscular and tanned physique, while we studiously ignored him. If it weren't for the fact that his was the only pool cleaning business in Lima, I doubt my mom would've let him set foot on our property at all.

I glanced over at Santana and rolled my eyes dramatically as Puck flexed his bicep and grinned. She snickered from behind her fashion magazine, tilting her chin down to peer at me over the rims of her Ray-bans.

"Hey, Q," she murmured in a soft, sultry tone that didn't carry as far as Puck. "You're starting to burn – you want me to top you up?" She picked up the bottle of sunblock and waggled it in my direction, her eyebrow raised questioningly.

I obediently sat up and gathered my hair up, exposing my neck, shoulders and back to Santana. As the cold lotion hit my warm skin I squealed and gasped, catching Puck's attention. He'd been checking the pool's filter but he paused to unabashedly check us out. I scowled at him but from the way Santana's hands slowed over my skin, stroking lightly in concentric circles across my shoulder blades, playing over my muscles with the pads of her fingers, I knew she was trying to torment him... two of his exes showing him exactly what he was missing. Then, Santana's hands hit a particularly sensitive spot just below my ribs and I bit down hard on my lower lip instinctively... God, that felt good. Better than good. Subconsciously, my body arched into her touch and I found myself stifling a moan.

In a flash, I was on my feet as though I'd been burned. I felt my cheeks flush and prayed that Puck was as clueless as usual and would simply put it down to the sun.

"I'm hot," I announced, trying to control the wavering note in my voice and sound like the HBIC I used to be. "I'm going for a swim." And without another word I dove into the pool, wondering whether it would be possible to just stay under the water until I drowned.

If Santana noticed my sudden flood of tension, she didn't say anything for the rest of the day. Puck left to clean some of the other forty or so pools in Lima and Santana and I continued our day of strenuous lounging around. My mom was away visiting my sister and Santana was staying over to keep me company, so by dusk that night we were snuggled up on the couch in our pajamas, watching movies and eating our own body weight in popcorn.

"Brittany started seeing someone, a guy, I mean." Neither of us had spoken in almost an hour so Santana's sudden announcement came as a bit of a surprise. It took my brain several seconds to process the information. Santana and Brittany may not have officially been a couple but I'd gotten so used to them as a unit that the thought of Britt being with anyone else seemed bizarre. Santana spoke nonchalantly but I knew how much she cared for Brittany and she had to be hurting over this.

"W-when?" I stuttered finally. I could have told her I was sorry or asked if she was okay or simply thrown my arms around her and given her a hug, but my higher brain functions seemed to have ceased. My heart was thumping erratically in my chest and my palms were suddenly sweaty. Shocked at my physical response to Santana's admission, the question I asked was the only word I could come up with.

"A couple of weeks ago." Santana sounded calm and unconcerned, whilst I fought hard to contain the fact that I was having a heart attack or a stroke. "Britt was worried about telling you – she thought it might make things awkward." Santana was studying me carefully, her dark eyes searching my face for any sign of a reaction.

"Why?" I asked. Oh great, I still couldn't manage more than one word questions. I wanted to ask if Brittany thought I was so pathetically loveless that seeing her in a relationship would push me completely over the edge.

"I think she thought it might change the dynamic," Santana explained, picking idly at a loose thread at the hem of her shorts. Her long legs were curled up beneath her and, with a start, I realized I was staring at them. They were smooth and soft and unbelievably tempting. I dragged my gaze away reluctantly. "She's with Sam," Santana confessed, chewing anxiously on her lower lip. "She says it only happened recently, but I kind of suspect something was going on between them in New York. I promised her that you'd be okay with it. I know you guys dated but you're not still interested in him, are you?" Was it my imagination, or were her eyes asking me a different question than her mouth? I shrugged it off and tried to get a hold of myself as a maelstrom of emotions began to swirl within me.

"No," I said hurriedly. "And, of course it won't change anything," I agreed, swallowing hard. "We're the unholy trinity, aren't we?"

Of course, I was lying... or if I'm being kind, I was kidding myself. It did change the dynamic. How could it not? It wasn't for the reasons Santana thought it might though. It wasn't because I still wanted Sam or even because I felt awkward forcing my two best friends to spend time together when I knew their relationship with each other had changed, it was for much more selfish reasons than that. I couldn't help but see Santana as available now, in a way I never had, and that thought alone was enough to terrify me.

Later that night as Santana slumbered peacefully on my bedroom floor, I awoke with a start. My skin tingled from head to toe and my heart felt like it was going to pound its way through my chest. I felt flushed and panicked as I tried to catch my breath. There was a distinctly uncomfortable throbbing between my clenched thighs and my shirt clung damply to the contours of my traitorous body. I felt like I was on fire, and yet freezing from the inside out at the same time, as I recalled the content of my dream.

We'd been in that dingy hotel room at nationals, but this time only Santana was there to hear my impassioned plea about wanting somebody to love, and this time when she'd told me she knew how to make me feel better, I hadn't responded the way I had the first time.

"How?" I'd whispered, tasting the salt of my tears on my lips. I'd gazed at Santana almost pleadingly as she'd smiled softly at me.

"Like this," she'd murmured, leaning close and brushing her mouth against mine - causing fireworks to explode - first in my brain, and then decidedly further south as her impossibly soft, warm, wet tongue had stroked over my lower lip, begging for entrance. Skilled hands had torn at my clothes, waking up my body with gentle caresses and reverent strokes until I'd been naked beneath her. Her fingers had been purposefully trailing up my inner thigh when I awoke - aching, trembling, and freaking out.

I'm a little ashamed of the way I reacted to my dream, I can admit that now. When Santana left my house the next day I called my mom and told her I needed to get away. I tried to sound

calm and composed but I guess she must've heard the tone of desperation in my voice because she called my uncle in Atlanta and two days later I was on a plane, without even a text message to Santana or Brittany explaining my decision.

I didn't return to Lima until the day before school started, and by then I'd come up with a new plan to protect myself and keep my friends at a safe distance. I had pink hair and a nose ring, and I acted like I didn't give a damn what anyone thought. I cut classes and spent my days behind the bleachers, smoking cigarettes and hating the world. I even spread a rumor that I was dating a forty year old guy who worked at the gas station and I started to hang out with the skankiest girls in school. I quit Glee Club and acted like no one from my previous life even existed. It worked like a charm – for about five minutes.

Eventually, I realized I couldn't run away from myself. It wasn't easy, and if anyone asked me I would deny it until the end of time (and probably find some way to make sure they died in a horrific and painful accident) but I couldn't lie to myself any longer. I was in love with Santana Lopez.

Now - Halloween, senior year... and Rachel is still wittering on at me about her ridiculously lame party, but it's hard to concentrate when Santana is just being so goddamned enticing, tossing her head so that her ponytail bounces perkily. I'm drawn to the deliberate and practiced sway of her hips, the defiant 'look at me' angle of her chin, the steady tap of her fingers against her slender waist as she sashays down the hallway.

"Uh huh," I find myself saying, without even hearing Rachel's question. Then Santana rounds the next corner and she's out of sight and suddenly I'm aware of Rachel beaming at me from under that hideous red hood.

"So, I'll see you at seven," she says happily, already starting to skip down the corridor to her next class. "Oh, and Quinn, it *is* a costume party so please try to make an effort?"

In seventh period calculus, I'm still fuming about the party. I don't want to go but I'm trying to make an effort with the guys from Glee Club. They've taken me back so many times after I've screwed up and I want to make it work this time. I'm so sick of all the drama. It's my senior year and I just want to feel that sense of belonging.

I'm so distracted that Mr Franklin calls on me three times before I even hear him. Luckily, it's an easy problem so I'm able to give him the answer and smile sweetly at him until he moves on to some other unsuspecting victim. At least I haven't totally lost my knack, I can still flutter my eyelashes and wrap most of the teachers around my little finger.

Brittany is sitting next to me, doodling pictures of unicorns in her notebook. She hasn't even gotten her textbook out of her bag and she's looking at me with a quizzical expression.

"Are you okay?" she whispers, hiding her mouth behind her hand. I nod and pretend to focus on Mr Franklin but Brittany is undeterred. "Is it about Rachel's party?" she asks, astounding me with her uncanny ability to hit the nail on the head. "You should definitely come. I think it'll be

fun. Rachel said I could go trick or treating. I'll share my candy with you if you come. Except for the Butterfingers – I've already promised those to Lord Tubbington." She pauses and grins at me. "What are you going to wear?"

I groan inwardly. I hate costume parties. I hate Halloween. I don't own anything remotely suitable... unless I go as a skank, but I'm trying to distance myself from that persona. I shrug aimlessly.

"I can lend you something," Brittany offers. "I was going to go as a devil, but I think I want to be a ghost now, or maybe a pirate, or Judge Judy."

I can't help but chuckle at the images Brittany's conjuring in my head as I nod gratefully. At least that's one problem solved.

At seven thirty, I'm still standing in Brittany's bedroom studying my reflection critically in the mirror whilst her hugely obese cat stares at me imperiously, a superman cloak tied around his fat neck. Rachel's going to be pissed at us for being late – she's a stickler for punctuality, even at parties.

"I don't know, Britt," I say, anxiously tugging at the hemline of the red PVC skirt which barely covers my ass. "I don't think I can wear this."

"Why?" Brittany's brow furrows, perturbed.

"It's too short," I complain but Brittany shrugs.

"So? I think it looks hot, and it's barely any shorter than a Cheerios skirt," she says nonchalantly. She's right, but a Cheerios outfit isn't anything like as revealing as this. The bodice is lacy, cut low and tightly fitted, and although I have to admit that it frames and enhances my breasts perfectly, it shows off a lot more skin than I'm used to. Knee high, high-heeled red boots hug my calves but my thighs are left naked and exposed. I'm worried that I look like a hooker but Brittany had been planning to wear this outfit and I don't want to hurt her feelings by voicing my opinion. I'd much rather swap with her and go as her final choice, Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, but it's getting late so I sigh and give in to the inevitable.

This costume isn't anything like any other devil outfit I've ever seen, and I'm wondering where Brittany found it as she hands me the final piece. It's glittery and lacy, a masquerade mask, covering my eyes and the bridge of my nose. Sparkly red horns jut from the top of the mask, and as I slip it onto my face, I'm grateful that at least no one will recognize me on the trip to Rachel's.

When Rachel answers the door, I can't help but do a double take. She's green. Literally, green.

"I love your costumes!" she squeals as she drags us inside and points us in the direction of her basement recreation room. We've partied there before, although my head still hurts when I think

about the resulting hangover, and I promise myself there'll be no repeat of that night. "Everyone else is already here."

"Are you Kermit the frog?" Brittany asks, perplexed.

"I'm Elphaba!" Rachel is indignant but since it's immediately obvious that neither Brittany nor I know who Elphaba is, she simply sighs and ushers us down the stairs.

The basement has been transformed, Rachel's Dads really have gone to town. Black and gold streamers cover the walls, interspersed with twinkling strands of multi-colored fairy lights. Ornately carved pumpkins cover every surface, their candles flickering, bathing the room with a warm, orange glow. Carefully positioned decorations dress the space - glittery cobwebs, sparkly black bats, and shimmering ghosts. It's stunning and I can't help but be impressed.

I remember from Rachel's last party how amazing her sound system is, and the music is pounding so loudly that I can feel the floor vibrating. I think I remember her telling us that her Dads had installed soundproofing so that she could sing as loud or as long as she wanted. Thinking about that gives me a funny little pang of regret, I never practise at home, even now.

As Brittany dives into the fray, I pause on the bottom step to take in the costumes my friends have chosen. Finn's wearing his football jersey - totally lame. Tina and Mike have come as John Lennon and Yoko Ono, and they both look great. Sam is wearing what I'm pretty sure is a Star Trek uniform - I remember him showing it to me back when we were dating. He was insanely proud of it. I'm not sure who Kurt is supposed to be, but I guess he's emulating some classic movie star. He's wearing a designer suit and a hat and he's deep in conversation with Blaine, who is dressed as a zombie. Blaine looks pretty good, he would've fitted right in during our junior year homecoming performance. Mercedes is a fairly average witch, and Artie is a vampire. Puck is wearing a biker jacket and ripped jeans, so basically he's come as himself.

And then I notice Santana and it's like everyone else just fades into the background. She's stunning, there's no other way to describe it. She's wearing a figure hugging white dress and delicate silver sandals that set off her olive skin beautifully. On her head is a silver halo made of tinsel, and a set of glittery, shimmery wings adorn her back. Her long hair is loose and flowing in a waterfall of soft raven curls. She's an angel - figuratively and literally. And she's staring right back at me as though she's never seen me before.

"Really, an angel?" I ask, trying to sound nonchalant as I sidle up beside her. I've been at the party for more than an hour and I can't avoid her any longer even if I wanted to. My whole body has felt like it's being pulled in her direction all night, like she's a star and I'm in orbit around her. "Are you trying to make an ironic statement?" Santana merely chuckles and tosses her hair over her shoulder. I'm immediately assaulted by the scent of her shampoo - it smells like honeysuckle and it's absolutely intoxicating.

"Nice boots," she replies, raising an eyebrow suggestively. My mouth is suddenly dry and I'm grateful when Rachel appears beside me with a cup of something and holds it out to me. I drink

it quickly, barely tasting it, but the bitter aftertaste lingers on my tongue and I notice Puck smirking in the corner. I'm pretty certain he's spiked the punch, but I really don't care right now. I'm glad of the Dutch courage. Rachel is too busy playing the perfect hostess to stop and chat, for which I'm simultaneously thankful and panicked, and I'm quickly alone with Santana once again.

"So, do you think Berry's going to regale us with her version of It's Not Easy Being Green later?" Santana asks and I snicker. We really haven't spent much time together since I got over my skank phase - I've been avoiding her - but now it's harder than ever to deny how much I've missed her. I love her snarky attitude and her dry sense of humor. There's no one else quite like her. I feel like she completes me.

"She looks like a gummi bear," I add, rolling my eyes. "You look amazing though." Oh crap, I didn't mean to say that out loud.

Santana grins at me, perfect white teeth surrounded by luscious, full, pink lips. "I know," she says confidently. "But thanks."

"So humble and not at all conceited too," I note drily, rolling my eyes.

Santana chuckles. "Come on, Q, you know that you and I are the hottest bitches in this room," she says looking me up and down, and unless I'm imagining things her eyes linger on the swell of my breasts where the lacy bodice stops.

"Just in this room?" I say, raising an eyebrow. "Not the highest bar, but I'll take it as a compliment." Suddenly I'm thinking I owe Brittany one for lending me the outfit.

"You're not dancing!" Rachel is back and she's glaring at us. She looks like an angry leprechaun and I bite back the urge to ask her if she's mad because someone's stolen her lucky charms. Santana eyes me quizzically as I struggle to curtail my giggles, but I shake my head at her almost imperceptibly. "I want everyone to dance!" Rachel insists desperately.

Sighing, but submitting to the inevitable, Santana and I allow her to pull us onto the dance floor. It's a real dance floor complete with a glitter-ball and although I've seen it before I can't help but be amazed that anyone has a dance floor in their basement.

When Rachel leaves us to it, Santana asks me what I found so funny a moment ago. I lean in and whisper my thought in her ear. Part of me instantly thinks I've made a mistake because it's so much harder to pull away again. I can feel the heat of her body, smell her perfume, and the delicate shell of her ear is so close that I just want to poke out my tongue and taste it. Santana seems to find my mean jibe even funnier than I did because she collapses in my arms in a fit of giggles and I immediately freak out because my heart is thudding erratically and I'm worried Santana will be able to feel it.

I fight the urge to run, swallowing hard, as Santana begins to pull herself back together. She gives a funny little hiccupy chuckle, and manages to regain control of herself but she doesn't make a move to pull away. And then, oh God, she wets her lower lip with the tip of her tongue and it's all I can do not to crush my lips against hers.

"Do you... want to..." she begins hesitantly, but we're interrupted by Brittany who bounces up to us to inform us that Mercedes and Artie are going to take her trick or treating.

The moment is lost and we both take a step backwards, shifting nervously from one foot to the other. Brittany dances away and moments later she's dragging Sam out of the back door, closely followed by Artie and Mercedes.

I look around us and note with a start that everyone else is blissfully coupled up. Rachel is in Finn's arms, they look somewhat ridiculous - he's like a foot taller than her - but I realize that I'm happy that they're happy. Tina and Mike are canoodling in a corner of the room, and Blaine and Kurt are dancing so close that I doubt there's even a molecule of air between them. Puck has disappeared - he's probably off TP-ing someone's house, so that just leaves me and Santana, standing awkwardly on the dance floor without moving.

"You want to sit down?" I ask, gesturing towards the side of the room.

Santana has an unreadable expression in her dark eyes and it's making my skin tingle expectantly. She shakes her head emphatically.

"No, it's too hot in here," she states, although I'm actually feeling a little chilly. "Let's go outside?"

It's forty-five degrees outside and I'm not dressed for it but I follow her out through the back door without a word of protest.

"Fuck, it's freezing!" I can't stop the curse from tumbling out of my mouth the second the night air hits my exposed skin and Santana snorts, her eyes glinting with amusement in the darkness.

"Language, Q!" she teases with a throaty chuckle. "That costume's obviously having a bad effect on you."

I laugh but it sounds somewhat forced and a touch hysterical, and rub my hands up and down my arms in a vain attempt to warm myself up. Then, Santana steps into my personal space and I almost forget about the cold.

"How much of a devilish influence do you think your costume has on you?" she asks lightly, reaching out to trail a hand over my forearm, tracing the goosebumps with her fingertips. I swallow a whimper, and bite the inside of my cheek as electric sparks shoot up my arm. "Do you think it might encourage you to try something *really* naughty?"

"Like what?" I'm stunned at the way my voice sounds. It's low and breathy, and kind of sexy. I don't sound like me at all.

"You look beautiful tonight," Santana continues as though I haven't spoken. "I've missed you, Q." I can barely see her face in the darkness, just her eyes shining in the moonlight. "Why did you go away?"

"You know why," I whisper. I'm not sure Santana hears me, my voice is so low, but then I see her nod slowly.

"I do," she agrees. Then she seems to doubt herself again. "It's amazing that we ended up wearing complementary outfits tonight." She's backing off a little, testing me to make sure this conversation is really going the way she thinks it's going.

"Brittany lent me the outfit," I blurt out without thinking. Damn it, I'm sure I've just killed the mood. Then Santana does the oddest thing - she laughs. She laughs until she's doubled over, clutching her stomach, tears pouring down her cheeks - their tracks glittering in the moonlight.

I'm torn between confusion, anxiety, anger, and amusement when Santana finally regains control of her emotions.

"What's so funny?" I demand petulantly, sounding like a spoiled six year old. Santana sobers up quickly.

"Who do you think suggested that I come as an angel?" she asks, and realization floods over me.

"You mean, Brittany played us?" I say with an audible gasp.

"She certainly gave us both a push in the same direction," Santana notes, shaking her head. "People think Britt's dumb, but she can read people better than anyone I've ever known." She takes a step towards me and she's tantalizingly close. I can feel her warm breath on my cheek.

"And what did she read in us?" I can't help but ask. I've been wearing my mask all this time but now Santana reaches up and tugs it gently off my face. The tip of her nose is barely an inch from mine and even in the darkness I can make out the delicate curl of her eyelashes and see the soft contours of her perfect lips.

"What do you think?" Santana responds breathlessly as her mouth descends onto mine. The first touch of her lips is electric and I already know I never want to let go. She's soft and sweet and wet and incredibly warm. When her tongue sneaks out to tease my lower lip it's a million times better than our dream kiss. My body is already thrumming with desire as I eagerly acquiesce, opening my mouth and inviting her in.

Her hands tangle almost painfully in my hair but I don't care, I only want to get closer to her. I can feel the heat of her body radiate into me and with an audacity I didn't know I possessed, I cup her delectable ass, pulling her against me - hard and verging on desperate.

Then, Santana's hands are everywhere and I almost forget that we're standing in Rachel's back yard and it's forty-five degrees out, because Santana is my whole world. It feels like it's taken me a lifetime to get here, and I don't ever want this moment to end, but I want more than I can have in such a public setting. Much, much more. My whole body is throbbing with wanton desire and I've never felt anything this intense before.

"Can we get out of here?" I pant against Santana's open mouth. Then I plunge my tongue between her parted lips, preventing her from forming words so she nods eagerly in response.

We don't even go back inside to get our coats or say goodbye to our friends. We stumble through the garden hand-in-hand, making a beeline for Santana's car. My mom's house is closest, and she's out at a party too tonight.

I thank God for my mom's newfound social life since her divorce came through. Santana has stayed over countless times but there's no way to explain our distinctly dishevelled appearances to my mom (it was far too hard to keep my hands off Santana on the car journey over here).

It takes us an age to get up the stairs and into my bedroom in between the kissing and the groping but once we're safely ensconced inside with the door locked, sudden shyness overtakes us both.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Santana asks me, deadly serious. She looks adorable - her full lips are red and swollen, her hair is mussed and her halo is wonky, and I can't help but feel a flash of mischievous pride at the sight of the darkening purple bruise on her neck that I gave her at the stop sign at the corner of Baker Road and Jefferson Avenue. "We can wait?" Even as she says the words, I can tell she doesn't believe them. Neither of us have that much self control right now. If we did, we would've stopped already.

I shake my head precisely once before I find myself crashing backwards into my bedroom door, the full force of Santana against me. Her body rubs up against mine delightfully and I experience a sudden thrill at the thought of doing this without the barrier of our clothes. Her hands are on my shoulders, tugging at the straps of my bodice and pulling the flimsy material down over my breasts. My nipple is in her mouth before I can even react to the cool night air on my skin. She's sucking and swirling her tongue and I've never felt anything like it. I never even took my top off when I had sex with Puck. I feel like my whole body is singing. When she grazes my nipple with her teeth, I let out a shuddering gasp that only serves to spur her on. I want to touch her too but I'm somewhat constrained by the straps of my bodice which are cutting into the crook of my elbows.

"Bed," I pant, and take advantage of the momentary respite to free my arms and grasp the hem of her dress, pulling it firmly upwards. Santana had to take her wings off to drive the car, and since her summer surgery before junior year she hasn't needed to wear a bra, so by the time we tumble onto the bed she's clad in just a pair of lacy white panties. She's glorious and I want to explore every inch of her. Her breasts are exquisite, of course, but I find myself fascinated by the curve of her hip, the beauty mark halfway down her ribs on the left hand side, the satin softness of her skin. I feel like I could get lost in her forever.

I'm kissing and touching every part of Santana I can reach while she struggles to rid me of the ridiculous devil outfit. I only pause to watch her unzip my boots, and a shiver of want runs through me when she follows the path of the zipper with her tongue. Then I'm down to my underwear too, and I'm glad that I chose to wear the black satin thong from Victoria's Secret because Santana is gazing at me like I'm the most wondrous creature she's ever laid eyes on. I'm splayed beneath her on my bed and I can feel her thigh brushing at the apex of my legs. I know

she must be able to feel the extent of my arousal against her bare skin, and that knowledge only heightens my desire.

"Can I take these off?" she asks, fingering the waistband of my panties and I'm touched that she's asking permission. Wordlessly, I nod, and I stifle a whimper as Santana peels my underwear down my legs leaving me naked before her.

Santana's gentle hands are on my thighs, urging my legs apart, and I barely have time to marvel at how natural it feels and how I'm not in the slightest bit shy or embarrassed at being so exposed and vulnerable before she settles herself between my legs and runs a tentative, testing finger over my heated flesh.

"Fuck!" I cry out uncontrollably, for the second time tonight. I never curse, not out loud at least, but the expletive tumbles unbidden from my lips.

"Oh, Quinn." Santana's voice is almost reverent. "You're so wet." She dips her head and I almost come undone when I realize what she's about to do. The first stroke of her tongue is like nothing I've ever experienced. It's intense and beautiful, evocative and overwhelming - almost more than I can stand - and I'm surprised to feel hot tears burning the corners of my eyes. I squeeze them shut but then I'm compelled to open them again because the sight of Santana's dark hair spread over my thighs and belly as her mouth pushes me towards bliss is too amazing a sight not to behold. I'm not a complete novice - I have explored my own body, but I always felt guilty whenever I gave in to those kind of urges. It always seemed wrong somehow, but not this. This feels so right, so perfect. I try to focus on each dip and swirl of Santana's talented tongue so that I'll know what to do when it's my turn to reciprocate, but I get lost in the sensations Santana is evoking within me. I'm gasping and panting, groaning, and, oh good God, did I just growl?

Every part of me is alive, my nerve endings are thrumming appreciatively and pressure is building low in my belly. Santana's fingers are caressing me and then she's inside me, stroking, rubbing, and curling. I feel complete, and like I never want her to let me go. She presses into me, harder and deeper, faster and faster, as her tongue continues its ministrations, and her fingers find this place within me that sends me flying up into the stratosphere, screaming Santana's name.

When I come down, I feel strangely detached from my body in a blissful haze. Santana has continued to stroke me through my orgasm, her fingers are still inside me but she moves up my body to capture my lips beneath hers. I can taste myself on her tongue and this simple revelation is enough to send another ripple of pleasure radiating through me.

"I want to taste you," I pant breathlessly, suddenly regaining my strength and pressing a surprised yet delighted Santana back against the pillows. Feeling suddenly bold and wanton, I begin to kiss my way down her delectable body. I pause for several minutes at her perfect breasts, taking one of her nipples into my mouth and sucking hard. I delight in the way it pebbles under my tongue. When I switch to her other breast I palm the one I'm neglecting, rolling the aroused nub between my thumb and forefinger. Santana hisses her appreciation and then it's her turn to curse when I repeat her earlier move and graze her nipple with my teeth. I chuckle and gaze up

at her through my eyelashes and the curtain of my hair. I'm certain I've never seen anything more beautiful than Santana at this moment.

That thought spurs me on and I leave her breasts to rub my cheek against the satin soft skin of her belly. Experimentally, I dip my tongue into her navel and her hips buck up into the touch.

"Quinn, please," she whispers pleadingly and I feel a rush of arousal to hear her beg. I'd thought I was sated but now I want her to make love to me again. But first I want to make her come undone. I want to bring her to the edge of ecstasy and push her over the edge, knowing that I'm responsible for getting her there. With no more hesitation I peel her panties down her legs and study the goddess laid out before me. I can't imagine a more perfect moment as I swipe my tongue through her heated folds for the first time. She tastes tangy and a little musky and I can't get enough of her. Her thighs are silky against my cheeks and when I find the sensitive bundle of nerves at her center with the tip of my tongue, she utters a broken cry.

I continue to draw her closer to her orgasm by delivering a series of kitten licks that leave her squirming and writhing against me.

"More?" she begs, and obligingly I press a testing finger against her. Oh God, she's wet and velvety, and impossibly hot. I never dreamed she would feel this hot. She feels like heaven. I add another finger and suddenly Santana's mumbling my name over and over.

"Come for me, baby?" I murmur, surprised at myself and my audacity as I thrust my fingers rhythmically in and out, but with a gasp and a shudder, Santana comes apart.

—

Hours later we lie intertwined in the darkness. My head is resting on Santana's chest, over her heart. I've already lost count of how many times we've made love, and I'm a little sad because I wanted to commit every single exquisite moment to memory.

"So, that's what it's supposed to be like," I find myself murmuring sleepily.

Santana giggles and I delight in the sound. She sounds so free, so happy. I lift my head to gaze into her eyes.

"Hmm," she agrees appreciatively, tangling her hand in my hair and scraping her fingernails lightly over my scalp. "Any regrets?"

I shake my head and plant a tiny, chaste kiss against her nipple, grinning as I watch her bite down instinctively on her lower lip.

"None," I confirm, stifling a yawn. I'm reluctant to let reality in just yet. I know there are going to be questions to answer - what should we tell our friends? Our families? Where do we go from here? What will tomorrow bring? All of that can wait though, I'm too tired and too content to worry about anything right now. As I snuggle into Santana's warm embrace and pull the blankets over our naked and spent bodies there's only one thought that invades my sleepy mind.

"I love Halloween," I whisper as I drift off into a blissful sleep.

The One Where It's Christmas, by empresskris

One of the conditions was to never miss a holiday. That was rule #4. It fell directly behind:

1. Never lie
2. Always disclose when your life is in danger
3. Never hide an injury

And right now, Santana was close to breaking all 4 rules. And the six others that followed.

"Shit, shit, shit!" She curses as they race through the airport. She checks her watch for the thousandth time and grips her bags tighter.

Puck runs behind her, amused as always. "I'm in D4," he calls out as Santana pauses to glance around the parking garage.

"Why the fuck did you park so far away?" Santana snaps.

"It was the closest spot when we got here!" Puck reminds her.

"Give me your keys," Santana orders as she races down D4, closing in on Puck's agency car.

"What? No way!" Puck holds the keys against himself, not wanting to give up his ride.

Santana stops in front of the black sedan on loan to them both, and holds out her hand. "Give me your keys Puckerman or I'll call your mother and tell her about the prostitute you picked up in Amsterdam."

Puck's eyes widen. "I didn't know she was a hooker!" Santana arches her brow. "I didn't!" But Santana doesn't back down. With a heavy sigh, he slams the keys in her hand. "How the hell am I supposed to get to my brother's?"

"Call a cab!" Santana suggests opening the backseat to toss her bags inside.

This was not part of the deal. Drive from Boston to Columbus for their flight to London and then Santana calls a cab to get to Quinn's moms. That's how it was supposed to go. *Not* the other way around.

"Are you kidding me?" Puck yells. He shakes his head and tries to make a grab for the keys. "No way. I'll drop you off."

"It's not even close to your brother's," Santana says baffled. Jake lives right outside of Columbus. Why would he offer to take her over an hour away?

"So? You still have to change or whatever, right?" He makes his play for the keys and catches Santana off guard, snagging them from her hand. "Besides, I'm a better driver than you. Not to mention I'm not going to my brother's until tomorrow."

Santana watches as Puck throws his bags in the backseat and walks towards the driver's side door with a smirk. "Then where the hell are you going tonight?"

"Dayton," he says simply.

Santana shakes her head. It would make no sense for Puck to drop her off in Lima and then turn around and drive to Dayton. "That's like an extra hour out of your way," she points out.

"You know, 'tis the season or some shit." And with merely a shrug he slips into the car. "Hurry up. You're gonna be late!"

Santana lets out a snort and slips into the passenger's seat without another word of protest.

Santana runs her hands through her hair and touches up her make-up one last time just as Puck is pulling up to the house. The clock reads 8:02. "Fuck," she swears as she reaches for the bottle of Dom Pérignon from the backseat.

"Relax. It's gonna be fine," Puck casually says.

"You don't know Quinn's mom," Santana points out.

"But I know Quinn." He glances at Santana in her short black dress and knee high boots. Not exactly Christmas dinner apparel, but she looks sexy nonetheless. Besides, Santana picked out this dress for Quinn. That's all that mattered.

She slips on her jacket and fluffs her hair one more time. "How do I look?"

"Would you just get your stuff and get out?" Puck says in mock annoyance. "I have a very attractive, older woman expecting me."

Santana curls her lip in disgust. "Gross." She grabs her bags out of the backseat and leans down to look at her friend. "Merry Christmas, Puck," she says with a grateful smile.

"Merry Christmas, Santana," he smiles. "By the way, you look wicked hot."

Santana rolls her eyes and slams the door.

"Santana you're here!" Judy says as she flings the door open in a dramatic fashion. She pulls Santana in for a tight embrace before she can even step foot inside her house. "Dan, take her bags," she instructs over her shoulder.

"We're glad you made it," Dan says sincerely as he removes Santana's duffle from across her shoulder.

"I'm so sorry. My flight was late," Santana explains as Judy finally releases her. She looks past her for Quinn, but she's nowhere to be found. Santana's shoulders slump.

"Don't worry about it! Flights are always late on Christmas. We're just glad you're here." Judy pulls Santana into her home and gives Santana no time to ask about Quinn before shutting the door behind them and yanking on Santana's jacket like an impatient child. "Let me take your coat and then we can eat before it gets cold."

Santana helps remove her coat and takes a deep breath, the smell of turkey making her realize how hungry she is. Judy's eyes fall to the bottle in her hand. "This is for you," Santana says presenting the champagne.

"Dom Pérignon?" Judy gasps. "What's the occasion?"

Santana shifts uncomfortably under her scrutinizing gaze. "Uh...Christmas?"

Judy's disappointment isn't masked as her face visibly falls. "I was hoping maybe - "

"Mom!"

Santana sighs in relief as Quinn walks into the room, a glass of wine in her hand. Her hair is loosely pulled back and she's wearing a casual red dress and matching flats. Santana thinks she looks stunning.

With a dramatic sigh, Judy turns towards the kitchen. "I'll go open this."

Santana's eyes stay on Quinn. She hasn't seen her for almost two weeks, and it takes all her self-discipline not to pull her in for a heated kiss in the middle of the foyer. "Hey."

"Hey," Quinn says softly, a smile tugging at her lips.

"I'm so sorry I'm late -"

Quinn closes the distance between them and pulls Santana in for a kiss. It isn't heated and it isn't passionate, but it's full of relief and love. And Santana melts.

When they pull away, Quinn reaches out to run her hand down Santana's chest. "I hate it when I don't hear from you. I always think the worst."

Santana leans forward, pressing her forehead against Quinn's. "I'd told you I'd be here."

"I know." But Quinn is already inspecting her hands and arms for visible injuries.

"I'm fine," Santana says, smirking. She can't help but enjoy that Quinn still insists on checking her over each time she returns home. "Not even a paper cut."

Quinn stops her inspection, her eyes lifting to Santana's. "Promise?"

Santana holds out her pinky finger seriously. There was no way she was going to break rule #1. Quinn smiles, satisfied for the time being, and grabs her hand, tugging her towards the dining room. She takes a sip of her wine and glances over her shoulder. "By the way, you look amazing."

—

"This was nice," Santana says as she nuzzles her face against Quinn's neck.

Quinn turns her head slightly to the side, looking over her shoulder at Santana nestled in behind her. "Even the carols by the piano?"

"Even the carols by the piano," Santana laughs. She squeezes her arms around Quinn's stomach, pulling her tighter against her. "Who knew you had such a seductive singing voice?"

"Yeah, yeah." With a sigh, Quinn looks past the Christmas tree and the fire roaring in the fireplace to the darkened window. "The only thing that would make this moment perfect would be if it was snowing."

"Snow, huh?" Santana pulls her arm away from Quinn and reaches in her front hoodie pocket. "I can't bring the snow, but maybe I can help make the moment even more special. I got you something," she says mischievously.

"It's not Christmas yet," Quinn chastises.

"I know. But I can't wait any longer." Santana pulls her hand out of her sweatshirt and brings her arm back around Quinn.

When she looks down to Santana's hand curiously, her hand instinctively goes to her mouth. Her heart hammers in her chest. "Oh my God," she says as the diamond catches the light from the Christmas tree.

Even in the darkened room Santana can see Quinn's eyes glisten. "I don't want to spend another Christmas without being able to call you my wife."

"Oh my God."

Santana twists herself so she can fully see Quinn's face, turning the girl to face her. But Quinn's eyes never leave the ring held tightly between her fingers. "Quinn, I have loved you since the moment I saw you. And looking back, I can't even imagine how I lived without you. And to be quite honest, I don't even want to try." She takes a deep, steadying breath. "Will you marry me?"

And finally Quinn's eyes lift to meet Santana's, if only for a beat, before dropping back to the sparkling diamond before her. "Yes!"

Santana releases a large breath, her heart swelling inside her chest. With a shaking hand, she slips the ring on Quinn's finger and smiles. "Too clichéd?"

"No," Quinn laughs. "It's perfect."

Santana's eyes glance briefly to the window as Quinn examines the princess cut diamond atop a thin, platinum band. "It's snowing," Santana mutters in awe.

But Quinn's mouth is already against hers and she's pushing her back on the couch, too distracted by her new fiancé to notice.

Parallel Love (6), by ive-gotta-gay-go-go-ive-gotta-go

(FabrayQS)

December 31st, 2018

A repeatedly knocking sound on the door frame, snapped me out my thinking. My mascara slips from my hands, landing in the sink.

"Everything will be alright." Frannie says, smiling, arms crossed and a smug smile on her facial expression. "You look beautiful." She comes near me, heels clicking on the wooden base. Her gray eyes seek mine. I can pick up many emotions just looking at her. She smirks, placing a strand of hair behind my ear. "Santana will die when she sees you." I glared at her. "Bad joke, sorry."

I fill up my lungs with air and exhale. It's eleven, twelve on new years eve, the tension its killing me. Santana and I merged for ten minutes this morning. Only ten minutes and by now, this time merging and differences were bothering me. I found myself distracted; it has been a long and tedious day. I miss her. The energy level today wasn't at its largest for us to merge, even though my sister increased the push coming from Mrs. Susan's house. No matter what we got along, we couldn't communicate back with her.

"It's incredible how missing her changes my moods." I said shrugging and my sister nods in agreement.

"I've experienced it earlier. Her emotions change as well." Frannie chuckles. "Santana gets angry and starts speaking Spanish." I could just guess. "She distances herself when she misses you."

"Really?"

"Yes, she is still the same girl I knew years ago. Nothing has changed."

"What if I don't see her tonight?"

"You will." I nodded, smiling at my sister in front of me. She pulls her phone out of her pocket and takes a picture of us. "Remember all those pictures on the wall?" I tilted my head, how could I forget those. "Let's start with new memories, okay."

I hugged her and suddenly I heard heels approaching the bathroom. My heart was pounding wildly in my chest. However, clicking the sound wasn't coming from Santana. "Hey," Jennifer, Frannie's girlfriend walks inside the bathroom. "The watches are ready, and everything is perfect next door with the condensers." I nodded, taking my watch from her hand and placing it inside the pocket of my dress.

"Thank you, Jen." I smiled at the lovely brown-haired woman in the room.

"Now listen, once you trigger off your watch, we just have to await until it clicks." I called for a deep breather. "This will work, Luce. Nevertheless, you need to remember it could exist a possibility that her friends," She smiles. "Your friends from high school are there."

"Okay."

"They won't recognize you, of course. They do not know you. So just get out there and have fun with Tana, okay?"

"Okay."

"You can do this."

"I can do this." I nodded walking out of the restroom and clicking my watch. We doubled the quantity of energy in the room, we hope the watch detects it creating the blend. Everything was empty, and just the feeling caressing my mind made my body tense. What if she is having fun with her friends? I sure could be her last option. "I can't do this." My breathing was erratic. I turned to Frannie and she is shaking her head.

"No, no, no. You are not having a panic attack over your friends."

"It's not that," I said, shifting my gaze from her. Everything was more interesting in the empty loft that my sister's encouraging eyes. I was too much of a coward. "Look at how am I acting, because I haven't seen her all day long."

"It's normal, you love her." Suddenly, the bare and quiet room composure me. The echoes of her words recoiled in the back of my head, repeatedly. I was just failing to attend her; I am longing, her scent and requiring kissing her lips.

"I love her." I said, looking at my intertwined hands in my front. As shortly as my lips pronounced those three words, my watch clicked twice, displaying a nonstandard energy. My heart felt warm and my cheeks sizzling. I pressed my hands on my stomach, trying to ease the hovering butterflies. My heart was pounding fast.

Suddenly, an electric shock bounced in the walls and music started playing. I smiled at Frannie and she kissed my cheek, running to the living room. "Quinn hurry, you can't just appear in Santana's room."

I ran with her toward the entrance, open my door and waited. The music was growing louder and louder. Silver circles started attaching to the wall like gravity. Balloons started to appear in the ceiling of the loft. Later a full minute, people began to appear one by one. My heart was shaking and I was standing there looking like a complete idiot.

Frannie elbows me on my ribs slowly and I smiled at her. "You seem in pain." She says, leaning over and putting up her voice over the music.

I could acknowledge the people in here. I sure don't know her names, however, they were in the pictures I saw in the future.

"Goddamn, you are hot. Let's dance." A tall and muscled guy asked, wiggling his brows.

"Not today, Puckerman." Frannie says, grabbing my hand and leading me into the living room. I saw backward at the boy, his face is flushed and he stands furrowing his eyebrows.

"Have we met before?" He yells and I squeezed my sisters' hands.

"Who's that guy?"

"He got you pregnant, I don't like *him*." I arched my brown, turning backward to look at him.

"Glad I'm gay."

Frannie stops in her tracks, making me collide with her back. She beamed at me, pointing me in the direction of the kitchen. It was hard for me to breathe, she was so beautiful. Santana was leaning over the counter. She was wearing a stunning red dress, her shoulder length hair was curly and there is a red cup in her hands. She looks stunning and upset at the same time.

"Go." Frannie said strident me to the kitchen. I felt like a stranger in my house. The people around me were dancing and screaming with laughter. I only had one thing in mind. I demanded to come closer to her before time decides to divide us for a second time.

I walked toward her. She turns to the sink emptying the contents of the cup. I quickly snaked my arm around her waist from behind and whisper to her ear. "I've never experienced so many people at my pace." She shifts her body, straining every muscle. I press a fond kiss on her cheek; I could feel how her muscles tranquil at my touch. She has been waiting for me. "Was I invited to my house?"

She smirks, spinning in my arms. Her eyes are all I've dreamt and her scent is invading my senses. It was perfect. "You look incredible." Her eyes wandering through my body. "And you are *late*." Her hand rounds my neck and I smiled.

"Sorry, *time* wanted to be a bitch today." I whispered in her ear as she nods.

"I am really, *really mad* at him today." Her nails graze the back of my neck. "I missed you."

I simply nodded. "It's been a stressful day without you."

"You are here now." She says, leaning, I am dying to kiss her lips.

"May I know who this beautiful lady is? I sincerely hope it's Quinn." I turned, looking at the side. A little brown-haired woman was smiling hard with her arms crossed.

"Berry, I *will* kill you." Santana said rolling her eyes. "Don't you have anything else to do?"

"Actually, I don't. My curiosity is more important." She shrugs her shoulders and I smiled, pecking Santana's lips promptly and taking a deep breath, regulating at how I felt by kissing her lips. My face felt warm.

"Um- nice to meet you, I'm Quinn." I stretch my hand to the brown-haired woman and she smiles.

"You are beautiful, indeed. Nice to meet you, I'm Rachel Barbra Berry, Santana's best friend."

I heard my sister laughing behind me. "Yup, Santana's *best* friend." She says happily. "Not for a long time." She whispers in my ear and I chuckled. "Hello, Rachel right?" I chuckled; I love how my sister plays the game. "Rachel Berry the Broadway star."

Rachel beams and she shakes hands. "I'm Frannie, Quinn's sister."

"Nice to meet you all."

"Tana!" Frannie walks in between us hugging S hard. She whispers something in her ear and Santana chuckles hugging her back. "So Berry, tell me more about your Broadway play." She winks at me dragging Rachel away from us.

"I really like your sister. She is fun."

"She will love to hear you say that. Trust me."

"I certainly can. I told you, I like her."

"You like her better than me?" I said, looking at the ceiling and pouting.

"I can't say," She hugs me closer to her body. Her lips found my cheek kindly. "I like her better," She tipped her head, moving closer to my lips every time. "However, I do know," She smirk kissing my jawline. "That I really," She smooches my forehead and then pecks my nose. "Really, really want to be with you."

If her hands weren't holding me static, I would be on the floor now. I could feel my knees quivering, my breath shallow. "I want to be with you as well, S."

She sighed in relief, placing her temple with mine. Her hands caressing my neck. "Where are you in my time?" She asks, her expression changing.

"Probably in Boston. In my time, you must be in-

"California." She said shutting her eyes. "I don't even want to leave New York now. I had all these wonderful plans. I was going to find an agent, someone who can see the talent in me." My heart crumbled. This was the first time I see her so exposed, so fragile.

I embraced her firmly. Her hands resting securely in my lower back. "And we are going to do all of this. You are going to fulfill your dreams." I pulled her out of my embrace. I pull back and look into her watery eyes.

"How we are going to do this? How this energy works?" She asks, looking straight into my eyes. "Because I can't seem to figure it out well." Her hand traveling through dark locks. "One day I can see you perfectly. The next day, I can't even see you or touch you." She crosses her arms. "It's very infuriating."

"I know." I said, descending my hand through her arm. "The energy varies every day. There's a moment when my push and your energy collides, making you merge in my time." I called for a deep breath, "You are expelling energy through me. When you are around and I can't see you, it is when the energy stops working by itself. Spontaneously, the energy it is not causing us to unite. You *are*."

"If seeing you every day was up to me. I sure will allow this, Quinn." She said caressing my cheek. "There must be something else in the energy. A malfunction."

I turned away for a second. I knew all too well, what she was talking. I was losing contact with her because the zip around us it has drifted for almost a week. It is not pure anymore. The circulation is dispersing on its own. Thus, when we are together the energy is resilient, unadulterated and fortified.

"The portal." I said. "I need to close the portal."

"Ten minutes for New Years!" Someone said in the backrest and I twisted my head backwards to her.

"That's your plan." She said, shaking her head. "That your perfect plan, Quinn."

My heart was hammering; I could experience how her face was changing. She was wrinkling her eyebrows and biting her bottom lip. She was furious. "I –I, we can see what it's going to happen. I think we-

"Should find each other's in this time?" She laughed softly. "You want me to start all over again? I don't think I want that, Q."

I instinctively took a step back. Music busting around us: my hands felt cold, my head hurts. We are having our first argument. I knew why she was frightened. I had these feelings a few days ago when my sister told me I should find her at this time.

"You know what will happen if I find you in my time Q?" She steps closer to me. "You wouldn't know me. How do you think I'll feel?"

I gulped, my chest rising up and down. "Santana this is hard for me too. If I find you in my time, I'll have to start all over again. Don't you think this frightens me too?"

"Well, sure is scary for *you*, however you take that as the first option like nothing matters." She lifts her hands. "I don't want you to close the portal."

"I don't *want* to close the portal. If I wanted to do this I would have done it the first day I heard your voice." She looks at me inspecting every inch of my facial expression. Her arms are crossed in front of her chest. "But how do you suppose I'll feel if one day you never merge back?" I walked nearer to her, putting my hands in the counter she was resting her back. "How do you feel if you never see me again?" She looked down and then turned her head, not facing mine. I cupped her chin, forcing her to look at my face. "Tell me Santana."

She took a long, deep breath. "I can't." She ran aside from me walking out of the kitchen. I turned to look at her direction. My heart was hurting as I saw her walking off from me.

"Thirty seconds!" Someone yelled again and I tore my watch out of my pocket dress to inspect the energy. The music keeps buzzing in the wooden walls. My heart kept pounding deep in my chest. People were cheering and jumping. I immediately snapped out of my thoughts. Why am I still standing here? *Go look for her.*

I started walking in her direction. I could still hear the counting behind me.

"Twenty five."

"Twenty four."

I inspected the bedroom. She wasn't there. I turned to look for silver circles, but none of them were present. She walked away from me. Her energy it's not mixing with mine. I fear I will lose her. Moreover, exactly like that, the music stopped and I was standing alone in my room.

My breath was shallow as ever. I twisted around expecting at the empty loft. Frannie and Jenn were next to each others looking at my worried expression. The people disappeared... *like Santana*. I quickly started pacing back and forth.

"Frannie, I-

I gulped, placing my hand on my forehead. I turned to my sister and she runs out of the loft.

"Santana." I called her. "Santana please come back."

I started looking at my watch. My hands were shaking, I was pressing every button on the watch; desperate to see a merge one more time. I ran to the bathroom, opening the door and walking out again. My hands cover my face; there were no silver circles in the bathroom. There was nothing left of it.

An electric shock diverted my attention. For two seconds the music came back in the loft.

"Seven!" I turned, looking back to the crowd. Where is she now? Where is she? The energy dissipates one more time, sending the people away. I urged on my watch buttons again. The energy was tilting.

"Five!"

"Four!"

I moved around to the sides looking over the crowd. My sister runs again in the loft, she checked her watch and then looked back at her girlfriend. By now, I could not breathe. This is really happening. Santana's energy is not mixing with mine. If she is not around me, I won't be able to see her again.

I close my eyes. There was no music, there was no people cheering. A tear escapes my eyes, *I lost her*. I looked downwards at my necklace and grip it firmly.

Time is always enough

"One! Happy New Year!" I heard and when I turned Santana's lips crashed with mine.

Suddenly, my airs were filling with so much needed air. I couldn't hear anything else in the background. Nevertheless, my hands were firmly holding her back. I would not let her go. As her lips were caressing mine, my shaky hands stopped trembling. Her tongue brushed away my headache. Her slow moans were causing the butterflies in my stomach to fly, higher than *ever*.

I was lost in time and space. Lost in her presence; her scent and how perfect she was. She kissed me with so much love and so much passion. She bit my bottom lip slowly, and I felt goosebumps on my skin. I was addicted to her lips. I wanted to explore every inch of her. I couldn't keep my feelings at bay. This was the time. This the best second change a person can get. This is my time and she is mine.

"I can't be without you. Not again." She says in my lips. Her hands caressing my nape. I promptly kissed her back, sliding my tongue tenderly inside her mouth. She moans slowly, intensifying the kiss. "I'm sorry." She says after a few seconds. "I should've run aw-

I hush her pecking her lips. "You are here now." I kissed her once more. "It doesn't matter."

She smiles resting her forehead with mine. "There must be a way, babe." She whispers and my stomach flip. "There must be a way for us to be together."

I smiled and hugged her tight. "I will find a way."

"Promise me; promise me you'll find a way." I could see her desperation in her eyes. I recognized how she felt; the same desperation is going through my veins.

"I will." I took a deep breath. "I'll unify into your time if it's necessary. Certainly, there will be consequences, and we'll have to go far. But I don't understand why this can't work out."

"What do you mean? Far?"

"If I merge into the past, there will be two of me there. I wouldn't live at this time." She furrows her eyebrows in confusion.

"What will happen to your sister? She is your only family. You just can't leave her alone here. I wouldn't allow that." I smiled at her. I just knew why my mother loved her so much and why my sister did this for me. She is not thinking about us only. She was thinking about our future in general.

"I would never push you to be with me in my time." I whispered and she embraces me.

"I would do anything to be with you. Even running into you in my time." I drew in her back and caress her face. "If that's the only option. If we have to start all over again... I'll do it. I'll do it for you."

I pressed my lips with hers. This was home; she was my home. "I'll figure something out. I want you. I don't want another person. You are my second change."

She smiles pecking my lips. "I would never let you go." She says lovingly. "Time is always enough babe. Happy New Years.

Merry Christmas, by KatieMacLove

"Welcome to Pleasures, what can I help you with?"

"I'm looking for a gift for my girlfriend." I say as I walk further into the store.

"What's her style?"

"Well she's a little up tight when the family comes to town and I'm hoping this will make her feel better and loosen up." I smirk. She redhead smiles back and tells me to follow her. She shows me the perfect thing Quinn needs.

"That's exactly what I had in mind! I'll take two." I say excitedly.

I pay for my purchases and drive back home so I can wrap the gift.

This is going to be a great holiday.

"Merry Christmas, Bitch." Santana smirks as she throws a wrapped package onto of my desk.

I look up at my girlfriend in confusion because it's not Christmas yet. "What?"

"I'm your secret Santa." She shrugs like it's obvious.

"Oh..." I'm a little hurt that she had to get me a gift instead of trying.

"Just kidding, babe. I got it for you because I love you," She wraps me into her arms and kisses my ear. "I want to give you something to make you happy," She licks my jaw causing me to shiver. "I want to give you something to remember me by." I turn around so my front is to hers and take her lips with mine.

"I love you too, baby" I smile as I toy with her baby hair on the back of her neck.

"Yeah?" She grins, "How much?"

"I don't know if I can tell you," I grin coyly. "But I can show you."

She groans, "I like that." She squeezes my ass. I groan and reluctantly I put a stop to it before we get too heated in school. It wouldn't have been the first time and it most certainly won't be the last.

"Tonight baby, I promise." I slap her ass before I turn to grab my stuff and the gift. "Thanks for the gift, Tana."

"Don't thank me now, thank me later. Wait until Christmas to open it, Fabray." She has that damn smirk on her face again.

"Darn you got me! I love you." I laugh and press my lips to hers on last time before I go home.

"I love you too."

—

"Quinnie! Time to open presents!" Mom calls up the stairs. The whole family is here so they want to open the gifts in front of the tree. I grab the gift Santana gave me and run down the stairs, tripping on the last step.

"Slow down, little one! The gifts won't be going anywhere!" Grandma Jean laughs.

"Hi, Grandma!" I give her a kiss on the cheek and sit down next to Frannie.

We all open our presents one person at a time. Everybody give their gifts to Grandpa first then Grandma, Granny Rose, Aunt Carol, Uncle Frank, Uncle Rob, Aunt Kathy, Aunt Robin, Mom, Dad, and everybody else.

By the time it's my turn, adults have already open their gifts and are getting thirds on the dinner, the kids are playing with their toys, and only me and Frannie have to open our gifts. I get the usual clothes, money, shoes, gadgets, the new Galaxy, and now it's time to open Santana's gift. I open the wrapping paper and slide the box out.

"Frannie give me your keys. It's taped with duct tape." She hands me her keys and I cut the box open. My eyes widen at the content when I open it. Since she's right next to me, I didn't have time to close the box before she saw it. I let out a squeak as she and I blush beet red. Frannie's loud cackling alerts the others.

"What's so funny, Darling" Granny asks with a smile. I kick Frannie in the shin causing her to laugh even harder. "Quinn? That's the gift from your girlfriend, right?" I nod, "Well what's in it."

My eyes widen and all I can do is let loose another squeak. Mom and Dad look from me to Frannie before Mom gets up to come see what it is. *I can't let them see it! Especially Granny, she'll have a heart attack!* I try to jump out the way but Frannie trips me and it goes flying out of the box in slow motion and lands across the room.

Everybody says there in shock as we look at a sparkling purple eight inch dick sitting in Grandpa Joe's peach pie.

Aunt Carol walks up to it and take it out and examines it and much to my mortification, she turns it on and it starts to rotate and vibrate causing the Santa hat on the tip to jingle. "I have one; it does great to relive tension." At that, my mom takes it out of her hand and looks at the label.

"Oh! I have one in blue!" She says excitedly to Aunt Carol. She then looks at me, "She's right, you know. They're wonderful for relaxation! You should try a rabbit."

"What?!"

"Well Quinnie never limit your options! As you grow, so do your hormones. " Mom says with a shrug of her shoulders.

"I can't say the same about men though, Quinn. Your uncle's seems to be deteriorating," She shakes her brown hair sadly. "It's a damn shame too. He used to could give this thing a run for its money."

"Or you know Santana might like one! But the say you go at it, imp surprised she had to give you one. Is that a new lesbian trend?"

"I think so, Judy, because I saw Phil watching a porno with just girls and they got this thing called a strap-on-

"STOP!" I yell as Frannie rolls around the floor in laughter. I can't get any redder and Granny looks like she's about to pass out and have a heart attack while Grandpa's continued eating his pie.

I'm going to kill Santana.

I take the dildo and stuff it back into the box and run out the room. I throw open the front door and jump in my car.

"Hi, Quinn! I'm surprised to see you here. Come in!" Mrs. Lopez says with a smile when she opens the door.

"Thanks, Merry Christmas!" I say. I gesture the box saying I'm going to give Santana a gift.

"Merry Christmas, Quinn! Santana's in her room." She gives me a hug and a pat on the butt before I walk up stairs to Santana's room.

When I burst through the door, she looks up startled. Even when I'm angry, I still think she's sexy and adorable reading Harry Potter with her glasses on.

"What the hell, Quinn?" She asks while dog-eared the page.

"Don't what the hell me, San! What the fuck is this?!" I throw the box on her bed. She laughs and picks it up.

"So you like it?" She smirks. Damn, that sexy smirk, I'm on a mission!

"Yes- NO- I don't know but that's beside the point! Santana I was in a room full of family! My Granny could have had a heart attack!" I fume and cross my arms while I sit on her bed.

I feel her shift the bed as she wiggles closer to me and wraps her arms around me. "Baby, I'm sorry. I just wanted to make you feel nice. I thought you would like it." She says while planting soft kisses on my neck and jaw causing me to moan.

"Santana, I'm mad at you!" I say but she's stubborn and tries to reason with me.

"Baby, I bought a red one for me. I thought we could play together! I'd never intend to give your grandma a heart attack," She goes back to giving me kisses and starts massaging my breast. "I love you, Q."

I turn to face her and take her hungry lips in mine. Our kisses are full of passion and need as our hands explore each other's body. I straddle her and grind down into her heat as she bucks her hips. Her greedy hands travel down between our bodies and I pull away.

"Wait... baby, mmm... stop, stop... babe." I say in between kisses when her hand gets close to where I need them the be. What I'm about to do is worth it, but it's going to kill me...

"Why?" She looks at me in confusion.

"I'm giving you a sex ban. Three weeks." I say as I detangle myself from her.

"Baby I did it for you! I'm sorry; I just wanted to make you feel good." She says in a panicked voice.

"I know you had good intentions, but you're not off the hook. No sex, three weeks." I plant a kiss on her lips and get off the bed. She sits there with a baffled look on her face while she blinks repeatedly. I open her bedroom door and turn around to face her once more before I go home. "Merry Christmas, I love you, Tana."

She gets out of her frozen look and jump off the bed to follow me to my car. "Quinn! You're not serious are you?! It was a gift! I didn't mean for that to happen!" She cries helplessly.

"I'm serious, Santana. I hope this is a lesson learned." I get in my car and ignore her sobs as I drive off.

"QUINN! I have my period in three weeks!"

Slave to the Games (6), by lacksubstance

When Quinn expressed news of my freedom, I was conflicted between happiness and potential sadness for I always dreamt of a life outside of fighting for sport, to no longer be a slave to the games, but a harboring thought asked what of Quinn and I when I depart? I know her and I only lay beside each other because she convinced my Domina that she is all, but desiring the cock of a true Gladiator. While I know it to be true, I know she is doing so because she harbors great love for me.

I knew the more time that went by and the longer laid caressing each other in the afterglow, was more time spreading us a part till the games in Rome. She was returning back to Rome to study in two days hence and will soon watch me graze the sands again. She intended on returning sooner, but my Domina convinced her to return to the ludus for a celebration of her eighteenth life.

As soon as I returned to the cells of the ludus, I seek the only slave that can go out of these walls freely, only to return back to the ludus when he found what Dominus needed. "Words have circled that you request my services," Saxa says as he enters my cell. I stand up from my bed and hand him some coin that I have earned in the arena. Some slaves are not allowed to have such earnings within their possessions; however, with the years I have spent in confinement as well as the educated mind I exhibit, I deserve such beauty.

"I need of you a favor," I begin. "You must find me a necklace, preferably with green gems embroiling it," I say, handing him more as my mind speculates the cost of such a gift. "Here is more just in case; however, if you don't use all, you will return it to my possession, except two—that is for gratitude for your graciousness," he nods with a smile, placing the coins in his pocket and shakes my hand.

"You are my sister though I do question what of the need for such a gift; however, I will not make my thoughts known," Saxa says and I nod to him as a way of thanking him for his indiscretion, before he retreats from my cell.

Not too long after, when I hear the sounds of the gate being opened and closed, a guard comes to me. "You have been summoned," he says as I rub my hands together before walking with him to the house. I walk up the stairs and through to the house. Just outside the bathing room, the guard retreats back to his post as I am left in the hall to make myself known. I walk in and see my Domina being washed by two slaves, one of which is Dani. I see them both nude as I too had to do such things three years pasted.

"Santana—are you aware of why you have been summoned?" Domina states with a soft smile. Dani glances at me then back at our Domina to make note of what she is doing.

"No thoughts cloud me of confusion Domina," I say softly as I stand before her at attention. She continues to sit in the bath, sitting in the water as the water ripples slightly from movement. The way the waves merely move with such ease and grace, I wander to the thought of freedom

by water—I smile slightly at the thought, with Quinn and I having a home overlooking such beauty with children—yes I can see such a future placed upon my shoulders.

"How did Quinn seem to fair when you laid with her?" She asked, before adding. "Did she seem fulfilled by your cock?"

I blink at the vulgarity, feeling a rising heat upon my neck. "If she did not, she did not voice displeasure to my person Domina," I say softly; however, I know Quinn loves it when I touch her as I love when she touches me. I am intoxicated by the thoughts of her touching me and I buried deep inside her. I am addicted to the sound of her breath against my ear and the moans that escape her lips when I touch her in the right position.

"Excellent, then I'll see to it when she arrives that for the rest of the day you are to fulfill her desires, after all an eighteenth year of life only comes around once. You recall that moment, do you not?" She says and my thoughts only linger to being with Quinn for the entire day with my Domina knowing of such.

"Yes Domina," I respond to her question and I all but want to slap her in the face for even bringing up my eighteenth year of life—I spent it serving her and at night grazing the sands of the ludus; there was not an ounce of celebration. I sat at the bottom of the stairwell with Dani and Puck sitting on the other side. They held out a candle for me, told me to wish for something grand, and to blow the flame out. I wished for freedom and love—I got one, but will receive the other soon, but even if the celebration was not of a great stature, having a brother and a sister to make it feel as such was enough for me.

"Take your leave in an hour's hence, she will make her presences known and I want you bathed," she says as I bow to her before retreating only far enough to be brought to another bathing corridor. Two slaves that I have not had the pleasure of serving with begin to disrobe me and have me cleaned. They take awful care of my appendage, but I know it is not because of it being dirty—they have just never bear witness to such a thing.

A throat is cleared and we three turn our heads to see Quinn standing at the door. She snaps her fingers and points them out the door; both quickly taking their leave, allowing it to be just us two. "Domina said you were not to arrive in but an hour," I say as she circles around to my front. Her eyes are squinted as if to examine me, which I feel she might actually be doing so.

"I decided to make my presence known early. Alba told me my present was actually being prepared as we spoke, then pointed to the room," she says; the tone of her voice is thick with desire, but of course I could mistake it for possession seeing as she made the two slaves disperse quickly.

"I know I am hardly the grandest gift you could receive," I confess to her as she stops her strides then stands there. The look she once possessed when she made her presences known has disappeared. She wears a completely different expression all together, only to wrap her arms around my nude body placing her lips upon my neck.

"You are all I want on this day," she whispers continuing to place kisses on my skin, lightening up my senses as I place my hands upon her holding her close to me.

"Is there anything you request of me?" I ask as she pulls away, meeting my eyes. She walks backwards and stares at me as I stare upon her. Her dress loosens and falls to her feet. Every moment I look upon her body, every moment I stare into her eyes, I must refrain from taking her lips hostage to my own and showing her truly how much I love her.

She walks to the bath and sits down in the water, beckoning me with her finger. I do as commanded and step in with her, sliding over to her, sitting her on top of me. I lean in to kiss her lips as she wraps her arms around my neck pulling me as close to her as she possibly can. Sliding my hand between us, I rub between her folds and she gasps into my mouth.

I continue to rub her as she begins to roll her hips into my hand, biting down on my shoulder. "Fuck," she moans as I replace my hand with my cock, putting it deep inside her. She groans, but welcomes it, sliding up and down on me as the waves of the water move against our bodies.

I begin to feel the slow build as she continues to move faster against me. I grab her breasts and take one into my mouth, gliding my tongue against her nipple as my hips thrust deep into her as she continues her movements. I pick up the pace as her moans get louder till I feel her walls tighten around me squeezing me as I begin to feel myself releasing inside her.

I slow my thrusts down as does she till we're finally just sitting in the bath. Neither one of us make any movements to have me pull out, enjoying the serene moment of just being so close. I close my eyes and lean back, then tiredly open my eyes and am met by her smile. "I love you," I whisper making her look down.

"And I love you," she returns leaning forward to kiss me softly. A throat is cleared and we both look in the direction it came from. Quinn turns back around to face me, turning a deep shade of red at the man in the door way. He casts a small shadow, but he holds a cloth within his grasp—it is Saxa and he has what I requested. I motion with my hand for him to place it on the bath tiles and does as he's told before retreating back outside.

Quinn pulls away from me and sits down beside me, suddenly filled with worry. "What troubles you?" I ask her softly, caressing her cheek softly; however, she moves her head slightly. I cannot deny her pulling away from me stung a great deal.

"He saw us," she whispers. "He saw me," she looks down and I know now that it is more of worry that word will surface of us being together. Suddenly I feel disgusted with myself—upon the idea that Quinn did not care of what other people thought.

I nod firmly, sighing before standing from the bath. The water cascaded down with heavily movements but Quinn watches from where she sat in confusion. "Where are you going?" She asks as I step out of the bath to retrieve a cloth to dry myself. "I asked you a question and I demand an answer," she says as she too steps out. I turn around to her with challenging eyes, throwing the damp cloth down.

"You demand me?" I ask her quietly. "I am not your slave. I am your lover—at least so I presumed when you confessed as such," I tell as her face remains firm. "He is a slave Quintina! Domina requested me to fulfill your desires for your birthday, so apologies but you should have thought stronger about laying with me and what shame your family might face due to such actions!" I yell only to have her shush me as it echoes through the room.

"Lower your tone," she says and it only fuels my anger as I throw the cloth across the room, as begin to walk in a line only to retrace my steps. "I am not ashamed of you," she finally speaks, making me stop my movements.

"When I told you such words I meant it," she begins to cry softly. "I do love you, but this is difficult for me. I wake up in the middle of the night after being plagued by thoughts of your blood being shed in the arena only to not see you again," she begins as my expression remains hard. "Thoughts that Antonius and Alba will not grant your wish, thoughts that I could potentially bear your child and yet you're still in captivity," she sobs and my face softens at the mention of bearing my child. She cannot possibly be carrying my child this very moment—it is not possible.

"I am not with child now that I am aware of, but this secrecy will soon begin to be too much for either of us," she says as she stands before me, running her hands down my sides comfortingly. "I pray to the Gods to have a life with you, but I am leaving in a day's hence, so my fears will plague me till I lay my eyes upon your face on the sands in Rome," she explains and I sigh deeply, looking down at the cloth by the bath, then return my gaze to her.

"What if your concerns are to be true, about Dominus?" I ask for I do not want that to be true. They have been nothing but good to me and allowed me to seek true refuge in the sands when I could have been beaten or put to death for placing a wooden sword in my hand without request. I will be grateful for such remorse; however, I refuse to allow them to keep me here for the rest of my life when they swore to Quinn of my freedom.

She sighs, nodding carefully. "I will tell my father of our affair and beg him to set you free himself," I blink at her in disbelief. I know he wouldn't be displeased if I was a citizen, but to be a slave laying with his daughter is a whole other situation. She could risk her place in society if this so much as surfaces. "Do not think of speaking words of anything against it. I love you and I will not stop till I have you to come home to—freely," she places her hands upon my cheeks and kisses me passionately, then pulls away to smile softly.

I place her arms at her side and step towards the cloth—my feet pad against the floor and I pick it up to hand it to her. "It is for you—I sent Saxa out to retrieve it with the earnings I received for your birthday," she takes it and unwraps it slowly, then reveals the necklace laced with green gems to match her eyes. "It is a way of telling you that even when I am not by your side, I will be," I add walking up to her and taking it from her hands so I can place it around her neck. She fingers the gems with a small smile, then places her lips upon mine.

"You did not have to spend such coin on me, but I love it nevertheless. I will cherish it always," she says into my lips, then kisses them again before pulling away. She steps back into the

back and sits down in the water, beckoning me with her finger. "I just want to sit with you, if I can have only that for my birthday I shall accept it as my favorite one yet," she says as I do as requested, sitting down behind her to wrap my arms around her waist, placing a kiss upon her soft yet slightly damp skin of her neck.

"And I will make certain you will have many more in the future," I whisper into her ear, kissing behind it only to have her giggle slightly at the sensation.

No matter what happens on the sands, I will make certain I will come back to her. In this life or the next, I will shed the blood of anybody who decides to try to take my life from me. I will come back to her—I have to come back to her.

Note: continued on <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10308069/>

Santana's Costume Mystery, by LazyWriterGirl

Seven days before Halloween; Quinn's not sure why she's spending the week leading up to Halloween at the Bushwick Loft. It may have something to do with the fact that most of her important classes have been cancelled by professors looking for an early break. More likely, she just really wanted, no, needed to spend more time with Santana. After they'd hooked up on Valentine's Day Santana had cleverly managed to get Quinn to confess that she'd liked sleeping with another girl on a level that she couldn't just dismiss as being "fun"; they'd decided to try dating.

They told Brittany first; it was Santana's idea and given their (particularly Santana's) history with the taller blonde, Quinn had agreed. Brittany had been a little sad, as expected, but she was happy for them and blessed their newly born relationship in a way that only Brittany could. After that they simply waited for the other New Directions to find out on their own, "organically" as Rachel put it, and after a few days of frantic, excited, generally encouraging phone calls, Santana and Quinn began to take their long-distance love seriously.

Of course, instead of being able to come to New York to spend time with her girlfriend, that summer Quinn had been offered the role of Ophelia in the Yale Theatre Club's production of Hamlet; it was Santana who had insisted that she stay put right there in New Haven to play the role. The only time that they saw each other in person during that whole time was in late August; Santana made it a point to come and watch every single performance. Further, she refused to allow Quinn's friend Mark to give her a discount on tickets just because she was the girlfriend of one of their stars and paid full price for each night. Quinn was usually so tired after the play that the most she and Santana ever got to in their downtime was a movie and some snuggling, but they made it work. Still, for fairly new couple they hadn't spent much time together, and that is something that really bothers the blonde.

Six days before Halloween; When it all comes down to it, no matter what her reasoning was, Quinn is so glad to be in New York, spending time with Santana. They deserve this time, and some part of her must have known that. Yeah, that's definitely it, Quinn thinks as she looks at Santana from across the table. The Latina is sipping from a deep red mug that reads "Property of the HBIC" and flipping through a tabloid without really reading it. Her lack of confidence is endearing; so unlike the Santana that was constantly trying to knock Quinn off the top of the pyramid. "What's definitely it, baby?" Quinn flushes; of course she'd said that aloud. From his perch on the couch Kurt practically coos as he hears the normally-snarky girl being affectionate, and he doesn't stop even when Santana turns around to shoot him a nasty glare.

"Leave Kurt alone San," Quinn says, and then, because she can't possibly say what she was really thinking without risking Kurt's life (he's made it a point to treat every sweet thing they say like he would the garbling of the world's cutest baby) she says, "I was uh...thinking that I have the perfect idea for a Halloween costume!"

"Oh yeah? What's that?" Santana mouths the word 'babe', shooting a wink Quinn's way before turning back to Kurt, who's all of a sudden very interested in the way the remote lights up when he presses a button.

"I...", she draws out her sentence, unsure of what to saying. She knows that the second she says what she's going to be, Santana will insist that she stick to it. Quinn casts her glance around the room quickly. She sees a book lying nearby, one of hers, and for a moment she's about to say that she'll be Daenerys Targaryen for Halloween but something stops her; it'll be done by somebody else, at least one other person at the party they're going to, and that would be embarrassing. Kurt seems to give up on his search for something to watch and fiddles with his phone for a bit. As the Killers come on Quinn realizes that he'd been pairing his iPhone to the television set; that's when it hits her. "I'm going to be Brandon Flowers for Halloween," she says. Santana hums lowly, smirking at her girlfriend as she sips from her mug.

"Good one, babe. I can't wait to see how you pull *that* off," she says, blatantly ignoring Kurt's drawl of "Wow Satan, who knew you can be so cute when you flirt with your girlfriend?"

"Don't worry, I'll make it work," Quinn says with a grin; she has no fucking idea how she's going to be Brandon Flowers for Halloween, but she figures it might have something to do with Mark and the Yale Dramatic Arts crew back in New Haven. They'll be able to help her whip something up, she's sure.

"What are you going to be for Halloween, Santana," Kurt says. The brunette snorts a little, something that Quinn would usually chastise her for if they were anywhere else; in Santana's own home though, she lets the impolite behaviour go. She doesn't want the brunette to feel like she needs to act any differently on Quinn's account.

"I'm *only* gonna have the most bitchass-fucking-amazeballs costume that that NYADA bash has ever seen, hmkay?" The look on her face is so serious when she says it that Quinn can't help but laugh. It comes out of her in strange, choppy little giggles as she tries to stop herself, and she's surprised when Santana doesn't say anything about it.

As they're falling asleep that night, Quinn realizes that Santana never actually said what she would be wearing to the party; it's too late to ask anyway, Quinn thinks as she rolls over, throwing an arm casually over Santana's stomach as she drifts out of consciousness.

Five days before Halloween; Quinn spends the whole day Skyping with Mark and his girlfriend Laura; they've got a great plan for her Brandon Flowers costume and all she needs to buy are feathers (preferably big and brown), a dollar store medal (they come in six packs, which should be handy if she messes up), and black laces for her combat boots. "I'm heading out to do some shopping, need some things for my costume. Does anybody want anything?" Santana looks up from her phone.

"You're not going alone, are you?" Kurt looks between them with interest, and from his laptop screen Quinn can see Blaine's baby-smooth face watching quietly as well.

"Santana, we're all the same age and you know I'm just as capable as you," Quinn says, mildly irritated. The Latina casts a glance at the two boys (well, the one boy and his boyfriend's laptop-enabled face) and stands, walking over to Quinn in a deliberately sexy manner that makes the blonde want to swoon and makes Kurt look like he wants to (jokingly) throw up.

"I know you can handle yourself Quinn, but I still don't like the idea of you alone...this isn't a great neighbourhood," here Santana ignores Kurt's indignant, "It isn't *that* bad!" and continues, "I just want to be sure that you're safe. Okay if I come with you? I need some things too." Quinn nods and smiles; she's secretly glad that Santana is coming with her. New York and New Haven are quite different, and though she stands by what she'd said to Santana, she knows that it's safer, in general, to walk around with somebody else.

"What do you need to buy?" Quinn asks as soon as Santana gets past the heavy door. The brunette just shrugs and winks, but won't say anything about her mysterious costume.

While they're at the store, Santana slips away for a bit, returning once she's already purchased whatever it is that she needs. On the way home, Quinn manages to sneak a discreet peek into one of her girlfriend's bags, but whatever was inside it was cleverly hidden by candy and chocolates. "Ah-ah, no peeksies, baby," Santana teases when she catches Quinn's frustrated eyes. Quinn frowns slightly. "Awh, my poor baby... I'll make it up to you when we get home." The frown disappears.

Four days before Halloween; Quinn hasn't seen Santana at all since she woke up to find the other girl's half of the bed cold and unoccupied. She searches the whole loft, slightly distraught to find that she's the only one home; *she doesn't even live here!* With bated breath she waits as the lock jiggles, and when it's Rachel that steps in, the blonde breathes out a little too loudly. The tiny brunette lets out a loud, excited shriek of "Quinn!" and it is only then that the blonde realizes that she hasn't seen Rachel since she got here. "When did you get here?" Rachel gives her a warm hug.

"About four days ago," Quinn says, amused when Rachel's face falls in shock.

"Four days! If I'd known I would've come sooner! Have Kurt and Santana been hospitable?" Rachel laughs a little at her own joke; during the summer she'd seen how Santana was around Quinn. If it were possible, the fiery Latina could be just as sweet as Brittany when it came to taking care of Quinn and Rachel finds it every bit as adorably weird as Kurt does. Quinn laughs and nods. "Well I'm glad to hear it!"

"Glad to hear what, hobbit? Welcome home by the way, whatever. Hey baby, sorry, I had to pick something up." Santana holds a hand up, asking for them not to say anything until she's dropped off her bags. As soon as she's done, she lopez over to Quinn, snaking an arm around the blonde's lithe waist. "So what'd I miss?"

"Nothing," Quinn says sweetly, wrapping her own arm around Santana. "What'd you buy?" She's still bothered by the fact that she doesn't know what her girlfriend's costume will be; Mark

and Laura have nearly finished drawing out what they're going to do for her Brandon Flowers costume. Speaking of which, "Hey, baby, I need to go back to New Haven tomorrow. Gotta pick something up for my costume."

Santana doesn't look as upset as she'd secretly hoped, just nodding as she rests her head on Quinn's shoulder and Rachel coos. "Mkay. I'll miss you," she says sweetly, acting as if the smaller brunette isn't there; Quinn figures it must be because Rachel caught her in a good mood. "I've got to work on this costume, so I'll be home whenever you get back." At the mention of a costume Rachel's smile grows wide but before the smaller girl can speak, she stops. Odd, Quinn thinks, looking between her girlfriend and one of their closest friends.

Three days before Halloween; nothing much really happens except for Quinn driving to New Haven and back. She leaves at around noon and gets there slightly before two, remembering to call Santana as soon as she's parked her car. She finds Mark and Laura hanging around on the grassy patch in front of their dorm, and when they see her they stand and stretch; they've probably been lying there all day, just talking, she thinks.

"I'm surprised you actually got here on time!" Mark says, laughing. "Would've thought Santana would want to come with you, and we know what that would've meant." He waggles his eyebrows at her jokingly, making her laugh along.

"She actually had to work on her own costume, but I'm supposed to call her before I leave so she knows what time to expect me." Mark nods and Laura smiles.

"It's so cute, how into Halloween you guys are," she says.

"Oh, Santana has loved Halloween ever since she was little; I used to not enjoy it as much; it's only because of her that I'm as into it now," Quinn explains. The couple nods and then Mark's eyes brighten.

"Did you bring the stuff?" Quinn holds out the Dollarama bag in response, "Excellent."

"How'd you come up with this idea, Q?" Laura asks as they make their way inside.

"I was desperate for an idea and Kurt was bored, you remember Kurt, and he was playing the Killers' new music video, so I kind of just went from there."

"Cool!" Laura says, throwing her fist up in the air so suddenly that it startles Quinn a bit. "Well don't worry Quinn; we're gonna make sure that you look *super* hot as Brandon Flowers!"

Two days before Halloween; Santana is sewing furiously when Rachel and Quinn return from the Spotlight Diner; Quinn wanted to see where they worked but Santana had "So much to do" that Rachel had gladly offered to take her friend there. The blonde doesn't manage to get a good look at the shimmery cloth but she can tell that her girlfriend is pleased with her efforts. She doesn't push for Santana to tell her what it is; she's tired of guessing, and she'll see it eventually.

The day before Halloween; Quinn is putting together the finishing touches on her costume when Rachel walks back into the loft; one of the girls at the diner has just joined Kurt's band and she's fantastically talented, according to the small brunette. Quinn smiles because she's happy that things are going so well for her friends; they're living out their big NYC dreams and it's all terribly exciting.

"You look gorgeous Quinn!" Rachel says when she sees the makeup that Quinn's experimenting with. It's going to be bold and dramatic, *theatrical* the blonde thinks, and she's more confident now that Rachel has sounded off her approval; the tiny diva has an amazing eye for these things.

"Thanks Rach... what are you going to go to the party as?" Come to think of it, the NYADA starlet hasn't once mentioned her own costume, but surely she has one.

"It's so funny that you should mention that Quinn, as a matter of fact, Santana—

"Whoa whoa, don't talk about me when I'm in the loft but not in the same room, right, Hobbit? No me gusta!" Santana doesn't sound all that angry; it's the hastiness of her voice that bothers Quinn a bit.

"She wasn't saying anything bad, S, you know that...and why are you so secretive all of a sudden?" Quinn asks suspiciously.

"What-me? Suspicious?" Santana looks confused for a minute. "Oh, Q you're too cute! Trying to get me to reveal my amazeballs costume a day early?" Quinn manages to stammer out that no, she didn't try anything like that but of course that was what she was angling for. "Calm your tits – which, by the way, look so hot in that shirt – I'm sure that when you see my costume it'll be totally worth the wait."

The day of Halloween; Everybody is busily getting dressed and they've only really got an hour until the party. For some reason Santana is the only one not aflutter with activity, even as Quinn, Rachel, Kurt, Blaine and Finn all struggle to put themselves together.

"Holy shit, Quinn, you look amazing," Finn says; she smiles at the compliment, she'd tried really hard to put an outfit together.

"If you were anymore beautiful we'd have to smuggle you out of the apartment; Bob from downstairs might finally mistake you for a goddess of the night," Kurt jokes even as Quinn shudders; Bob from downstairs is a certified weirdo.

"Baby how come you're not getting ready?" she asks as she fixes her hair. The pompadour had been Rachel's idea and it looks, if she dares say so herself, pretty damn hot.

"I'm going to get ready soon. Gotta be fashionably late and all that shit. You guys go ahead." Rachel comes out of her room just then and Quinn immediately recognizes the shimmery fabric that Santana had been sewing together a few days previous. It's a replica of the outfit that Rachel

had worn at the end of her Run, Joey, Run video, but sexier and much more nicely put together. But wait... as she's pulled out into the hallway by Kurt and Rachel's eager hands, she wonders, *what the hell is Santana going to wear?*

The answer comes about a half hour later. Quinn is on the dance floor, absentmindedly swaying along to the beat with Rachel and Kurt's new band-mates, Elliot and Dani. She likes them both; they'd immediately guessed "Brandon Flowers!" when they'd seen the feathers on her blazer shoulders.

"Goddamn Miss Brandon Flowers, you are *so* fucking sexy," she hears Santana's voice rasping behind her ear. Quinn smirks at Dani (dressed like a total rock-star) and Elliot (a 'glampire' as he'd said upon their introduction), turning to the beat and getting a full look at Santana's amazeballs costume which is...well. The Latina is wearing black leggings that might be leather but are probably not, black boots, a black leather jacket, and a graphic tee that's hidden under a black scarf. She looks beautiful (and sexy) Quinn thinks as she allows herself a longer look, but for the life of her Quinn can't figure out what kind of costume this is.

"Well thank you Miss... Buffy?" Santana shakes her head and winks at Dani and Elliot, who laugh. They're obviously in on the joke.

"Nuh-uh," Santana says as she twists her girlfriend around and the beat morphs into Church by T-Pain. "Aw fuck I love this song. Dance with me, baby." Quinn mentally braces herself; she knows that dancing with Santana, especially to songs like this, will leave her all hot and bothered. And she knows that the Latina knows, and is probably using this knowledge to avoid answering what her costume (which Quinn is starting to doubt is even really a costume) happens to be.

Just as things start to get a little too intimate for everybody else's comfort, Quinn stops. She really can't figure out this costume business and it's bothering her like crazy. "Hey Q, what's wrong, do you feel okay?" Santana asks, and Quinn nods.

"Yeah... just don't want to dance." At this point Rachel, Kurt, Finn and Blaine have all met up with them on the floor and the four are watching them with interest, along with Elliot and Dani.

"Why not?" Santana looks a bit upset.

"I just... it's been bothering me all week, and now it's Halloween and I can't figure out what your amazeballs costume is and maybe you just wanna dance so I won't ask questions and I feel dumb because I haven't figured it out."

"Oh baby, I'm sorry, I didn't know that you've been waiting to find out what it is. You want to know what my amazeballs costume is?" she asks, throwing her arms around Quinn's neck and laughing when the blonde gives up and begins to dance again.

"Clearly," Quinn says, dipping her head dangerously close to Santana's secret spot, hidden right under her jaw. "So are you going to tell me?"

"Of course," Santana says, and when their lips are only a breath away from each other she says, "I'm Emily Fields." Quinn backs away slowly, hands holding on to Santana's hips. Now that she mentions it, Quinn can definitely see the connection, but it's just so low-effort that she honestly can't believe it; she wonders if maybe San's just bullshitting and if she'd actually just forgotten to prepare an outfit.

"Seriously?" She laughs, "Really San, that was your amazeballs plan?"

"Emily Fields is totally hot, and Pretty Little Liars is pretty much *the* fucking Halloween show. It's genius!" Santana says, pulling the blonde closer. Quinn rolls her eyes. Then again...she casts another glance at her girlfriend, it's kind of genius.

That First Christmas, by lightblue-Nymphadora

Everyone she talked to said sophomore year was the hardest. Her twin cousins Louis and Amanda both said they'd wanted to drop out. Her dad said he nearly developed an alcohol problem. Her aunt Karen said she was hospitalized twice. And she hadn't believed them, until now.

"Damn it!" Santana said, throwing her pen. She'd worked through the numbers six times, just to make sure she had everything right. Unfortunately, she was right the first time. She would have to work through Christmas break this year, if she wanted to go on the Tropical Ecology class's field trip to Costa Rica the next summer. Worth it? Hell yeah, but she missed her family. And she wasn't exactly looking forward to breaking the news to her mom.

"What's going on?" Rachel asked, peeking her head around the privacy partition.

Santana sighed and stood up, stretching. "I just realized that I'm going to have to have a working Christmas this year. Say hi to Lima for me."

Rachel, who was packing at the moment, furrowed her brow in confusion. "Are you sure? You can't even manage it for a couple of days?"

"It wouldn't be worth the money for a ticket to just go for a couple of days. Especially since that would set me back a hundred and fifty dollars."

"Right," Rachel said, nodding. "I'm sorry."

"It's okay. I'm the one that went and picked a biology major. Can you take my family their Christmas gifts? The postal service is delayed up to two weeks, apparently."

"Absolutely. Give them here and I'll pack them now."

"I never thought I'd live to see the day when I was thankful for your crazy animal sweaters, Berry. But these are breakable, so here I find myself in that exact situation."

Rachel snorted with laughter. "Whatever. You've always loved my sweaters. Don't think I don't know about the unicorn one you swiped from me in January."

"I was planning on burning it as an offering to the gods of fashion," Santana deadpanned.

"Sure...."

"Oh, and make sure you get video of Burt meeting Kendrick for the first time."

Rachel rolled her eyes. Kendrick was the black, male, sports-loving version of Santana, so this trip was likely to be an adventure. "Right."

Later that day, after Santana had seen both Rachel and Kurt off, she sat in the empty apartment, trying to figure out a way to make the next three weeks not suck. It came to her after about a solid hour of pouting. She grabbed her phone and hit one of her programed numbers.

"Fabray Crematorium – you kill 'em, we grill 'em!"

"Gross, Quinn!"

The blonde's musical laughter floated through the phone. "What's up, sexy?"

"Besides missing my girlfriend? Curious about her plans for Christmas."

"Eurgh," Quinn groaned. "My mom's slovenly pig of a new boyfriend is all big on going to Aspen for the holidays. On her money, of course. I'm not looking forward to it."

"Tell her you're not coming," Santana said. "Come spend Christmas with me. I have to stay here and I'm going to be *so* lonely." There was silence, and Santana could basically hear the slow start to the famous Fabray Grin.

"I'll talk to her tonight."

—

Quinn showed up that Friday, all smiles. "Hey baby!"

"Thank god, you're here! I tried making a batch of Christmas cookies from scratch, and it..."

The smoke alarm went off at that moment.

"Shit!"

Quinn laughed as Santana dashed back into the kitchen. She rolled her suitcase in and left it next to the sofa. "Okay, what – holy crap."

"Don't judge!"

The kitchen was covered in cookie ingredients. It was a wreck. Flour was all over the counter, there were chocolate chips melted to the stove, egg was dripping from one of the cabinets, and Quinn didn't want to speculate about the suspicious green substance in the sink.

"Okay...let's just start from the beginning."

It took them around two hours to bounce back from Santana's catastrophic cookie attempt. Quinn conceded, by the end of it all, that the oven in the apartment was possessed by a demon, and absolved Santana of all responsibility for the extra crispy cookies. They finally had a good four dozen by the time dinner arrived, and they cuddled up on the couch to watch the Charlie Brown Christmas special.

"I could totally get used to this," Santana commented, snagging her fourth cookie and second slice of pizza.

"Me too. But you do know that we can't stay in and eat all break, right? We'll both have gained fifty pounds by the New Year."

"Right?" Santana agreed, laughing. Then her eyes lit up.

"Uh oh – you just got an idea."

"And an awesome one. I know something we can do tomorrow for Christmas Eve."

"Do I even want to know?"

"Don't worry. It's perfectly wholesome, and totally in tune with Christmas spirit," Santana assured her, giving her a kiss on the cheek.

The children's home housed about 40 kids, ages five to fifteen. Santana and Quinn had both spent the morning hanging out with the older kids, and the afternoon doing Christmas crafts with the younger group. As they left that night, the volunteer coordinator welcomed them back any time they wanted.

"We don't have enough people willing to spend time with the kids. The older ones need mentors especially. Come back anytime," she said.

Quinn hailed a cab a bit down the road, and the two of them rode back to the apartment in silence. When they got in, they stood in the kitchen for a moment, just looking at each other.

"Every year?" Quinn said.

"Every year," Santana agreed.

"Will you go back?"

"Yeah. I think that definitely just became a part of my weekly routine. Let's make dinner."

As they sat down to their leftover pizza and turned on A Christmas Story, Quinn nudged Santana.

"Yeah?"

"One day? You know, after we're done with school and everything.... I think I want to adopt."

Santana smiled and nodded.

Family Matters, by PikiBear

December 2024

Quinn woke up early in the morning to start preparing some of the food they would be having for Christmas dinner. She heard Santana come home late from working at the hospital; there had been big emergency the night before - a lot of trucks had crashed together because of the heavy snow fall. Santana was the best doctor in her field, so it was her job to take care of the injured patients.

Santana usually came home late at night, sometime between 11pm and 2am, but she always made sure that she had time for her family. On most days she brought she and Quinn's son, Logan, with her in the morning to the hospital daycare where Quinn would pick him up after she was done working at her studio.

5 years ago they decided that Santana would get pregnant with their first child. It didn't happened on the first try, but luckily for them, after the third try Santana was finally pregnant. She took some time off at the hospital, which made her boss and co-workers a little displeased, but they understood why. After her short time off, Santana worked until she was almost 6 months pregnant and her always growing stomach was just in the way between her and the surgery table. And, finally, on July 19, 2019 she brought a healthy baby boy to the world who had her caramel skin tone and looked almost exactly like her.

Now it was the year 2024, and Quinn had a round stomach. She and Santana decided not to have a second child right after Logan, but a couple years down the road, which was now the time that Quinn made a big name for herself and had two other photographers working at her studio who could take the work on thier own for a while. She often pays them visits to check up and see how everything is going, but after working with both of them for over 1.5 years, she knows that she can trust them, unlike some employees she had hired in the past.

For breakfast today she cooked eggs and little sausages which was Logan's favorite, and she also a smoothie for everybody. Quinn loved green juice but she didn't want to drink the same thing every day, so sometimes they had smoothies or other juices that you could make with fruits, veggies, and a blender. After everything was done cooking, she put it on plates, and put the oven on a low heat to keep it all warm, then she went to Logan's room to see if he was already awake or if she had to wake him up.

Walking to Logan's door in their 4 bedroom apartment, Quinn put her ear on the door to see if he was making any noises or not. After not hearing anything, she cracked the door a small way open to see him still lying in his bed surrounded with a lot of stuffed animals and his thumb in his mouth. Santana had been trying to get him to stop, which she did get him to do, but only partially – he still would sleep with his thumb in his mouth at night, but Santana had broken him of the habit enough that he didn't do it during his daytime naps anymore.

Quinn sat down at the side of the bed, where there was still enough space between her and Logan to make it easier for her to wake him; after some time, she and Santana learned to never wake him up suddenly, otherwise their little prince would be in a really bad and cranky mood - and nobody has fun when he is like that. So, sitting next to him on the bed, Quinn turned the small radio on the bedside table to a low volume, and returns her attention to her son to stroke his face softly and give him small kisses. At the same time, Quinn hears the shower turn on, indicating that Santana woke up as well and is ready to have this big day with their boy who would finally be able to interact with all the people that would be over. The two only hoped that he would be more interested in his presents rather than all the colorful warping paper.

When Logan was finally fully awake, he saw that his mommy had a difficult time getting up from sitting on his bed, so he took both of her hands and pulled as hard as his little body could to get Quinn back on her feet. He was so happy that his mommy was finally pregnant, because he wished for a sibling for so long. He would get jealous because at the hospital daycare, most of the other kids had one or two siblings. The same was true for the kids of the employees at Quinn's studio.

Quinn had been lucky enough that in Chicago there weren't that many great photographers before her, so she was able to build up her studio really fast after the people noticed how good she was. In New York or LA, she would have had a lot more competition, but since Santana had this really good job at the hospital where she liked, she was not going to take that away from her.

At the breakfast table, everybody went right to eating the delicious food that Quinn cooked, while Santana told them some stories from the night before. Originally she requested free time from the 22nd of December until New Year's day, but if emergency arose, she would go into work, knowing that that she is just the best for most of the really difficult cases. Once everyone was done with breakfast, Quinn went and washed the dishes by hand, that way the dishwasher wouldn't get full and she could use it to clean all the dishes that would be dirtied from Christmas dinner.

Rachel and her wife would be coming in a couple of hours. Rachel had her last Broadway show the night before so they are catching a plane in the morning and will be staying in the guest bedroom with their girls Anna, Lucia, and Avia. Brittany and Mike are staying at a hotel with their kids, and will come back later. The last guest coming would be Santana's twin brother, Alex, who doesn't have any kids for now. He would be coming alone because he doesn't want anybody to know about his relationship yet. Quinn always found it funny that he was like the opposite to Santana - quiet and laid back.

Cooking all the different food would take them almost all day, and with so many people coming over, it was a bit stressful. But they had started this tradition with their friends back in college before their families had formed, so why stop the tradition now? It would always take place at Quinn and Santana's. In past years, Santana would always end up having to leave and run off to an emergency at the hospital, but now that they were older and she was more distinguished in her field, she was cut a lot more slack during the holidays so she could spend time with her family and friends, and not at the hospital.

Cooking the chicken was always Santana's job, because she could always do that the best. And chicken is something usually everybody likes. Rachel and her wife both live a vegan lifestyle, but don't force their kids to eat that as well. They have often vegetable dishes at home, but when eating out the kids usually order some meat. Quinn is making two different kinds of mac and cheese one with milk and cheese and bacon, and another one with vegan cheese and rice milk with mushrooms, so that Rachel and her wife don't feel that left out. All the kids usually try the vegan dish but nobody gets angry if they don't like it, either. Having both dishes in the oven to bake for now, Quinn gets Logan so that he can help her make some Christmas brownies and berry muffins. He has gotten really good at mixing all the ingredients together, so Quinn always likes to include him in easy tasks of cooking.

After all of their guests arrive, they finally start to eat their dinner where they all share some good conversations about what has happened in their lives. Often the conversation shifts to Quinn's belly, which was rather large for being 6 months pregnant, but she and Santana want to keep the reason for that to themselves until the babies are born, but won't stop the others about speculating either.

The items for the nursery are ordered, but most of them are still in the boxes besides Logan's old crib, where they ordered a matching second one, but since the walls aren't painted yet, they don't want to start setting up all the furniture. Quinn's assistant will come after the holidays; she is really good at painting and already did Logan's room which turned out perfectly.

The kids were done a lot earlier than the adults, so Santana put on a singing game Rachel brought with herself which the adults will play later as well. The girls were dancing to the music, as well as the boys, who each showed the others their tricks. The kids seemed to be having a lot of fun, but began to get tired after about an hour of playing.

Bringing them all to Logan's room, Santana blew up a big air mattress for the other kids, since not all of them could fit in Logan's bed. The only one still awake was Anna. At the age of 7, she was a lot older than all of the other kids, so she thought that she was too old to go to sleep, but soon enough she fell asleep on the couch.

Having to say goodbye to most of their friends wasn't that hard, because they would be back the next day, anyway.

Since all the adults went to bed kind of late, it was no surprise to them that they got woken up really early by the kids. Anna helped her sisters and Logan to get dressed so that they were ready to open all of the presents she saw under the huge Christmas tree that Quinn and Santana decorated. One thing they did different than most families was that they had real candles on the tree, and not some fake light strings that looked cheap. All of the kids were taught not to go near the tree when the candles were lit, so there hasn't been an accident ever.

Logan ran into his parents room, lifted himself up on the bed, and started to jump on it, while screaming for his moms to wake up. Santana who was a light sleeper pretended to still be asleep while slowly turning around, and after another jump she sat up immediately, grabbed their little trouble maker, and started to tickle him. He started to get out of his moms tight hold while

screaming for his mommy to help him, but all Quinn did was turn around and tickle him as well. He screamed so loud that Rachel and the 3 girls came running to their room, only to stop in the doorway at the funny little family to laugh. Rachel's wife who went into the kitchen and made everybody a glass of green juice, and returned only minutes later with a tray full of cups from which she gave everybody one. They all sat down on the big bed until Lucia remembered why they were all there, and grabbed Logan's hand so that they both ran full speed to the living room where a lot of presents were waiting for them. Everybody else came after them and they sat down around the tree. Each kid was allowed to open one present first, after which they would put the candles on the tree again to look at it and let everybody calm down a little down before the rush happened and wrapping paper was flying around the room. Little Avia still had the most fun with the paper, while the other kids were fascinated with their presents. They didn't even get up to eat lunch until their parents forced them. They all hold the memories of this Christmas on camera, where they could add this video to all of the other ones they had from big milestones of their kids.

Today's The Day, by SCWritings

"This is gonna be it, Puck," I whispered as we started setting up for the Halloween party at his place. "I think I'm going to do it tonight." Puck glances at me but quickly returns back to the task of setting up the beer pong table. His tongue pokes out in concentration as he sets the cups up, focusing entirely on lining them up. I cross my arms and bend one of my knees. "You know you're gonna have to fill those later, and reset them." He hangs his head in realization and then he starts to restack the cups, not really paying me any attention, and let's face it. I thrive on attention. "Did you even hear me?"

He fully stands back up and crosses his own arms, mirroring me. "Yeah, I heard you. You said you're going to do it tonight, but let's go down memory lane and think about how many times you've said that before and chickened out."

He's right. I almost did it a lot of times. I told him I was going to do it after we all were supposed to do 'Born This Way', but then things got messed up with David, and Brittany threw a fit over me not coming out.

Then there was Prom. I was going to win Prom Queen and then no one would question me and I would be able to have the power to come out and finally do it, but once again things got messed up and Kurt was crowned Queen, and the plan was botched.

Senior year came around and Quinn turned into the Skank, so there was no way I was going to do it. Nope. Not at all. No chance. Nada. No bueno.

Thankfully, she came to her blonde senses and here we are. Puck is throwing a Halloween party complete with all of the alcohol you could name, or at least, that a high school student could get their hands on. The house is pretty much set up and Puck and I walk around the house admiring our work.

"This time I mean it. I'm gonna do it," I say with a grin creeping up on my face.

Puck chuckles and crosses his arms, throwing one over my shoulders. "What makes today any different?"

I shrug my shoulders and point towards the kitchen. "Alcohol."

We both start laughing and he claps his hands together. "Well, I'm going to get ready. Gotta get my costume all set up. The ninja outfit is really tight." He winks and runs upstairs like an excited school girl putting on makeup for the first time.

I chuckle quietly to myself and walk up the stairs, grabbing my costume on the way. I wanted to be a cat for Halloween, so I found the perfect combination of sexy and cute. I bought the cat ears, and then I'm going to wear a loose crop top, with some black shorts. That's the sexy part. The cute part is the fact that I'm going to draw a nose and whiskers on my face. I smile at the thought and get my costume ready, curling my hair slightly then positioning my cat ears.

I walk out of the spare room and as soon as I do, I hear a wolf whistle. Well, a muffled wolf whistle. I turn my head and see Puck standing proudly in his ninja costume. He pulls down the mask, and says, "Damn it's hard to breathe in this thing."

I laugh and shrug my shoulders. "I told you to be a biker, but you insisted on being a, and I quote, 'sex ninja'."

He walks over to me with his best swagger. "You can't deny the Puckasaurus."

I push him back a little bit with my finger and duck around him. "Actually I can, considering you've got a 'P' where I would rather see a 'V'."

He chuckles a bit at that and shrugs. "Oh well. Plenty of fish in the sea."

We laugh and go back downstairs to prepare the alcohol, which actually means that we tapped the keg, and set up all of the bottles on the island and the kitchen. Just then, the doorbell rings and I look over at him. "Twenty bucks says it's Rachel."

He scoffs, "No way. It's Kurt."

I reach into my bra and pull out a twenty and slap it on the table. He does the same except he reached into his back pocket, pulling out his wallet and getting a twenty from there, slapping it on the table next to mine. We walk towards the door and I pull it open revealing a Rachel Berry dressed up like a bunny. Not even a sexy bunny, like a bunny from A Christmas Story.

I laugh and run back towards the kitchen putting both twenties in my bra, and I hear Rachel say, "What was that about?"

Puck sighs and responds, "We made a bet. I said it was Kurt, she said it was you."

Just then I walk over, scratching his Mohawk. "Silly boy, don't you know Kurt is always 'fashionably late'?"

"She has a point, Noah," Rachel responds.

It's been a couple hours since my bet with Puck, and everyone is here. I mean everyone. I haven't had any alcohol yet because I want to do this sober and if I get rejected, then I can drown in alcohol. It's almost a win-win.

I've been looking around the place for her when I see her. She's wearing a cute little mouse costume with gray ears and a gray loose t-shirt with some gray shorts. Ha, a cat and a mouse. The Gods have spoken. I have to do it tonight. So I make my way over to the girl.

"Hey, Quinn," I say as soon as I reach her.

She turns her head slightly to face me and smiles. "Hey, San." She looks me up and down. "Nice costume."

I smirk, thinking it worked. "Ain't it cute?"

Quinn laughs. It's a laugh of pure joy, one I haven't heard since, well, since before she went all cray-cray. "Yes, it's adorable."

As soon as she says that, we hear Rachel's loud voice. "Karaoke!"

We both sigh. "Here we go..." I hear Quinn mumble from beside me. I grab her hand and pull her towards the small improvised stage.

"Santana!" I look up and see Rachel pointing a tipsy finger at me.

My eyes go wide. "Oh hell no! No way!" I feel people pushing me up to the front and soon, I'm standing next to Rachel. "Come on! I don't want to."

Rachel stumbles a bit. "Well I can't right now, so you have to because your voice is the only one that can compare to mine." Everyone goes silent. "What? Have you *heard* her sing?"

"Thanks, I guess." I look over to the side and see some guys playing with plastic cups and I walk over to them. "Can you guys make a beat to Stop Standing There by Avril Lavigne?" The guys nod and start to tap their cups, clap their hands, and stomp their feet. I walk back over to the makeshift stage. *There's no time like the present*, I think to myself. I look over at Quinn and open my mouth to sing.

*"All this talking to you
I don't know what I'm do to
I don't know where you stand
What's inside of my head."*

She looks back at me and the intensity of her stare makes me almost look away. Almost. I keep looking at her, and I keep my voice going.

*"All this thinkin' of you
Is that what you're doin' to?
You're always on my mind
I talk about you all of the time."*

Quinn's eyes go slightly wide and my stomach twists in knots. I wish I could see what's going on in her mind right now. We keep staring each other down, not breaking eye contact as I sing the chorus.

*"Don't waste another day
Don't waste another minute
I can't wait to see your face
Just to show you how much I'm in it"*

I can almost see the gears working in her head. I wonder if she even knows the message behind this song right now. Aw, man, I bet she's going to ask me about it when I come down. The knots get tighter in my stomach, yet I continue to sing. I have to get this out.

*"So open up your heart
Help me understand
Please tell me who you are
So I can show you who I am"*

I sing the second verse. It feels like I sing it with more emphasis than anything I've ever sang before.

*"You're just standing by
You're just wasting time
Why don't you just tell me the truth
About me and you*

*And as the time goes by
I hope you realize
If you ask me to,
I just might be with you"*

At this point I'm ready to jump off of the stage. Strangely, Quinn's gaze keeps me in place, so I continue.

*"Don't waste another day
Don't waste another minute
I can't wait to see your face
Just to show you how much I'm in it*

*Open up your heart
Help me understand
Please tell me who you are
So I can show you who I am"*

I finish and the party people start to cheer. That's when my gaze breaks from Quinn to see everyone smiling and clapping at me. I wave my hand in a non-committal gesture, and hop off of the stage. I remember where Quinn was standing and I make my way back to her. When I see her, she puts her hand out and I take it. She starts to pull me out of the crowd and into a kind of dark corner of the house so we can actually talk. On the way there, I steal a cup of whatever alcohol was poured and bring it with me, just in case.

As soon as we get there, Quinn stares at me for a while before asking, "Did you mean that?" I nod. "Did you mean that for me?" I nod again. "Why?" I roll my eyes at her, sticking a hip out. "No I know why, but, like, *why*?"

I take a deep breath. "I like you." She's about to interrupt me, but I stick my hand up to silence her. "I like you because you're strong. You've gone through a lot in your life, hell, you've gone through a lot in these past couple of years."

"Why now?"

"Trust me, it would have happened sooner, but things kept getting messed up. Just ask Puck."

"Puck?!"

"Wait, no, not then. He had no idea until I kicked his ass and shaved his Mohawk." Quinn looks at me with a confused look. "Yeah, that mole thing was a lie. After that he was the only one

I could talk to, so he started hanging out a lot and now he calls me his 'lezbros'." I look down at the alcohol swirling in my cup, debating whether or not I need to take a sip, considering the fact that I was pretty much rambling now. I start to raise the cup to my mouth, but Quinn's hand covers it. "What are you doing?"

I look up and she's only an inch from my face. "I wish you would have said something earlier..." she whispers and then leans in to capture my top lip between hers. I toss the cup aside, not caring about spilling, and wrap my arms around her neck. She pulls back and says, "I'm not wasting any more of our time." I smile at the song reference and lean back in to kiss her

Best Halloween ever, I think to myself. And I'm pretty sure Quinn was thinking the same thing.

Just Go With It, by ShadowKira

Quinn smiled down at her daughter, squeezing Beth's tiny hand gently. "Are you having fun, honey?"

The smaller blonde nodded before pouting out her bottom lip slightly. "You know what would be more fun, Mommy?"

"What?" Quinn asked, smiling wider.

"A picture with Santa!" Beth exclaimed excitedly, pointing a tiny finger toward the center of the mall. The Mother followed her Daughter's gaze, a bit surprised by the fact that she had been able to see the photo op from so far away.

"Can we, can we?!"

"Of course! But we have to stay still so we don't hurt ourselves on the escalator, okay?"

"Okay." Beth said, immediately going serious and still. She remained that way until they were almost at the bottom and then she started to squirm again. As soon as the escalator came to the ground floor she lurched forward, tugging on Quinn's arm.

"Come on, Mommy!"

The two made their way through the crowded space and Quinn directed her daughter to the end of the line.

The older blonde's eyes peeked around the other parents and their children toward the large empty chair.

"What's wrong, Mommy?" Beth asked when she looked up and noticed her Mom's frown.

Quinn was about to answer when two men dressed as Elves emerged from the faux snow covered house. "I'm sorry kids, Santa is not feeling well and had to go back to the North Pole." The brunette Elf said, apologetically.

There was a group sound of disappointment and several parents moved to exit the line almost immediately.

"But," The blonde Elf said, speaking up in an attempt to keep people from leaving. "Mrs. Claus is more than happy to get her picture taken and pass on your gift ideas!"

Quinn glanced down toward Beth, ignoring the few people around them still leaving. "You want a picture with Mrs. Claus?"

"Yeah!" Beth said, jumping up and down excitedly.

Several minutes later, a woman emerged from the prop house in a more form fitting and feminine Santa outfit. It was a little short, in Quinn's opinion but Beth and the other children seemed excited.

Given how many people had abandoned the line and how quickly they were getting the pictures taken, it was Beth's turn in no time at all.

Quinn released her Daughter's hand, smiling as she watched the six year old run right up to Mrs. Claus. The women caught each others eyes before the brunette helped Beth onto her lap.

"Hello there and what's your name, Kiddo?"

"Beth!"

"Beth, alright, Beth... What do you want for Christmas?"

The little girl glanced toward her Mother before leaning in toward Mrs. Claus slightly. "It's a secret!"

"Hah, okay. I like you, kid. How about you whisper it in my ear?" She asked, leaning down a little more and turning her ear toward the child.

Beth hid her whispering behind her tiny hand and pulled away with a serious face when she was done.

Mrs. Claus glanced up toward Quinn, a surprised look on her face. She set Beth down gently from her lap, "I'll talk to Santa and we'll see what we can do."

Quinn stepped forward, mouthing a quick *'thank you'* before taking Beth's hand and leading her toward the exit where they could purchase their picture.

"What did you ask for, sweetie?" Quinn asked, paying the blonde Elf with a smile and thanking him as he handed her the freshly printed image.

"Can't tell you, it's a secret!" Beth said, swinging her Mom's arm as the two held hands and headed back to finish their shopping.

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"Thank you so much for coming in and saving our asses, Santana!" The blonde man said, smiling broadly as he removed his hat and Elven ears.

"No problem, Sam. But you two owe me, big time." Santana said, looking between her two roommates.

"I figured..." The other man mumbled, taking off his own hat and smoothing down his gelled hair.

"Oh, can it Blaine. Did you have any better ideas?" Sam asked, unbuttoning the shirt to his costume.

"If Kurt hadn't been in class, he would have done it without asking anything in return..."

"Yeah, *right*. I'm sure he'd love to waste his precious time in between NYADA classes to come down to the mall and dress up with you dorks."

The other brunette shot her a glare, "Oh, whatever. Don't tell me you weren't enjoying yourself. You had plenty of pretty women appreciative of your piss poor efforts with their children. If only they'd been able to hear what you were saying!"

Santana glanced toward her nails as if she was ignoring him and Blaine's features relaxed slightly. "You totally had the hots for that one Mom though, didn't you?"

"What, which one?" Santana asked, sounding a little shocked as she looked back toward him.

"The blonde one, with the cute little girl." Sam said, coming back into the conversation. "You were so much nicer to that kid... And for good reason, her Mom was a total MILF!"

"I'm going to tell Mercedes you said that." Blaine said, crossing his arms over his chest.

"I don't know what you idiots are talking about, there were plenty of blonde Mom's with cute little-"

"Are you blushing?" Blaine asked, his thick eyebrows rising in surprise.

"She's totally blushing, dude." Sam said with a chuckle and Santana narrowed her eyes glaring at both of them.

"Fuck you, I'll see you later. Have fun playing Santa and his tight ass little skanky Elf on your own." She muttered, immediately getting up from the couch to grab her coat and stalk toward the door.

"Why, thank you. I do have an adorably tight ass." Blaine said, smirking as he watched her storm out of their little dressing area and back into the mall.

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Santana sighed, looking out over the few patrons that had decided to venture out in the snow to come in for a drink. It was Christmas Eve, so she wasn't really all that surprised. Most people were at home in bed or with their families.

She hadn't wanted to bother going the whole way home for just one day, given she was to work the Friday just after Christmas. So she'd offered herself up for a long and boring shift Christmas Eve knowing that it would be easy money.

The young woman kept herself busy cleaning glasses and occasionally talking to anyone who was up for conversation. The only other woman staffed in the bar that night was currently out on break and Santana was bored out of her mind. There were three men up at the bar, all too drunk now to have a decent conversation with and the other patrons had tucked themselves off in the furthest corners of the room.

Santana looked up, eyes moving for the door when it was pulled open. A feminine figure bundled up tightly in layers stumbled in from the cold and immediately headed for the bar.

Santana had watched her approach but turned away as the woman took a seat and began to strip off some of her layers. "Still nasty out there, huh?" She asked, over the music.

"Yeah... At least we'll have a white Christmas." Came the woman's soft reply.

Santana smiled and grabbed a glass, "So, what's your poison?" Just after the words left her lips her throat ran dry. The woman who had just come up to the bar had beautiful shoulder length blonde hair with a slight wave to it.

"Oh, weren't you at the mall the other week? Mrs. Claus, right?" She asked, a wide smile pulling at her lips.

Santana swallowed and could feel her cheeks heating up. "Uh, yeah... I was just doing a favor for my roommates... You know, the two idiots that had been dressed like Elves?"

"Well, thank you. My Daughter really appreciated it." The blonde said, her smile shrinking slightly. "My name's Quinn and I'll have... Whatever strong drink you can recommend." She said, glancing toward the bottles lining the wall behind the bartender.

"Name's Santana and alright. I think I've got just the thing.." The brunette turned, scooping up some ice for the bottom of the glass before grabbing several bottles. "So, where's your kid tonight?"

She wasn't really known for her subtly and the fact that this well dressed Mother of a young girl was out on Christmas Eve was sort of rubbing her the wrong way. Santana glanced up from what she was doing when Quinn didn't respond right away.

"She's... With her Dad, back in Ohio. I get her throughout most of the year because of school and he gets her for the Holidays..."

'Shit.' Santana thought, gritting her teeth as she realized that she'd judged too quickly. "I- I'm sorry, I'm sort of known for speaking before I think."

"It's okay. I'd probably wonder the same thing, if I were in your position..." Quinn said, glancing down as she trailed her index finger against the wood grain of the bar. The two were quiet for several minutes before Santana slid the tall glass over the wood and toward the other woman.

"Here, on the house."

"You don't have to-"

"Hey, do you see what it is like in here tonight?" The brunette asked, leaning on her arms slightly and nodding toward the rest of the bar. Quinn glanced around, taking in how little business they were getting at the moment. "They're paying me extra just to work this shift, so, as an apology for my slip up... Let me buy you a drink."

The blonde nodded with a sigh, lifting the glass to take an exploratory sip. "Mmm. This is good, very fruity but... Are you sure there's any alcohol in it?" She asked, arching a delicate brow.

Santana laughed and swept her towel over the bar where some condensation had built up on the wood. "Yes, I promise you there is."

Quinn shrugged and took a deeper sip, before smacking her lips and placing the drink back down. "What's it called, for future reference?"

"Love Potion... Nice and sweet but with a kick. Normally a good starter for someone who doesn't drink often."

"Am I that obvious?" The blonde asked, with a chuckle.

"A little, normally people order their familiars first... Move into the experimentation phase later, once they've got a few drinks in them."

Quinn smiled shyly, giving Santana a look that said she only half believed that before drinking more of the delicious fruity concoction. "So, why are you working on Christmas Eve? Don't you want to be home with your family, your boyfriend?"

"Woah now. Just because I work at Coyote Ugly doesn't mean I'm into boys, blondie." The brunette said, leaning on the bar again. "I'm single and my family lives out of state, didn't seem worth the trip when I could be making money, instead of spending it." She finished, with a shrug.

The blonde gave a slow nod, her eyebrows having shot up at the quick correction. "Don't you... Get a lot of unwanted attention, working at a place like this?"

Santana laughed, "Isn't that anywhere? At least they'll tip here, even more if they've copped a feel and appreciate a good slap upside the head. Besides, now they treat me like one of the guys anymore. Most of the regulars know."

Quinn frowned a little and swirled her drink before taking a gulp of it.

"Look, I know what you're thinking... But it's okay. I knew what it was going to be like when I started here, or honestly... Even when I looked into bartending." Santana confessed, "It's good money and I enjoy the job."

Quinn nodded, "Sorry... Look, now I'm the one judging."

Santana laughed, "Not really."

The two stared at each other a moment, completely comfortable in the silence. Santana felt her heart flutter as the woman glanced down at her lips before draining the rest of the liquid in her glass. "I think I'd like another one of these."

The brunette slid off of the bar and swiped Quinn's glass to pour her the remainder of the first batch of the drink. "Alright but you might want to drink the second one a little slower..."

Quinn chuckled and covered her smile with her hand, "Yes, I think that would probably be a good idea..."

The two talked for a while, Quinn only had one more round of the drink aptly called Love Potion before sobering up for closing time. And when the time came, she bundled herself back up and bid Santana a quick goodbye before heading back into the cold.

"So Quinn, what did you do for Christmas? Did you get to see your parents?"

"No, Rachel... I didn't." The blonde said, ignoring the gasp of surprise from her roommate.

"What?! Quinn... I thought you said that they invited you to come home, with Beth?" The brunette asked, joining her friend on the couch.

"They did, I just... I didn't feel like going." She glanced toward Kurt who was nearby in the kitchen and shifting uncomfortably on his feet.

"You sent Beth to Ohio by herself?" Rachel asked incredulously and Quinn rolled her eyes.

"No, she flew with Kurt both ways because he's amazing."

Kurt returned the grateful smile the blonde was giving him and did his best to not wilt under Rachel's glare as he joined the two of them in the living room.

"I feel so out of the loop! It would have been nice for one of you to tell me what was going on..."

"Rachel, you were upstate for most of the month! We didn't think it would matter..." Quinn groaned, rubbing at her temples.

"She's my Godchild! What if something would have happened to her? I'd never forgive myself..." The brunette frowned, realizing that Quinn had already gone back to her book and Kurt was looking at something on his phone. "Wait, you've used *this*, my protective feelings for your Daughter as a distraction! If you didn't go home, what did you do on Christmas?"

Kurt looked up from his phone, clearly interested in hearing the answer as well. Quinn sighed and closed her book, "I went to a bar."

"What?" The two brunettes asked in unison, both equally shocked by the blonde's admission.

"Are bars even open on Christmas?" Rachel asked, looking toward Kurt seeing as she wasn't an expert on the holiday.

"Well, not Christmas... Christmas I mostly spent sleeping and relaxing, I also Skyped with Beth when she got home from her visiting extended family. I went out to the bar Christmas Eve." Quinn corrected, as if it made this part of the conversation any more normal.

"But you hate bars." Kurt pointed out, placing his phone on the coffee table and getting more comfortable now that the conversation had shifted.

"I... I wasn't in a good place, okay? I just, I needed to not feel for a little while." Quinn admitted softly, avoiding her friends' worried gazes.

"Quinn... You should have called, I would have come home early." Rachel said, covering the blonde's hand with her own.

"It wasn't really so bad... The bartender was really cool and she made me this delicious drink, you two would love it!"

"What's it called?" Kurt asked and Rachel shot him a look, not liking that they were moving past Quinn's emotions so quickly.

"Love Potion, I didn't see what she put in it but it tasted amazing... And it still had enough alcohol in it to get you drunk."

"I don't like the idea of you spending Christmas alone in some seedy bar... Having a stranger make you a drink called 'love potion.' It sounds like an alias for a drink containing a date rape drug." Rachel said, crossing her arms over her chest.

"Actually... I kind of knew her."

"You *what*?" Kurt and Rachel asked at the same time.

"Do you remember the story about that Mrs. Claus the other week?" Quinn asked, trying her best to fight the smile that was threatening to pull at her lips just thinking about Santana.

"Oh, yes... The one you thought was attractive." Rachel said, the tension in her body relaxing slightly.

"Wait, what?" Kurt asked, looking between the two of them.

"Oh yes, she didn't tell you that part?" The other brunette asked, a sneaky smile twisting the corner of her mouth.

"She seemed to forget to tell me the entire story, which mall?" Kurt asked, narrowing his eyes at his friend. She had barely gotten out her response when the man busted into a loud full on laugh. "Do you remember the brunette Elf? Shorter, a little more stocky?"

"Yes?" Quinn asked, looking a bit surprised.

"That's Blaine, the guy you two have been hearing about." Kurt admitted after his laughter had calmed a little.

"Oh, Kurt! He's adorable! And he knows Santana... What a small world!" Quinn said, utterly amused by the fact that she had met her friend's new boyfriend without even realizing it.

"They're roommates, I've met her a few times... She's single and I hear she likes blondes." He said, leaning his chin on his palm and wiggling his eyebrows. "Please tell me you left her your number on a napkin or something."

"No... I didn't." Quinn said, moving his eyes away from Kurt's.

"Why not? You're into her, aren't you? What if I hadn't known her, were you just going to go back to that bar and get drunk again?" He asked, a little amused.

"Maybe." Quinn mumbled, crossing her arms over her chest to mirror Rachel's earlier posture.

"Well, if you do... Ask her out this time. Or I'll do it for you." He warned, jumping out of the chair he'd been sitting in and swiping up his phone before heading toward his room.

"You wouldn't dare!" Quinn called after him, twisting around to glare at him over the back of the couch.

"If he doesn't, I will." Rachel said, smiling as she slipped off of the couch to head to her room as well.

"You're both traitors!" Quinn called after them, her cheeks flushed a shade darker than normal as she went back to her book.

Quinn shivered, shoving her hands deep into the pockets of her winter coat as she walked down the street toward the restaurant Rachel and Kurt had asked her to meet up with them at. Apparently they'd nailed their performances at NYADA and wanted to celebrate. It wasn't exactly a new practice for the two but given all three of them would be out, Quinn had to scramble a bit to find a babysitter.

Luckily, a friend from school had been looking for a little extra cash and had offered to do it after seeing the blonde's post on Facebook. Beth had been a little disappointed that she couldn't tag along but Rachel and Kurt had both warned Quinn that they planned on having her drink, after her bringing her trip to a bar up not even a week before.

The blonde sighed in relief as she stepped inside from the cold, instantly feeling the warmth of the building. A man just inside offered to take her coat for her and the blonde blushed, not expecting such a fancy place. Once he'd gotten her coat on the hanger, he pulled a strip of paper from his pocket and jotted down the number on the hanger. "Just hand this to whoever is here when you go to leave, I do hope that you enjoy your meal."

"T-thank you." Quinn said, smiling at the man before turning and heading toward the front counter as he moved on to the group that had come in behind her.

"Hello, name please?" The woman behind the computer asked, not nearly as friendly as the man the blonde had just been talking to.

"I believe the reservation is under the last name Hummel." Quinn said, a little quietly. She watched as the woman entered the name, clicking a few times before nodding toward the waitress standing nearby. "Tina will direct you to your table, I do hope you enjoy your meal."

Quinn followed the woman back into the main room of the restaurant and was immediately blown away by the large space and its high ceiling. She was almost too busy taking in the grandeur to notice that she was passing her friends at a table. If it weren't for a hand skimming her forearm, she would have been completely oblivious to their presence.

"Have fun." Kurt said with a wink and Quinn nearly stopped in her tracks.

"What?" Her eyes found Rachel's and the other woman was grinning from ear to ear, that much was obvious even though she had her hands over her mouth.

"Are you coming, Miss?" The waitress asked, Quinn shot her friends one more look before following the other woman into a smaller and more private side room. The lights were dimmer here and there was a large marble fireplace built into the wall across from the doorway.

Quinn wasn't as distracted by the decor and architecture this time, however and it didn't take her long to spot the table they were headed for. Her mouth went dry as she noticed a brunette in a red dress seated alone at a table in the corner. They were almost there when Santana turned, her eyes widening when they fell on Quinn.

The blonde took the seat across from Santana and the two remained silent as Tina placed their menus down on the table in front of them, "Can I start you off with something to drink?"

They ordered quickly, both opting for a simple water with lemon before the waitress left them to fill the order.

"Hi." Santana said, arching a brow and folding her arms on the table. "Is this a set up? Because it feels like a set up..."

"It is." Quinn said, dropping her gaze. "Apparently... One of my roommates is dating one of yours."

"That figures. I was wondering why you would be coming to a table that had been reserved under the last name Hummel... Huh, small world." The brunette said, smiling as she took in the blush that was making its way across Quinn's features.

"Yeah... I'm sorry. My friends are... They don't really know boundaries."

Santana's smile widened, "They sound like my kind of people."

Quinn blinked and narrowed her eyes before tilting her head at the other woman. "So... Do you just want to go with it then?"

"Why not? I mean... This normally isn't how I pick up women, I'd like to think that I've got more game than that but... I like you. And your daughter is cute, too."

Quinn's heart fluttered in her chest and she couldn't help but smile. "We're going to have to figure out a way to explain to her why Mrs. Claus isn't in the North Pole."

Santana shrugged, "We'll just say that it's her Christmas wish coming true."

"She never told me what that was..." The blonde said, her smile falling slightly as a look of curiosity took its place.

"Well, I'd tell you... But then we'd risk it not coming true." Santana said, the blonde was about to push the subject when Tina returned with their drinks.

Quinn watched as Santana explained that they hadn't had a chance to look at the menu yet but that they could figure it out quickly. Although she was extremely curious about her daughter's wish she decided to drop the subject and opened up the menu.

She was going to have a talk with Rachel and Kurt later but for now, she was just going to enjoy her date.

"It's a secret!"

"Hah, okay. I like you, kid. How about you whisper it in my ear?" Santana asked, leaning down a little more and turning her ear toward the child.

"I want Mommy to stop crying when she thinks I'm sleeping.. I want her to be happy."

Holiday Season, by snixty9

*Just once try to wrap your, little brain around my feelings
Just once please try not to be so mean
Repeat after me now, R-O-M-A-N-C-E-E-E
Come on I'll say it slowly (**Romance**) you can do it, babe*

Santana was having a stressful day at work. Her boss had been up her ass about an upcoming corporate event that Santana was in charge of. She thought one, Sue Sylvester was an overbearing crazy bitch - apparently New York City had a different brand of crazy... An entirely super-saiyan type shit crazy.

"We need those invites to all of our top clients out by today, Lopez."

"I'm on it, Sarah," Santana replied as politely as she could, turning a corner in this maze of an office full of cubicles.

"Did you make sure that you definitely have the right date for the location we wanted?" Sarah probed, tailing Santana from behind. But seriously this bitch felt like she was attached to Santana's ass - she was literally her tail.

Santana scratched her head and took a deep breath trying to keep Snix at bay, "Yes, Sarah, I called the Hilton and booked the ballroom, just like we discussed."

Santana picked up her speed, desperately wanting to get to her office and slam the door shut in this psycho's face.

"What about the caterer? We've done business with them before. Are you sure they're not over pricing their services?"

To everyone walking opposite of Santana or who had a good visual of her face could clearly see that she was on the verge of strangling someone soon. They all veered out of her way immediately when they saw her coming. It gave her sentimental feelings of walking down McKinley High School hallway all over again.

"Sarah, I've gotten everything down. Everything is almost finished and as I said before, I would let you know once everything is in place," Santana finally turned around to face the pestering rodent behind her, while placing her hand on the cool golden door knob of the door leading into her office. She was hoping Sarah would get the hint and leave.

"Alright Lopez, but if this goes to shit, it's your ass," Sarah reminded before storming off in the direction of her own office.

Santana only huffed a deep breath she had been holding to retain herself from Snix-slapping the shit out of the uptight bitch. She was so sick of doing all this ass work, only to have Sarah take all of the credit. But once all this ass kissing bull shit was over, Santana would soon have her

hands on the promotion she'd been waiting for to take that bitch's position as head of the department. Sure, everyone in the office feared her like the natural great leader that she was born to be, but no one hated her like they all hated Sarah. And it was clear to all the big dogs up top, too. Mariah, who was Sarah's boss, held a secret meeting with Santana and assured her if she could organize the company's upcoming corporate party with all of their important clients, it was bye bye Sarah and hello Santana. And s work was certainly making all of Santana's muscles tense up.

Santana twisted open the door to her office only to be surprised by a huge beautiful bouquet of flowers sitting on her desk. They were her favorite, sunflowers and roses. She felt herself relax at the sight and knew only one person who would be thoughtful enough to send these. As she walked over to the vase to smell the flowers, she immediately pulled out her phone from the pocket of her black pencil skirt.

"Hey, Babe," she greeted with a smile.

"I'm guessing you got my surprise?" the voice on the receiver's end came out silky and smooth as always. Santana's favorite thing to hear, especially after being on the verge of allowing Snix to come out and play.

"They're almost as beautiful as you."

"Still in ass-kissing mode, huh? How bad is Sarah driving you nuts right now?"

"I almost slapped the bitch on my way back to the office. She stalked me from the bathroom to my office, Quinn. The bitch is cray," Santana pointed out, playing with one of the petals on a sunflower.

Quinn giggled in response, "Sounds like you have a lot of frustration to work out tonight, babe," Quinn's voice quickly shifted from playful to seductive in a millisecond.

"Fuck, speaking of tonight, babe, I'm gonna be coming home late again. I'm so sorry," Santana remembered that she had some work to do in the office still.

"It's okay, San, I'll be waiting," Quinn sing-sang.

Santana lifted a curious brow. This is the one thing they fought most about - Santana killing herself at her job and basically living in her office. Why was Quinn suddenly not angry about her staying late? Whatever, Santana would take what she could get - especially with the amount of pressure she was feeling at the moment, she didn't need another stupid fight with Quinn on top of that.

"Thanks for understanding, Q. You're the best babe. And these flowers really made my day," Santana chimed, smelling the flowers one more time. Boy, did she become a sap - high school Santana would've chided her for being all gross and lovey-dovey over some flowers that would wilt and die in a few days anyway. But Quinn changed that.

"Wait till you see what I've got planned tonight - you'll be thanking me more than once today."

Again, Santana furrowed her brow in confusion, but again, she wasn't about to complain.

"Can't wait, babe, I'll text you when I'm leaving the office."

"K, love you."

"Love you too," Santana replied automatically before hanging up.

She sat at her desk feeling uneasy about something. Like she was forgetting something. It was all too suspicious - Quinn sending flowers (though she sent surprises to the office for no specific reason on more than one occasion), Quinn not picking fights about Santana staying late in the office and Quinn having more planned surprises. Something wasn't right. Santana pressed the button on her office phone to call her secretary.

"Jonathan, do I have anything marked in my personal calendar today?"

"Nope," Jonathan immediately replied.

Santana bit her bottom lip in even more confusion. Nothing on her personal calendar? No anniversary, or birthday? Which Santana had forgotten all too often and so it worried her now that she may have forgotten again this time. The last time she forgot their anniversary, Quinn nearly threw a hot plate of food at her face, spent all night locked up in their room sobbing loudly and put Santana in the dog-house for a week. Santana spent an entire week kissing her girlfriend's ass, doing sweet things she usually didn't do, like taking home Quinn's favorite flowers, or sitting through Quinn's favorite bizarro independent movies or bringing her breakfast in bed. It took Santana buying her an engraved iPod with all of her favorite albums already downloaded and a sappy sentimental scrapbook filled with memories as friends and girlfriends for them to finally have make-up sex and for Santana to sleep in her own bed again. But boy was the make-up sex amazing.

Perhaps Quinn just knew she had been having a really difficult time at the office lately and she just wanted to do something nice for her girlfriend. Santana shrugged and sighed. She turned towards her company computer and began tapping away, immediately getting lost in her work.

Santana was opening the door to her New York City loft that she shared with Quinn at almost 10 pm. She tried to be as quiet as she could. She assumed the blonde had fallen asleep since she didn't reply to Santana's text before she left the office. Santana walked in to see a somber sleeping beauty gently laid on their couch in the living room. She was wearing a red silky robe that Santana hadn't recognized and the way Quinn was positioned, Santana could see a sneak peak of new lingerie that she hadn't ever ripped off either. The house smelled amazing too - she assumed Quinn had made an amazing dinner for her to come home to.

Santana sat down on the sofa next to Quinn's sleeping body and shook her lightly to rouse her awake.

"Babe, wake up, let's go to bed," Santana insisted in a hushed tone.

She saw Quinn's eyes open slowly and a dazed look paint her face, "What time is it," she groaned sleepily.

"It's about 10, Q. Come on, let's go and cuddle in bed," Santana stroked Quinn's soft cheek admiring her beautiful girlfriend, so grateful that she could come home to this.

Quinn sat up, stretching a little bit. She seemed to be observing Santana or looking for something around her. And when she realized that Santana didn't come home with anything in particular or had any sort of surprise for her, tears began to well up her eyes.

"Babe? What's wrong? Are you okay?" Santana immediately asked concerned, noticing the immediate shift of emotions on Quinn's face.

"You forgot again, didn't you!?" Quinn accused in a shaky voice.

Shit.

"Fuck," Santana muttered, "Babe, it's Jonathan's fault I swear!"

"You can't blame your fucking secretary for your idiocy!" Quinn stood up to storm off in the direction of their bedroom.

Santana immediately followed, "I swear, Quinn I've filled up my personal calendar, not missing ONE thing. I asked him if anything was on it for today and he said nothing!"

"I'm going to fucking fire Jonathan tomorrow and then kill that moron," Santana bitterly thought to herself.

Before reaching the doorway of their bedroom, Quinn turned around abruptly, catching Santana off guard.

"Santana, what is the date today?" Quinn asked, her eyes red from rubbing them too hard making sure her angry tears wouldn't fall.

"Uh, the fourteenth," Santana replied dumbly.

"Of what month?"

"Februa - ohhhh."

Now everything made sense. Including all of the people she saw during lunch holding roses and stuffed bears.

"God damn it, Santana, I even wrote it on the fucking card in the flowers that you clearly didn't bother to read!" Quinn continued to storm off into their bedroom.

"Babe, come on, give me a break here," Santana pleaded following Quinn into their bedroom.

Obviously, Quinn had gone all out. There were scented candle lit, rose pedals everywhere and were those handcuffs on the bed? Quinn was now blowing out all of the candles that were lit around the room.

"Give you a break, Santana?! You're always forgetting these things! You make me wonder if I'm special to you at all!" Quinn argued.

"Quinn, Valentine's Day is just some bull shit Hallmark card holiday to make saps buy overpriced roses and chocolates," Santana tried to reason.

"Yes, Santana I'm completely fucking aware of how you feel about this *stupid* holiday. But were you aware that this is our fucking TENTH Valentine's Day together? Probably the EIGHTH one you've forgotten, though," Quinn was screaming now. Santana was sure their neighbors were going to complain, but it wouldn't be the first noise-complaint they received.

"Hey, that's an exaggeration," Santana replied. But those were the wrong choice of words.

"You know what, I must be a fucking idiot to think that nearly ten years of being with me could change anything. Why did I even expect you to come home with some surprise?"

Ah - there's the reason why she didn't pick a fight earlier. She thought she was going to receive a surprise.

"Sometimes, it's nice to know that the person you've been committed to for almost ten years of your life actually fucking cares about you to some extent and doesn't just *forget* important things all of the time."

"Quinn, it's not even a real holiday - "

" - It was the first time we had sex with each other!"

Santana immediately shut her mouth as realization washed over her. It was the first time they had done anything outside of the friend zone. Ten years ago was Mr. Schue's disaster of a wedding and ten years ago was when they had drunk hook up sex. Of course it took both bitches to get their asses out of their heads and realized that they did love each other.

"Quinn, I'm sor-"

"Look, I'm just really tired Santana. You do know you're not sleeping in this bed with me tonight, right?"

Santana just nodded quietly before making her way to the living room where she would continue her work on her laptop.

—

It had been about a week and a half since the Valentine's Day massacre, but Santana made no strides or even tried to grovel for forgiveness. Instead the next morning after the huge fight, she left a handwritten note on the pillow next to Quinn stating that she was very sorry for forgetting and that she would make it up eventually. After that, being in the loft with Quinn was tense and their sleeping arrangements had not changed. Santana only prayed that Quinn still had some semblance of patience in her even after these ten strenuous years. For that week and a half she focused on work and focused on receiving this promotion that she had been working so hard for.

"Quinn!" Santana kicked the door shut and walked into the loft excited with a bottle of champagne in her hands, "Quinn!" She called out again all too excited with her news.

When she wasn't greeted by the blonde, she was immediately concerned. She knew she should have been home by now. She's home at six at the latest after teaching her art classes and it was now seven. Santana waltzed into their bedroom only to find a very quiet Quinn packing her belongings in a large luggage.

"Quinn, what are you doing?" Santana asked almost breathlessly, shaken by the image in front of her - her worst nightmare.

"I need time to think, Santana," Quinn sighed, not turning away from her task of folding and packing.

"Q, please, just hear me out," Santana pleaded.

"You left me a fucking note after you clearly hurt me. I'm supposed to magically forgive you? All you've been preoccupied with is work and I don't know anymore, San. Ten years is a long time waiting - how long do I have to keep on waiting?"

"Babe, please, you don't have to wait anymore, I swear, I've -"

"Santana, I'm so tired of your empty promises!" Quinn cried, tears spilling from her eyes and cascading down her cheeks. She wiped them away with the back of her hands immediately.

"Quinn, I swear, I know you've waited so long for me to get my shit together. And I know you want and deserve someone romantic and corny as fuck and -"

" - really, Santana, you're digging a deeper hole for yourself."

Santana took a deep breath to collect herself and her thoughts, clearly her words coming out wrong.

"Look, I literally need just ten minutes of your time and if it doesn't convince you that I was and I still am very sorry for forgetting about Valentine's Day and anything else I've ever forgotten while we've been together, then you can leave me," Santana's chest tightened at those last words, but she couldn't let them get the best of her. She had to convince Quinn to stay.

Quinn looked at her with questioning eyes, but nodded silently, giving Santana permission. Santana immediately dragged her into the living room and let her sit on the couch. She was pacing back and forth in front of Quinn trying to figure out how she should phrase exactly what she wanted to say.

"I have been a selfish shit throughout most of our relationship. I've forgotten anniversaries, birthdays, holidays and I am the least romantic person, aside from Puck that you have ever dated. I know I'm not the ideal person you pictured yourself with, but you've made me a better person, Q," Santana was fiddling with her fingers nervously, praying to a God she didn't believe in that this would work, "I'm sorry, I'm such a fucked up person and a shit girlfriend. But there's a reason why I've been working my ass off instead of begging for your forgiveness this entire week and a half and I finally got the promotion I've been wanting since forever! And before you roll your

eyes and sarcastically congratulate me, let me just tell you why I had been working my ass off lately instead of groveling for your forgiveness."

Santana walked over to her purse on her sofa and grabbed two pieces of paper, waving them around excitedly.

"I told them, I would only take this promotion and continue working for their company if they allowed me a three week paid vacation and they said yes!" Santana was beaming, but Quinn was still clearly not overjoyed by any of this news. She sat down next to Quinn, with a serious look on her face.

"Q, I bought us tickets to your dream city. To a place I remember you fawning over since we were like five."

Quinn looked at her suspiciously now.

"If you'll let me take you, I have tickets for Paris, France, taking off next week."

Quinn now looked at Santana with wide eyes and pink cheeks.

"Babe, breathe."

Quinn shook her head and inhaled a deep breath.

"Seriously?" it was a quiet response, but a response that was better than continuing to pack and leaving Santana.

Santana nodded silently and was met with a tight embrace from the blonde.

That night, Santana was finally allowed back in her bed, but she barely slept. Quinn and Santana were up all night, and they were sure to receive tons of neighbor noise complaints in the morning.

—

Santana and Quinn had finished a nice dinner in a quaint French cafe with a few glasses of red wine. Thank God Quinn took French in high school or else Santana would've probably ordered a calf's brain and duck liver. They decided to walk to the Eiffel Tower since it was nearby. As they walked down the park leading up to the Eiffel Tower, they gazed at it together quietly in awe of the beautiful monument.

Quinn squeezed Santana's arm tighter and leaned on her shoulder, "I never thought it would be this beautiful," she sighed, truly happy.

Santana took away her attention away from the lit up Eiffel Tower and looked down at Quinn, admiring the beauty in front of her, "I always knew it would be," she quietly replied, smiling.

They were maybe twenty yards away from the Eiffel Tower when Santana stopped them. Santana could hear one of the merry-go-rounds playing nearby and the bustle of tourists in a

distance. There were only a few venders around trying to sell keychains and whatnot, but other than that, it was basically just Santana and Quinn in the area where they stood.

"Quinn," Santana held Quinn's hands and themselves face each other, "I don't deserve you. You are the most amazing, inspiring, loving woman I know and you make me a better me. Maybe that's why we work so well together in spite of how we fight. We make each other better, but you have no idea how much you've changed me as a person. I know I suck at remembering things and I suck at romantic shit, but I'm suck a little less at them because of you," Santana smiled as she heard Quinn giggle in response and could slightly see her blush even in night's lighting, "Ten years, you have waited for me. Ten years, you've forgiven me for fucking up. Ten years of the best sex of your life."

Quinn rolled her eyes, shook her head, but still laughed.

"And Valentine's Day just made me realize how long you've waited for me to get my shit together. And, babe," Santana's voice was shaky and she was clearly nervous, "you've waited long enough," Santana then got down on one knee and pulled out a little black box, "Lucy Quinn Fabray, will you marry me?"

Quinn gasped and Santana was pretty sure she was going to faint.

"Q, can you please say something. It is cold as fuck and the gravel kind of hurts."

"Yes! Yes a million times!" Quinn wept happily.

Santana smiled and immediately slipped the rather large diamond ring on Quinn's finger. She stood up hurriedly and kissed her fiancé, tears of joy streaming down both of their faces. If only they had captured a photo, they would've witnessed the lights on the Eiffel Tower dancing on it as if mirroring the fluttering butterflies that were dancing in both of their stomachs.

Holiday Season, by team-valkyrie

Santana hated waking up early. Unless it was Christmas. That day, she was always the first one up, usually at the crack of dawn. She woke everyone up with breakfast and loud carols that played on the radio. She just really loved Christmas and couldn't wait for everyone to get up so she could open her presents.

This particular Christmas, however, everyone in her home was refusing to wake up, even with her coaxing. So she did what any civilized person would do. She grabbed the megaphone Sue Sylvester had given her as her graduation gift and strutted to her bedroom.

"Quiiiiiiiin, wake up it's 6:30 and I want to open my presentsssss!" Santana whined into the megaphone, which abruptly woke up Quinn. She fell out of bed and Santana couldn't help but laugh. If looks could kill....

"Santana Marie Fabray-Lopez, what the hell were you thinking?!" Quinn hollered in an enraged tone.

"Ohhh, Mama said a bad word!" two voices sing-songed from the doorway. The voices that belonged to Olivia and Amber Fabray-Lopez. Ariana was the splitting image of Quinn while Amber was Santana's. The two sisters giggled and Santana quickly joined in while Quinn sat on the floor glaring at Santana.

"C'mon girls! Let's go downstairs so grumpy can get ready and we can open presents," Santana said ushering the girls out of the room. Before she left, she threw a wink over her shoulder at her wife.

Quinn finally came downstairs 20 minutes later. Her mood was lightened after a nice Christmas breakfast and the family happily made their way to the tree afterwards to open their presents. Santana and Quinn exchanged gifts with each other, Santana getting an acoustic guitar she had her eye on and Quinn getting the latest camera while the girls excitedly tore open their numerous presents and got pretty much everything they asked for. All except for one thing..

Suddenly, Santana jumped up from her seat and started bouncing around before dashing away towards the garage yelling "we forgot one" over her shoulder. When she came rushing back, she held a small bundle of blankets in her arms. Santana sat down and gently placed the bundle in her lap before unwrapping it. A small puppy popped out and the girls squealed with excitement. They have been asking for a puppy all year and they had finally gotten one!

"A puppy!"

"Really Santana?"

"Yay!"

Olivia, Quinn and Amber said respectively. The two sisters had a look of pure joy on their faces while their mama had an unamused scowl on hers. Santana smiled sheepishly before

squeaking out "surprise" to them. The girl immediately picked up the puppy and started playing with her.

"We should name her Max!"

"No, Lucy!"

"What about Charlie?"

"No, Bella!"

Santana smiled wickedly and said "What about Snix?"

"No!" Quinn, Olivia, and Amber exclaimed at the same time.

Santana pouted and playfully sniffled out a "fine" before smiling wide at her two girls, who were bickering about what to name their new puppy. She looked over at her wife and saw the loving look she had whilst observing their two angels.

This was definitely a Christmas to remember.

All I Need Is You, by tehedward

"I think every Christmas should be like this." Quinn says softly in the dark. She snuggles in a little closer to Santana.

Santana turns her head and stares a little incredulously at her girlfriend. Her teeth are chattering and you can see the puffs of breath coming from their mouths. Quinn is currently settled on her lap and they are pulled off on the side of the road as a blizzard rages on around them because it was too dangerous to drive.

They were in the middle of nowhere and their only light source was an old flashlight that's brightness had a dulled over the years. They were supposed to have been at Santana's parent's house spending Christmas with her family. A warm fire in the fire place, Christmas carols, and the best food in the *entire* continental U.S... possibly Europe too. But no, instead they were freezing their buns off in her tiny little car, sharing the back seat trying to conserve heat, starving, and stuck until the storm passed. And Quinn, the love of her life, one of if not *the* most intelligent person Santana had ever known had just said that she wanted every Christmas to be like this.

"Um babe, I can think of a lot of ways I would like this Christmas and all of our future ones to go, stuck in the middle of nowhere, freezing our asses off is not anywhere on that list."

"Granted it's not the ideal location or situation but honestly, this is one of the best Christmases I have ever had."

Santana laughs, "You must have had some pretty shitty Christmases then?" As soon as the words were out of her mouth she would have given anything to be able to take them back. Santana knew exactly what kind of assholes the Fabrays were. Quinn had admitted to her that her father had been physically abusive, and that while her mother never got physical that she was just as bad emotionally. So why the hell would Christmas time make them act any more human.

"Yeah... I guess I have." Quinn says sadly.

"Quinn baby, I am so sorry. I didn't mean to-" Santana tries to apologize feeling about three inches tall.

"No, it's okay. You're right, Christmas wasn't all that fun for me. It just meant that there was no school to escape to. Some kids grew up counting down the days till Christmas, I spent my time counting down until I could go back to school."

"Quinn... I... I didn't mean anything by it. It's just for me Christmas was always such a great time, my entire family would get together and it was always so fun and I just-"

"San it's okay really. I understand that this isn't your ideal Christmas but can I explain to you why this, for me, is the best Christmas I have ever had?"

"Of course you can." Santana says as she hold Quinn just a little tighter.

"Growing up I always hated Christmas. My family, my parents weren't nice people. We'd go to church and we'd here all these different sermons about how Christmas was a time for giving and sharing and forgiveness and fresh starts and then we'd go home and if I was lucky my father wouldn't beat me and my mother would be half passed out drunk in the kitchen.

I wasn't present deprived, that was actually the one part of Christmas that people would say I was really lucky with. The living room would literally be covered in gifts, I don't know, maybe it was guilt. Maybe my parents felt so guilty for being the way they were that maybe they were just trying to buy my forgiveness. More likely they just wanted to show off, look at how rich we are and how much we can afford.

Anyway I would open my gifts, I would say thank you and then we'd go to the Fabray family Christmas dinner. Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Grandparents... basically the whole family would get together and then we'd sit at this huge dinner and have this beautifully prepared gourmet Christmas dinner, because hey, who the hell actually cooks their own Christmas dinner right?" Quinn scoffs bitterly.

"The dinners always looked to be the picture of perfection but I can promise you that no matter how good the food may have tasted it always left a foul taste in my mouth. We'd eat in almost complete silence. You could cut the tension at that table with a knife. And if anybody spoke up it wasn't to wish someone a merry Christmas or to wish someone well or show any gratitude for all of the things we were blessed with, it was to take a snipe at another person or to bitch about something.

It was just a bunch of angry bitter people with too much time and money and a severe superiority complexes all sitting around trying to outdo each other. By the time we left I was always depressed and my parents were in a worse mood than when they arrived. The tiniest thing could set them off, hell one year I got screamed at on the ride home because I accidentally spilled some food on my dress, I was five by the way."

Santana has tears streaming down her face at this point, "Quinn-"

"Anyway, that should give you an idea of what Christmas was like for me growing up... and then I got pregnant and I got kicked out of my house. I spent that Christmas alone, I don't even remember who I was staying with at the time but I did know that I wasn't welcome to intrude on their holiday. I was just the pregnant tramp who was mooching off their kindness.

And when I moved back in with my mom, the damage had been done. I didn't know how to even talk to her. I was always afraid she would change her mind and kick me out and I would have nowhere to go. And as time went on I could tell that she resented me, she began to blame a lot of her problems on me and my actions. So those two Christmases where it was just the two of us were spent in an awkward silence as we ate take out, both of us trying to put forth some kind effort but wishing we could just get the hell out of there. And then I went to Yale and I had no one there really so I spent those Christmases alone."

Through all of her story Quinn's voice and demeanor had betrayed no emotion. And to Santana's surprise when she finally does let something show, it's not tears or anger or resentment.

Quinn smiles at her warmly and leans forward and gives her soft kiss. "Then three years ago you and I got together. You asked me out and we started dating. By that time I had pretty much stopped celebrating Christmas... or any holiday really, I just never really had any reason to celebrate. But you were always so enthusiastic that I played along and eventually I started to appreciate what this day could really be.

"You let me spend Christmas with you and your family and you didn't ask for anything in return. You just wanted to share your happiness with me and so for the last three years, Christmas has actually been something to look forward to and enjoy. But the reason that this one to me is so much better than even those is that this is the first Christmas where it's just you and me. And yeah the lights and the trees and the carols and the food are all good, but to me, Christmas is you.

Christmas is supposed to be a time of renewal for the world. And that's what you are to me, you took away from me all of the bad things that happened in my life and replaced them with the good. And so here we are, completely alone in the middle of nowhere and yet I'm happy because you're here. And I get to share this day with you and I know you miss your family and for that I am sorry but I can't help it, I'm happy. I'm here with you and life is good."

Santana was all but a blubbering mess at this point. She crashes her lips to Quinn's and kisses her as fiercely and as passionately as she ever has. Words seemed so paltry, so insignificant, so inadequate in being able to describe how she's feeling about the girl on her lap. So Santana kisses her with everything she has in the hopes of conveying just how important and just how special Quinn is to her.

Finally the need for oxygen becomes a necessity again and Santana pulls back. Both girls are panting and Santana is staring intensely into Quinn's eyes. "Querida, I love you more than anything in this world. You are everything to me and you're right, any Christmas I get to spend with you is going to be the best. I don't need anything but you and I promise you, I fucking promise you, that I will always be there for you to make this day and every day special. I love you."

"I love you too and so that's why I got you this." Quinn reaches into a pocket inside her coat and pulls out a tiny little wrapped box.

"Awe baby, thank you." She holds the little wrapped box in her hands like it's the most precious thing in the world because to Santana it was. "My gift for you is still in the trunk..." Santana looks out the window and the blizzard doesn't seem to be slowing down at all. "I..." Santana hesitates before firming her resolve. "Let me just quickly go get it for you and-"

"Santana Lopez! You are not going out there in this weather!" Quinn scolds her before smiling softly. "It's too dangerous plus... I kind of really want you to open this right now."

"Okay." Santana says as she begins to carefully unwrap Quinn's gift, a stark contrast to the way she usually just tore into her presents. It's a tiny little box and Santana's eyes widen in shock and she stares at Quinn in amazement. Quinn is looking at her a hopeful smile on her face and she nods her head encouragingly.

Santana opens the box and gently resting inside is the most beautiful engagement ring Santana had ever seen.

"So how about it San, will you marry me?" Quinn asks after a few seconds of silence.

"Yes." Santana gasps breathlessly, almost too choked up to form a real sentence. "A thousand times yes."

Shotgunning, by wonderlandwaitforme (BlessYourSoul)

"Hey Quinn?"

"What?"

"Do you know what today is?"

"Ummm, St. Patrick's Day, why?"

"Do you know how to shotgun a beer?"

"No, but I have a feeling you're about to tell me."

"It's really easy. You get a can of beer, tilt it to the side, make a hole near the bottom, put your mouth over it then pull the tab."

"I'm not going to get out of this am I?"

"That you are not Lucy Q."

Santana grabbed two beers and keys for them to make the holes. She saw the sceptical look on Quinn's face and kissed her lightly, making Quinn smile slightly. *Mission Accomplished.* She quickly demonstrated to Quinn what they had to do, just to make sure. Not being a big beer fan Quinn wasn't looking forward to this, *but you know what they say; there's a first time for everything, right?* She held the can in her left hand, the key in her right, and took a deep breath.

"Ready?" Santana asked.

"As I'll ever be." And with that, they were off. The beer spilled everywhere, mostly drenching their clothes. Santana pulled her tab with ease, having shot gunned a beer many times before. She looked towards Quinn and saw she was struggling to pop her tab, reaching over the pulled the tab on the blonde's tab and nearly choked at the shocked expression on Quinn's face, having forgotten to tell her how the beer would rush in to her mouth once she did so.

Santana finished first and watched with an amused expression as she watched Quinn valiantly try to down her beer. When she finished she pulled away with a grimace, releasing a groan.

"That is not fun, why do people do that?"

"Beats me, but *I* think it's fun."

"Great, my clothes are soaked in beer." Quinn huffed.

"You'll just have to take them off then won't you?" Santana said, mirth in her tone, while she pulled Quinn closer by the hem of her shirt.

"Oh, I see how it is. This was a ploy to get in my pants, wasn't it?" Quinn asked, placing her arms on Santana's waist.

"Maybe." Santana muttered, trailing kisses along Quinn's jaw.

"You know, you could've just asked."

"Where's the fun in that? Happy St. Patrick's Day." Quinn slapped Santana's arm playfully.

"You are unbelievable!"

I Hate Valentines (I Don't Hate You), by

WordsHaveMelodies

There were a lot of things that you hated and if you had to make a compiled list, the top three things on it would be Rachel Berry, Weddings and Valentine's Day. Actually no, scratch that, the top three things would be Rachel Berry, fourth would be weddings and fifth would be Valentine's Day. The latter in your opinion was created by breeders to sell cheap chocolates and false hope. You despised the teddy bears, loathed (secretly ate) the candy and detested the fact that they used your favourite colour to do it. You had long since determined to never give a crap about the day but then Quinn Fabray came along and now you found yourself actively thinking about changing your sentiments about it all.

Never say never right?

"Alright troops," you say joining them at the Starbucks table that you had commandeered for this meeting, "I've never done this before and it's now T-minus 2 says until Valentine's Day. I need ideas and I need good ones."

A couple of weeks ago during one of your impromptu movie nights, Quinn let it slip while you were watching *The Holiday* that Valentine's Day was actually her favourite one. Maybe you did get into a little argument about the whole commercialism of love aspect of it that may have resulted in you both taking a 5 minute break from each other to cool down, but on the upside, there had been makeup sex.

"How about you take her on a shopping spree?" Sam interjects into the round table discussion, "Chicks love clothes right?"

"She said good ideas Sam," Kurt replies before you can, "Besides, that's sexist and simply not true. Chicks aren't the only ones that love clothes."

"It's ok Kurt," you pat him on the shoulder, "Some guys just don't know any better."

"Plus its Valentine's Day bro," Puck adds from his spot next to you, "You're actually supposed to like put some effort and shit into the gifts. They go shopping like all the time anyway."

"Now it's clearly obvious why you two don't have girlfriends," Tina supplies from her spot next to Blaine who just nods in agreement, "I say go the traditional route with Quinn. Movie, dinner-"

"Sex," Puck interrupts and your groan of frustration isn't the only one, "What? Like that's not what all of that shit leads to afterwards anyway."

"Ok yes, it does lead to sex," you say to the group, "But I don't want it to just be about that. This is the first Valentine's Day that I'm actually excited about and I need it to be perfect."

"You're really serious about this?" Kurt asks, "Like you're fully committed to doing the whole Valentine's Day thing?"

"Yup," his hand going over his heart in typically overly dramatic fashion, Blaine's eye roll and head shake mirroring your own feelings, "I am."

"Then I think that I have an idea," Blaine says and you all put your coffees down to give him your undivided attention, "Firstly I have to ask, are either of you afraid of heights?"

"I do not like where this is going at all," you whisper to Puck, everyone else's focus on Blaine and whatever he was saying, "I'm sensing something to do with bowties and balloons."

"I bet you 25 bucks it involves singing," Puck whispers back and you almost choke on your coffee.

"No way," you whisper through your laughter, "That's easy money."

"So Quinn, your favourite holiday is in two days," Rachel says taking the seat next to you, "What are you going to do to celebrate?"

"I have absolutely no idea or plans to do anything," you reply with a shrug, her eyes asking you to elaborate, "Santana's not really into the whole Valentine's Day thing and as much as I would love it if she was, I'm not going to ask her to change that just because of me."

"How can someone not like Valentine's Day?" she asks through another sip of coffee, "That's like not liking puppies or your siblings."

"It's a day in the year Rachel, not a sibling. She's allowed to not like it if she doesn't want to."

"If you say so," her head tilting up towards the ceiling in thought, "I mean she isn't exactly the friendliest person in the world either so I guess I could see how a day about love wouldn't be her thing."

"Oh please, you haven't exactly been a ray of sunshine yourself," her hands going up in surrender when you glare at her, "Why can't you and Santana play nice?"

"I try," no, no she doesn't, "She just hates me."

"She doesn't hate you," yes, yes she does, "She just doesn't like you very much or your affinity for all things Broadway and Barbra Streisand."

"Well the feeling is a mutual one I assure you," you couldn't roll your eyes hard enough; "I can't say that I'm too fond of her affinity for gory horrors and Amy Winehouse either."

"Leaving me to be in the middle of this ridiculous feud," you wave off her protests of 'It's not my fault, blame your girlfriend', "Tell me about your Valentine's Day plans. You're doing what with whom?"

"I'm going to a party actually and you should come with," her eyes imploring you to say yes, "It'll be fun I promise."

"No thank you," you say through a laugh, "Going to a Valentine's Day party without a valentine is very depressing."

"Then be my valentine then."

"Really?" her face asking the question, 'what?', "And you wonder why she hates you."

"How's your valentine's day been so far?" Rachel says in greeting when you answer her call.

"Seeing as I got up like 20 minutes ago,' her gasp making you laugh for some reason, "I'd say pretty good."

"Quinn it's like noon."

"I had a very *tiring* night," you whisper just in case, "Forgive me for not being able to wake up at the crack ass of dawn like you do."

"I do not wake..." her pause coming as expected, "Santana's there?"

"Were you expecting someone else?" you ask hopping onto the kitchen counter, "We went out to dinner last night and-"

"Yes, yes that's all well and good but-"

"Doesn't she have a boyfriend that she could go harass the shit out of or something?" Santana asks walking into the kitchen, "The fact that she calls you every spare chance she gets is depressing and also painfully irritating to my sanity."

"Tell her that I heard that!" Rachel shouts back but you don't have to tell her, she heard it quite clearly.

"Hi Rachel," she says into the phone that you're still holding in your hands, "Bye Rachel." And then she hangs it up.

"I should be mad at you for that."

"You should, but you won't be because today's the day of love and you love me," she says placing herself in between your legs, her hands guiding yours around her neck, "And I love you."

"Good save," her cocky smirk on full display, "So since we're not celebrating Valentine's Day, what exactly are we going to do today?"

"For the sake of honesty, I had the day all planned out actually," a careful hand running through her hair before her smirk reappears, "But someone was too tired to wake up on time."

"You woke up after me," you add through a giggle, "But honestly, you made plans for today? I thought you hated Valentine's Day?"

"I do hate valentine's day," she says with a shrug, "But I don't hate you."

Dinner last night had been pretty much insane.

She showed up at your apartment with a dozen roses, chocolates, and teddy bears before whisking you off to sip champagne, eat gourmet food and be serenaded on a rooftop underneath the stars. It was perfect.

"Seeing as we went out last night, I think we should stay in today," her eyebrow quirking in question, "We already did the whole dinner date thing so how about we just relax here and watch movies."

"Are you sure? The dinner reservation for tonight hasn't been cancelled yet if you want-"

"I think I have something better in mind," you interrupt before whispering it into her ear, "So which plan do you like better? Yours or mine?"

"Yours," she says smiling into the kiss, "Most definitely yours."

New Year, by WriteForYou

What am I doing here?

I'm standing in the middle of the campus, utterly lost with no direction whatsoever. In my hand is a map of the campus and I'm turning it in every angle possible in order for me to get some sort of epiphany as to where I am.

"Stupid map." Frustrated, I crumple the map up and throw it in the closest trash bin. I was always bad at reading maps.

A cold breeze runs up my shirt and I chatter my teeth. I walk over and sit on an empty bench while silently berating myself for listening to Rachel.

"Santana, what are you doing?" Rachel stands in the middle of the living room as I get back from another one night stand.

"Not you, that's for sure." I fall forward onto the sofa and try to get some shut eye before class tomorrow morning

Rachel sits herself on the edge of the couch. "Ha. Ha." She fakes. "I don't understand why you keep going to girl after girl like this."

"They're hot and they want me. Who am I to deny them?"

"But what about Quinn?"

I groan into the cushion of the sofa. I should have never told her about how I had a huge thing for Quinn in high school but played it off. I should have never told her about what happened on the wedding night. And I should have never told her that I didn't get back with Brittany because all I can still think about is Quinn.

"Rachel...you said you would never bring that drunken moment with my big mouth up again." I flip over and glare at her.

"Santana, I still don't understand why you won't try to be in a relationship with her." She stands up and puts her hand on her hips. "She wants to be with you and you want to be with her. I don't know why you are making this difficult!"

Quinn came to visit for Christmas in New York and spent the night with us. She came single, which surprised me because I thought she was dating a guy called 'Biff'. Near the end of the night, Quinn was a little tipsy and tried to make-out with me in the kitchen area.

"Santana...I think I like you."

I try to brush off meaning of her words and think it's only because she's intoxicated. "Well, I have toned down my bitchiness a little."

"Santana, I want to be with you." Quinn breathes with the strong odor of coke and rum. "I don't want just a three time thing this time. I want a fourth. A fifth. A sixth. And so much more..." She grips her hand on my shirt, pulling me in close.

"You're drunk, Quinn." I step out of her hold.

"Do you not want to be with me?" Her hazel eyes now glossy.

I swallow the lump in my throat. I want to be with her...but I can't. Everything has always been different with Quinn...and I'm honestly scared of getting into a relationship with her. I'm scared to lose her and the friendship we finally regained.

"I...I can't, Quinn." I walk out of the kitchen area and back to the room with all of our friends.

The rest of the night Quinn puts up the usual façade that fools everyone, everyone but me. Apparently, it didn't fool Rachel either. Because when Quinn left the next morning Rachel came interrogating me with a crap load of questions. I had a hangover and I wanted her to shut up... which is why she practically knows everything that went down with me and Quinn.

"She was drunk. She probably doesn't know what she was talking about or even remembers."

Rachel sighs and scoots next to me. "You'd be surprise." Rachel has that look in her eyes, the look that tells me she's hiding something

"What are you keeping from me, Berry?"

Rachel shrugs. "Nothing." She lies. She's a horrible liar.

"Liar. Tell me or the next girl I sleep with will be on your bed!"

Rachel isn't phased at all. Sucks that living with the hobbit for so long has made her immune to my threats. "If you want to know so bad, then go see Quinn for New Year's."

"I can't." I sip on the bitter taste of the beer.

"Why? When did Santana ever stop from getting what she wanted? I remember a girl who would do anything to get what she wanted."

"That girl grew up. She grew up and realized that everything in life is a lot more complicated." I take a swig of the beer. "I mean, look where I am now! I'm still working at a bar, still needing you guys to help pay my part of the rent, and I still don't know what I want to do with my life!"

I place the beer bottle down on the table. "Even if Quinn really did want to try something, why would she want someone like me? We fought throughout high school and said some pretty harsh shit to each other."

"You need to have more faith in yourself and Quinn, Santana." She rummages through her bag and pulls out a train ticket. "Here, take this."

I looked at a ticket to New Haven. "Rachel, I can't—"

"Take it and go see her. Talk to her." She looks at me sincerely with her big brown eyes. "Trust me, it will be worth it."

So here I am. Here I am in the middle of Yale without knowing where the hell I am or where the hell Quinn is. This is the first time I'm actually visiting her.

I pull out a pack of cigarettes from my purse and light it up. "So much for having a wicked New Year's Eve." I take a long drag and welcomed the smoke in my lungs.

"Excuse me?" A sorority girl, with her pink jacket with Greek letters on it, walks up to me. "But you're not allowed to smoke here."

"Seriously?" I groan.

The blonde hair girl laughs. "No, I was just messing with you."

"Okay..." I drawl.

"So, what is a hot girl like you doing all alone?" She blinks her blue eyes at me.

"Got lost trying to read this school's stupid map." The sorority girl laughs.

"Yea, it's pretty hard to read." *Quinn wouldn't have trouble with it.* "I'm Hanna by the way."

I shake the hand she offered. "Santana."

"Well, Santana is there any place you're looking for that I can help you find?" She asks sincerely.

"I would ask you to help me find the place if I even knew where she was at." I put out the cigarette.

"*She?* Someone special?"

"Kind of, yea."

"Well, maybe she's at the big campus party at the Omega Chi's place. Everyone will most likely be there so maybe your friend will be there too."

"Okay, let's go then." She squeals and grabs me by the arm as she leads me to the party. If Quinn is there then it's meant to be and I'll tell her that I want to be with her. If not...well at least there will be free alcohol.

—

The frat house was huge and it was packed with college students dancing to some top 40 hip hop song with a wide range of alcohol at the mini-bar. They have a mini-bar. Maybe I should visit Quinn more often...

I was following the sorority girl who was taking me to go get drinks. In the middle of the room there were a group of kids playing beer pong.

"Hey, wanna play?" A frat guy, not hiding his leering eyes, asks me. I was about to refuse, not really wanting to get buzzed before I talk to Quinn, when they all start to chant 'Play! Play! Play!'

I relent and hold up my hands. "Okay, be warned though, I'm wicked good at beer pong." I step up to the opposite side of the table and pick up the small white ball.

"Ready to lose?" I stare the guy down.

"Bring it!"

Within less than 10 minutes, the group that surrounded us cheers loudly at my triumph. The guy, apparently his name is Kyle, drinks the last cup and stumbles backwards into his friends arms.

"Man, you got," Kyle burps loudly. "Game." He giggles and his friend takes him away from the table before he puked or did anything stupid.

"That's right! I'm the Queen of beer pong! Who's up next?" The crowd cheers loudly and group of college students try to decide who gets to go up against me next.

"Santana?" The sound of Quinn's voice startles me and I turn around quickly to the sound I missed so much.

Quinn crosses her arm with a mixed look of shock and annoyance.

"Hey, Q." I scratch my head, slightly embarrassed and a little buzzed.

Quinn shakes her head and starts pulling me away from the game. The crowd voices their discontent but it doesn't stop Quinn dragging me out to the backyard. We walk to an empty table by the pool and sit down.

"What are you doing here?"

"I...I..."

"Come on, S. I've seen you sober even after you lost a round of beer pong to Puck. I know you have a high tolerance." Quinn quips playfully.

I laugh softly before looking at her. "I wanted to see you."

Quinn leans forward and smiles. "Why didn't you call then?" She questions. "Wait...how did you even know I was here?"

I shake my head. "I didn't. Followed some sorority girl here." Quinn face falls and she leans back in her chair.

"So you saw a hot girl and followed her." She snips. "Typical Santana."

"Hey!" I bark. "What's your problem all of the sudden?"

"She was the blonde with blue eyes, right?" I don't have time to reply when that exact girl comes running over.

"There you are!" She says in a high pitch tone. "Been looking for you!" Hanna pulls on my arm and I see Quinn lock her jaw from my peripherals. "We were going to play Suck and Blow...wanna play with me?" She runs her hand seductively down my arm.

I see Quinn gripping the arms of the chair. "I..uh sorry, I'm talking to—"

"It's fine." Quinn stands up. "Go play, Santana. It's what you do right?" She walks away angrily.

I shake the sorority girl's hand off of me. "I'm sorry. I have to go." I fast walk in the direction Quinn went.

Pushing through the crowds of bodies, I see Quinn with her coat walking towards the front door of the house. I try to call Quinn but the crowd starts counting down from 30 as it was almost the New Year. I push and push and scream Quinn's name.

I see a guy, tall with sandy blonde hair block Quinn from leaving. He is obviously drunk as he pulls Quinn into his arms and tries to kiss her sloppily.

"Let go!" I hear Quinn's voice shrill.

"Come on baby, be my first kiss in the New Year." He slurs.

15

The jerk then gropes Quinn's ass and tries to lift her dress up. My body moves like lightning through the crowd.

14

"Get your filthy hands off her!" I twist his hand and he howls. I shove him backwards and glare at him.

13

"Bitch!" He spits at me and then walks away to find another girl to make-out with.

12

I wipe the spit from my face and turn to look at Quinn who had tears in her eyes. "Why?" She croaks.

"You honestly think I was going to let that ass treat you like that?"

11

She shakes her head. "Tell me why you came here to see me Santana."

"I just wanted to see you." I tell her half the truth.

"Santana."

10

"I wanted to see you because skype calls and phone calls aren't enough anymore. I wanted to see you and tell you..."

9

I move closer to Quinn and wrap my arms around her waist. She gasps slightly at the sudden contact and her hazel eyes wide.

8

"...that I want to try. I want to give *us* a shot."

7

"But what about that sorority girl?" She tries to pull away but I just bring her closer.

"She's nothing to me. The only blonde I want is you. The only girl I really want to be with is you."

6

"I thought you said you couldn't—"

I cut her off. "I know what I said on Christmas. I was just scared."

5

"Santana Lopez, scared? No way." Quinn jokes and the smile on her face warms me to the very core.

"Shut up, Fabray."

4

Quinn leans in and tucks a strand of hair behind her ear. Her hazel eyes shine and she bites on the bottom of her soft pink lips.

"Make me, Lopez."

3

The sound of everyone counting down unanimously is drowned out by the beating of my heart and the soft inhale and exhale of her sweet breath. I bring both my hands to gently hold her face and slowly start to close the distance between us.

2

Her eyes flutter close and my body pulsates with excitement. The last thing I see is her parted lips and...

1!

Finally the distance between us is ended with the sweet touch of our lips—the sweet touch of her lips that I've been dying to taste again. Everyone screams and rejoice in the New Year, but Quinn and I are too busy re-connecting in the best way possible.

We pull away softly and I brush my nose against Quinn's. My eyes are still closed with the touch of her lips still tingling on mine.

"Best New Year's ever." I whisper against her lips. Quinn chuckles and pulls me into a searing passionate kiss.

Day 7 - Free Day

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Sad Endings and New Beginnings, by 27summer

The sun beat down on Quinn's neck, causing her hair to stick to her neck but she barely noticed as she stared at the tree in front of her. It was still pretty small. Of course, it had only been planted a few months ago. But it seemed to be waste. The only thing left to remind people at this school of Finn was a stupid little tree and a plaque. Someone who had been such a big part of her life was gone.

Quinn could feel the tears coming and she shook them away. She shouldn't be crying. It wasn't like she and Finn had been close when he died. Whatever little friendship they had fell apart when they no longer saw each other daily. That was sad but Quinn wasn't sure she would change it if she could. If Finn was still alive, it wasn't as though she would have been hanging out with him. To be perfectly honest, she probably wouldn't have thought of him at all. Their lives had taken them so far apart. Plus, they both treated each other very badly. She knew that it was probably better that they ended up far away from each other. But that didn't mean she wanted him dead. She just had so many complicated feelings about Finn and she didn't know how to express them. That was part of the reason she'd skipped his memorial. Even if she could deal with an outpouring of emotions, seeing everyone lose their minds when she didn't feel the same would have destroyed her. She'd have looked like a total robot. And she knew everyone would have judged her for it. For not being devastated. And she just couldn't deal with it. So, she'd stayed away, even though she wanted to be there.

Looking at the tree once more, Quinn felt the need to do something else. Standing and staring at a stupid tree didn't seem like enough. She wanted to pay her respects but what did that really mean? And who should she pay them to? Finn's mom? She could hardly bring herself to look her in the eye. Kurt? She barely got along with him and she would probably end up offending him. And Rachel? That was a bad idea all around. She hated how Rachel acted around Finn and if she played the grieving widow, Quinn knew she wouldn't be able to keep her mouth shut. She would end up hurting Rachel and that was the last thing she wanted to do. So maybe it was better that she just stay away.

"Wow, look who finally showed up. Months late, but I guess life at Yale is too busy to be interrupted for something like a funeral."

Quinn looked over and found Santana glaring at her. "Don't start."

"No, I will. Why didn't you come? Do you just not give a shit anymore?" Santana demanded, getting into Quinn's face.

"Of course I care. I wanted to come. I just couldn't..." Quinn trailed off, her eyes filling with tears again.

At the sight of Quinn's tears, all of the anger left Santana. She didn't want to fight with Quinn. She just wanted answers. "Why not?"

"I don't know. It didn't seem right." Quinn hurried to continue when she saw the unimpressed look on Santana's face. "I'm not explaining it right. I'm sorry Finn's dead. I am, but I don't feel as sad as everyone else. If I'm honest, I haven't given him a thought since I left for Yale. I'm sorry if it makes me selfish."

"It does." Santana interrupted but she softened towards Quinn a little.

"Right." Quinn shook her head remorsefully. "I didn't want to listen to everyone sanctify Finn when that's not how I feel. We had a complicated relationship. That doesn't change just because he's dead."

"Are we supposed to talk bad about him? Do you want us to rip him to shreds?"

"Of course not." Quinn took a deep breath and counted to ten. This was exactly why she'd stayed away. She had known she would say something inappropriate and someone would get offended. She'd never thought that Santana would be the one to feel bad but it wasn't too surprising.

"What are you saying, Quinn? What do you mean?" Santana was furious but she tried to stop herself from blowing up at Quinn.

"I don't want to do this. I don't want to apologize for my feelings." Quinn sighed, all of the fight leaving her. "I'll see you around, Santana."

"Wait, don't." Santana grabbed Quinn's hand, stopping her from leaving. "I'm trying to understand. I don't mean to be a bitch."

"Comes naturally, huh?" Quinn smirked, squeezing Santana's hand so she knew she was kidding.

"Funny." Santana laughed. "Now, what do you mean?"

"Let's just drop it. I don't want to fight with you."

"No. Tell me." Santana used her free hand to cup Quinn's chin and tilt her head up. "Please."

"Finn dying doesn't whitewash everything he did," Quinn spoke quietly. "I'm sorry he's gone, really, I am. But he still did some awful things to me."

"And you did shit to him. Did you forget that?" Santana snapped.

"No, I didn't. Nobody in this place ever let me forget what an evil whore I am," Quinn retorted. "But somehow Finn's a prince who never did anything wrong."

"Quinn, that's not what I'm saying."

"It's exactly what you're saying and that's exactly why I didn't want to come. I'm- I'm allowed to feel however I feel. You're not going to make me feel bad about it." Quinn shrugged away from Santana.

"I don't want you to feel bad," Santana whispered, hurt when Quinn moved away from her.

Quinn narrowed her eyes at Santana, pissed that it was Santana making her feel so out of sorts. “Yes, you do. That’s what everyone wants. You want tears for Finn. And I did cry. But he wasn’t some sort of saint. I won’t pretend otherwise. And you know, I’m surprised that you don’t feel the same.”

“What? Finn was a good guy.”

“Yeah, a good guy that outed you in the middle of the hallway because you called him fat.” Quinn laughed harshly. “Did he ever apologize for that? I mean a real apology and not some lame ass music week designed to make him look like a hero.”

Santana froze. “I was a jerk to him.”

“Oh, so you deserved to be outed? It was okay that you didn’t get to choose when to tell your parents? Come on, Santana. I know you’re not over it.”

“What good does it do to rehash all this? Nothing’s going to change. He’s dead,” Santana said, her usual bravado fading.

“Yeah, Finn’s dead. And you’ll never get closure. You’ll never get to tell him how bad he hurt you. Doesn’t that upset you?” Quinn took a few steps toward Santana.

“Why are you doing this?” Santana asked, growing more agitated as they talked.

“You’re the one who wouldn’t drop it,” Quinn pointed out, hands on her hips. “I’m not saying anything untrue. We were terrible to Finn and he was terrible back. The difference is that we were told what heinous people we were for our actions and Finn never was. Doesn’t that piss you off?”

“Yeah, of course it does,” Santana burst out. “Happy now?”

“Thrilled, Santana, this is what I was hoping for when I came here,” Quinn shot back.

“Whatever. Finn never apologized and now he’ll never get the chance. He was a jerk and I never forgave him for what he did. Oh, God.” Santana slapped a hand over her mouth.

“It’s okay.” Quinn came closer to her, grabbing her hands. “I didn’t mean to upset you.”

“You didn’t. I’m just awful. How could I say that?” Santana screwed her eyes shut, shoving Quinn’s hand away when she rested it on her shoulder.

“It’s all right. It’s natural to feel that way.” Quinn shrugged. “At least that’s what my shrink says.”

Santana stared at her in a surprise. “You see a shrink?”

“Yes, I’m really screwed up.”

“No kidding.”

“Hush,” Quinn said, slapping Santana’s shoulder. “But seriously, Santana. There’s nothing wrong with how you’re feeling.”

Santana snorted. "I'm sure Kurt and Rachel and everyone else would disagree with you."

"Yeah, they probably would. Which is why I'm avoiding them." Quinn blew out a breath. "Being away from this place has been good for me. At Yale, I'm not the girl who got knocked up by her boyfriend's best friend."

"No, you're the girl who banged a professor."

Quinn rolled her eyes. "I may have exaggerated that a bit."

"Really?"

"Not the point." Quinn waved her hand dismissively. "My point is I'm not the same person I was in high school. But that's all anyone here sees."

"So? What's that got to do with Finn?" Santana questioned. She still had no idea what Quinn was talking about.

"I just meant that I feel how I feel. I'm not apologizing for it or tying myself up in knots because of it," Quinn said, her voice quiet but steady. "If that makes me a bitch, oh well."

"It's that easy?"

"Well, it's not hard." Quinn grasped Santana's hand. "I've just stopped caring so much what people think."

"I don't know how to do that." Santana looked so much like a little girl that Quinn wanted to wrap her up and never let go.

"I'm not saying that's what you should do. I just..." Quinn trailed off. She didn't know if she should continue. Who was she to tell Santana how to live her life. She was just now pulling herself together.

"Just what? Spit it out, Quinn." Santana turned away, furious all of a sudden. "You always do this. You make me doubt myself."

"That's not what I'm trying to do," Quinn replied quietly. She needed to tread lightly here. She recognized the signs of a Santana rant coming on and she wanted to stop that before Santana became so angry that nothing she said would get through to her. "I want you to be okay. I don't want you to feel bad about yourself."

"Why shouldn't I? Finn is dead and I- I'm still so damn angry." Santana spun back around to Quinn, tears in her eyes. "I can't even tell anyone I'm angry because they'll just say I'm selfish."

"You're not selfish."

"Aren't I? Isn't it selfish to be thinking of how I never got the chance to confront Finn about what he did?"

"No, it isn't. Emotions aren't something you can control. It took me a while to realize that." Quinn dared to take a few steps forward, smiling when Santana didn't back away. "There's

nothing wrong with being mad. It's just how you express it. If you're trying to make someone feel bad, then no, that's not right."

"That's what I'm good at," Santana said, returning Quinn's smile.

"I know, I am, too. But I'm working on it." Quinn shrugged. "I don't have all the answers. But I know keeping it inside isn't healthy. For one thing, it's not going to work. It's going to come out, probably in a way that hurts everyone."

Santana looked away, her feelings a big jumble. She knew Quinn was right but she didn't know what to do about it. She had spent so much time shoving everything away that she had no idea how to let it out. "I'm- I'm afraid."

"Of what?" Quinn asked.

"If I say what I am feeling, what good will it do? Finn's still dead. It's not going to change anything at all."

"It won't," Quinn agreed, tilting Santana's face until they were staring at each other. "But you'll get to say your piece. That's something at least."

"You want me to be honest? You want me to say what I feel?"

Quinn nodded. "I do."

"Okay." Santana scowled. "I'm pissed that Finn never knew how much he hurt me. That he didn't even really care. That the half-assed apology I did get was really a way for him to feel better and look like a hero."

"That's fine."

"I'm not done yet." Santana began to walk circles around Finn's tree, feeling the need to move. "I'm angry that Rachel's acting like her husband died and not her ex that treated her like crap most of the time."

"Okay."

"Still not done," Santana continued, clenching her fists. "Kurt acts like his and Rachel's pain is so much greater than anyone else's. Like he's freaking special and nobody could possibly understand how he feels."

"O-okay." Quinn started to see that she let loose something she wasn't actually prepared to deal with right now.

"Nope." Santana stopped pacing in front of Quinn, looking her dead in the eyes. "And I'm furious that you haven't talked to me since our two time thing at Mr. Schuester's wedding."

"I- What?" Quinn's eyes flew open. The rest of Santana's complaints were expected but she didn't anticipate that.

"You heard me, Quinn. You freaked out and ran back to Yale, forgetting all about me." Santana was amazed at how much better she felt. She didn't feel nearly as guilty about Finn. And telling Quinn that she was pissed at her was a relief, too.

"Hey, the phone works both ways. You never called me, either." Quinn recovered from her surprise quickly. She wasn't going to let Santana blame her for everything.

"Please, you're the straight girl I corrupted. I couldn't risk you freaking out, which is obviously what you did." Santana glared, a little intimidated when Quinn glared right back.

"No, I didn't. Which you would know if you'd been in touch. I- I haven't exactly been shy since I got back to New Haven." Quinn smirked at Santana's confusion. "You don't know everything about me. When I got back, I- I hooked up with some other girls."

"I guess I don't know everything," Santana said slowly, stunned by the thought of Quinn with other girls.

Quinn bobbed her head, slightly embarrassed. "When we didn't talk after, I figured that was that. I didn't want to be that girl that pestered you but I wanted to explore."

"You found some girls to explore with?"

"Yeah." Quinn nodded. "And I had a fight with my mom and wanted to get to her so I posted some pictures of some girls to Facebook."

"Nice." Santana laughed, picturing the look on Judy's face. Then, she pictured Quinn with another girl and sobered very quickly. "Was it worth it?"

"It was." Quinn tried very hard to be casual, even though she was terrified of Santana judging her. "I feel silly for wanting to prove something to my mom but I don't regret what I did with those girls. I enjoyed it."

"Really?"

"Really." Quinn was firm. Those few weeks when she went on a bit of a girl rampage had been good for her. It helped her discover who she was and what she liked. She wouldn't do it again. She really believed that sex was special and shouldn't be thrown around casually. But she wasn't going to apologize for any of what she did.

Santana knew not to make a joke here, she could tell Quinn would think she was teasing her instead of trying to ease the tension. "I'm glad you're happy. I wish I could've helped you. I know all about identity crises."

"I wish you could have helped me, too." Quinn smiled wistfully, thinking back to those days right after they slept together. She hadn't panicked but she couldn't make herself call Santana, either. She'd convinced herself that Santana would make the first move. Which was pretty ridiculous now that she thought of it. For all her bravado, Santana was as insecure as she was. "We handled this all wrong. We should have talked after."

“I know.” Santana took Quinn’s hand and laced their fingers together. “I just didn’t want to push you into something you didn’t really want.”

“And I thought if you wanted me, you’d tell me.”

Santana laughed. “We’re a mess.”

“We are,” Quinn agreed, stepping closer. She looked down at Santana and couldn’t help but smile. It had been a long time since they’d been this close. “But it’s okay. Eventually, we’ll get it together.”

“I want that,” Santana whispered. She slid her arms around Quinn’s neck, tugging gently until their lips were barely touching. “This’ll be crazy.”

“Of course it will. But that doesn’t mean it won’t be good.” Quinn kissed her deeply, hands moving over Santana’s back. She’d been thinking about this for so long. She couldn’t resist her now that she had the chance.

“Mmm.” Santana sighed against Quinn’s mouth. “This is probably a bad idea.”

“Maybe so but I thought we’d agreed we wanted it.” Quinn chased Santana’s lips. She wasn’t going to let Santana push her away.

“That’s not what I meant.” Santana scratched Quinn’s scalp, grinning when she practically purred. It felt good hearing Quinn lose her mind over something she did. “We’re in public. Someone could see us.”

“I don’t care.”

Santana had to pull back at that. “Really?”

“No.” Quinn stepped back, peering down at Santana. “I spent my whole life caring what other people think of me I’m done. I am who I am and everyone else is going to have to deal with it.”

“That’s great.” Santana couldn’t tear her eyes away from Quinn. She had always been beautiful but this confident, unapologetic woman in front of her was so different from the one she used to know.

“Listen, I understand if you’re uncomfortable, if you don’t want to be affectionate in public. It’s okay.” Quinn watched Santana shuffle around nervously and she didn’t want to put any pressure on her.

“That’s not it. Really, it’s not. Once you’ve been outed via TV commercial, you get pretty good at ignoring other people.” Santana gestured at the tree in front of them. “We’re at Finn’s memorial. It’s a little creepy.”

“Oh. Right.” Quinn reached out, taking Santana’s hand. “So, if I were to ask you out, you wouldn’t have a problem?”

“No. Not at all.”

“Good to know.”

“Quinn!” Santana glared at her.

“Couldn’t help it.” Quinn softened. She loved to tease Santana but couldn’t resist that look on her face. “Santana? Will you go out with me tonight?”

Santana couldn’t keep the smile off her face. “There’s nothing I’d like more.”

“Good.” Quinn leaned in, pressing their lips together briefly. “Seven okay?”

“Perfect.” Santana backed up, shooting a glance at Finn’s tree. “Should we pray or something?”

“Maybe we should just say good bye.”

Santana bit her lip, feeling out of sorts. “Bye, Finn. I’m sorry we never got to settle things.”

Quinn held onto Santana’s hand, squeezing as hard as she could. “Finn, I’m sorry we treated each other so badly. I hope you’re happy wherever you are.”

“We’re going to be okay, right?” Santana asked as they walked away.

“Okay? We’re going to be amazing.” Quinn hung onto Santana. She wasn’t letting her go for a while. Their adventure was just beginning.

Move Like a Sinner, by Annjul414

Santana pretended she wasn't nervous about the reunion. As much as she wanted to see all of her friends, that meant facing certain someone, and she was by no means sure that she was entirely prepared for that.

They hadn't talked much since failed wedding and they definitely hadn't seen each other. She was preoccupied with different stuff happening in New York – work, Brody, work, Rachel, diner, and now her Broadway mini-role. She assumed that Quinn was busy herself, because she very much disappeared off the face of the earth. It was better that way anyhow, to keep distance until thoughts stopped harassing her with certain images. They didn't and that was a reason of her anxiety.

She took her time to wander around her old school, nostalgia swirling in her mind. Having already talked with some of the people who returned, there was nothing better to do than to see what new principal had done with the place. Just when she turned around the corner, she locked eyes with one blonde confidently strolling down the corridor. Although she looked strangely different, Santana still had to keep her sudden, unexplained urges under control.

"Fabray. And here I thought that you wouldn't find time to honor us peasants with your presence."

"Oh, you know that I wouldn't miss it for the world."

They eyed each other with seriousness to abruptly grin. Santana couldn't deny that deep down she missed Quinn. She had no person like her in New York, someone who didn't do a scene every time she wasn't particularly friendly.

"How have you been?"

"Pretty good."

"Got any interesting job?"

"Actually... yeah. I'm Berry's understudy for her greatest Broadway show. I know, I know, this doesn't look like my kind of thing, but it's a huge opportunity for me."

"Are you serious? This is amazing! It could open so many doors to you. Really, congratulations." Quinn smiled at her from ear to ear.

"Thanks."

Santana involuntarily checked her out from head to toe, wondering how she was able to rock that prude outfit she was wearing so effortlessly and why it even worked on her. The blonde bit her lower lip and something about it made the brunette blurt out the concern which was troubling her regardless of how much she tried to dismiss it from mind.

"You haven't called."

"Neither have you."

They stared at each other and Santana's thoughts returned to that Valentine's Day. She noticed that Quinn was slightly blushing, which made her flushed even more. She started weighing options in her head about what to say and how to behave when unfamiliar voice reached her ears.

"There you are!" A young man appeared on Quinn's side, and Santana frowned when he kissed her cheek.

"Who the hell are you?"

"That's my boyfriend Biff." They smiled sweetly at each other, making her laugh out loud.

"You're kidding, right?" She looked between them with disbelief. The guy looked like a gay version of preppy, stuck-up, rich sissies that she always thought were gathering in colleges like Yale. Even his voice was annoying.

"Are you Quinn's friend?"

"I'm Santana Lopez. Any bell ringing?"

"No, not really." He sent her a smirk that made her blood boil. She looked questioningly at Quinn, but she averted her eyes.

"Well then, remember my name. You will have reasons." She gave him the best fake smile she could pull off and left, storming in the opposite direction.

Santana didn't know why she was so furious about the whole situation. Of course Quinn's behavior was disappointing, but it wasn't the first time she made really bad choices. She was certain about one thing, though. Biff was at the top of her hate list.

To forget about that infuriating meeting, she decided to spend some time with Brittany who seemed lost, in a manner of speaking. Her best friend was clearly unhappy about something and it bothered her, since she never stopped caring about her despite their breakup. Yet every time she tried to reach out to her, there was no desired effect.

She came up with the idea of an Unholy Trinity performance, however, the second they started dancing together, she knew it was a huge mistake. Quinn was looking exceptionally good, her voice was dripping with sensuality, and her delicate touch was driving her insane. When their eyes occasionally met, she found herself staring, against her common sense. There were moments that she had to use all of her willpower to restrain herself from taking her there and then. In her head she started repeating to let it all go, especially seeing the interaction between Quinn and her 'boyfriend', and she focused on her ex-girlfriend to keep her impassioned emotions in check.

They hung around with a couple of friends and later went to lunch to Breadstix. When they looked around the place to find a free table, Santana grunted at the sight she wanted to avoid. To make it even worse, the Yale guy invited them to sit together, and she got squeezed between Quinn and Brittany.

That was one of the most awkward meals in her life. And irritating. She had to put up with Biff's constant talking and his damn smirk which she wanted to wipe off so badly that she refused

to look at him. Quinn looked uncomfortable as well, especially whenever he was getting touchy-feely with her. Moreover, with every passing minute she appeared to be as angry as her. She was smiling, but Santana knew her well enough to see beneath that façade.

"So, how would you describe Quinn in one sentence?" Biff asked, glancing around. The blonde stiffened even more and looked at her briefly with apprehension.

"Skilled." Was her only reply as she stared straight in her eye.

She must have gotten the message since she blushed again and Santana smirked on the inside. Quinn quickly changed the topic to start casual small talks and everything in her fake behavior was extremely upsetting. Their friends exchanged puzzled glances, but kept their mouths shut. Santana followed their lead, certain that she was going to explode if Quinn continued her farce. She became so engrossed in her thoughts that she hardly paid any attention to people she had come with, including Brittany, who seemed overly friendly as her hands were nonchalantly touching her body.

On the other hand, she was awfully well aware of Quinn's proximity. Every time she shifted, her arm or leg stroked against her, and she found herself clenching her teeth in attempt to control her craving.

They returned to school to watch another performance and Santana couldn't help glaring at the pair in front of her. She had to do something, it was stronger than her. When people took a break, she followed Quinn into the hallway. Her guy was thankfully nowhere to be seen and she stopped in front of her with crossed arms and artificially pleased expression.

"Do you enjoy your little role of Stepford wife?"

"I don't know what you're talking about." Her face remained blank.

"Oh, I think that you know very well. Gay panic much? How does it feel to be dependent on men again? Look at you... Fancy dress, curled hair, fake expression. And a preppy beard who is gayer than you. You must be real proud of yourself, a true woman of '50s!" She exclaimed with a very sly smile and Quinn angrily pushed her at the lockers. Santana forgot how it used to hurt.

"Says the girl still pining over her ex-girlfriend."

"I'm not getting back together with Brittany."

"She seemed certainly interested."

"Is it jealousy I sense?"

"I could ask you the same question." She whispered with an impish grin, her face inches from hers. Santana could smell her intoxicating perfume and felt the cold steel on her back as Quinn continued pressing her hands against her shoulders. Although she was furious beyond reason, she felt aroused even more. "I saw you looking at me during our performance. I know that look."

"Wow. That's very, very gay of you, Fabray."

"You're jealous."

"If you gonna tell me again that I'm jealous of you, I will literally laugh in your face."

"You're jealous of him." Santana's confident expression fell and she quickly turned them over to pin Quinn against the hard locker.

"Tell me, is he any good? Does he make you feel the way I did? Whose name is on your mind when he tries to please you?" The blonde's eyes darkened while she continued to glare. "I thought so."

She let go of her with a pleased smirk and strolled away, adding a little sway to her hips. Even though she felt somehow satisfied with getting it all out of her system, Quinn's words got under her skin. She reassured herself that she was angry about her behavior, not her boy-toy. There was no reason to be jealous. Despite the fact that she couldn't stop thinking about their night. Despite the fact that every inch of her body was on fire whenever she crossed her mind.

After receiving a text from Brittany, she met her in one of the classrooms to talk about their plans. They exchanged stories about New York and MIT and Santana's mood improved, knowing she had her cheerful friend back.

"I'm not saying that you should drop everything, not at all. This college is a huge thing for you and if you think that you're needed or fit there, that's great. But don't forget about yourself. Don't let anyone or anything change you, the real you." The blonde smiled at her.

"You're the best. You're like the bestest thing that happened to me. I was thinking about it a lot recently... and I'd really love us to be together again." Santana frowned a little and pulled away upon hearing her words.

"Listen... I don't think this will work."

"Why? You are single, right?"

"We can't just go back and forth with each other, it's not alright. Especially when we're still so far away."

"But we don't have to be."

"Don't we? As I said, MIT is a big chance for you and New York has become my home, my place. I really don't see this working out, we've already been there and you know how it ended. And I don't think it's wise to give up what we've accomplished so far."

"We could try again. We fit together, I know that now. We have past, memories, and a very special relationship. You know that too."

"Britt, I —" She didn't finish because the blonde pressed her lips against hers. Santana would have enjoyed it if not for the confusing realization that she actually wished to be kissed by completely different blonde. She slowly drew back to look into her eyes. "I love you and it's never gonna change. But I can't do this, that part of our relationship is over. I'm sorry... if you had suggested it a couple of months before, I would have probably agreed on it in a heartbeat."

"No, I'm sorry. I've just missed you and our sweet lady kisses. I don't have any close people at MIT."

"I know. We haven't kept in touch recently, which kinda sucks. You know that you can always call or visit me, right?" Seeing her saddened expression, she continued. "How about doing a little duet with me to celebrate good old times? I know exactly what would cheer you up."

They smiled at each other and joined people back at the choir room. Santana put things straight and stated that they would perform their tournament number for the sake of walking down memory lane and comforting Brittany. She immediately noticed Quinn's bitchy glares and Biff's absence.

Santana hadn't thought about it, but she could definitely use the situation to her advantage, especially when the blonde thought that she was getting back with her ex-girlfriend. Perhaps it was stupid to think that she could make Quinn jealous, yet there was no harm in trying. Two could play that game. She decided to dance maybe a little bit more provocatively and a little bit closer to Brittany than planned because she had way too much fun. To her great delight, she could feel Quinn's eyes burning holes in her body, although she made certain that she didn't honor the blonde even with a glance. Revenge was sweet.

When they finished, people started causing a commotion to pick a song for a collective number, gathering around the piano. Santana stood casually in the crowd and discussed their show songs when all of a sudden someone took her hand in a death grip and started pulling her out of the choir room. Before she realized what was exactly going on, Quinn had stormed through the entire empty hall, dragging her behind, and pushed her into the chemistry classroom.

"What the —"

"Shut up."

The blonde pinned her forcefully against the locked door and crashed their lips together. She responded immediately, and they began kissing so hungrily that she was out of breath within seconds. Quinn's taste, scent, and touch surrounded her completely, and a fleeting thought run through her mind how she managed to go without it all for so long. Her lips were swollen, but Quinn's shaky gasps and not fully suppressed whimpers compensated for her discomfort.

She swiftly changed their position, feeling how her back stiffened. The blonde's fingers were digging painfully in her hair and hip, and Santana grabbed her hands to raise them above her head. She detached her mouth from hers to plant kisses down her face until she found her favorite spot on her neck. Quinn could have as many boyfriends as she wanted, but ultimately, it was her who left the marks on her body. Santana let go of her hands to slide her fingers down her arms, chest, and grabbed her thighs to lift her up against the door. The blonde made a noise between whine and grunt which was loud enough for Santana to hush her up with another kiss. Classes might have been over, but taking into consideration the silence on the corridors, the possibility that someone could hear them was great. Somehow, the idea turned her on even more.

"Desk." She mumbled into her lips and Quinn wrapped her arms and legs tightly around her body.

Santana felt grateful that she didn't completely ditch workouts as she moved them unsteadily towards the closest flat surface. Having roughly spread her legs to stand between them, she sucked on her lower lip and Quinn almost growled, her perfectly manicured nails scratching her back, sending tingles through her core. They both wore dresses, which made Santana smirk as she sneaked her hand under the material to caress her skin up to her inner thighs. The blonde pressed harder against her to get as close as possible and Santana nuzzled her collarbone, feeling the silky strands of fair hair on her face.

"This would have been ten times hotter if we wore our cheerio uniforms." She whispered, toying with the fabric of her underwear.

"That could still be arranged." Quinn breathed out while her hands relentlessly tugged at her dress.

"Jesus."

Santana couldn't help herself and she cupped her breasts, getting rewarded with another steamy sigh. Somehow she wasn't pleased anymore about their clothes, she wished to feel her skin against hers, flesh against flesh. She pressed their chests together, yet it wasn't enough. Quinn must have felt the same way since her hand wandered under her dress to yank at her panties.

"Mmm, impatient much?" She joked between kisses, despite the fact that there wasn't anything else she wanted more in that moment.

The blonde replied with a grumble and aggressively settled herself on her thigh, as much as the desk which she was leaning on allowed her to. Santana cursed under her breath when she rubbed her leg against her core and quickly disengaged herself from her to take off their lingerie in a fierce manner. This time Quinn smirked.

"Who's impatient now?"

Her smug look quickly fell when the brunette grinded intensely against her, trying to please them both simultaneously. Quinn arched her back with a sharp intake of breath, sinking her nails deeper into her arms in a very enjoyable pain. Santana took advantage of her exposed neck to press her lips greedily on every inch of her skin. Her feet started to hurt from standing in that position, leaning against her and the desk, yet every thrust of Quinn's thigh against her groin was totally worth it.

"Closer." She gasped desperately, and the brunette was more than happy to oblige.

They easily caught the rhythm and Santana could feel how damp the skin of her leg was. She herself was intensely soaking, but the blonde didn't seem to mind much – her hands were everywhere. On her hips, on her chest, on her neck, entangled in her dark locks. Jerking, caressing, roaming around. She clutched at her butt and a faint moan escaped Quinn's lips. Having sensed that they were overly ready to take another step, she slightly pulled away to

replace her leg with her hand, and before the blonde could protest against her retraction, she brushed her soft folds with her fingers. The girl threw her head back in pleasure, her lower lip caught between her teeth. Santana leant forward.

"It looks like we're gonna miss the group number." She purred right in her ear.

Quinn opened her eyes to stare at her and the look of pure desire swirling in them made the brunette almost come right on the spot.

"What a pity." The blonde panted before grabbing her face, pulling her close, and capturing her lips in a fiery kiss once more.

Santana concluded that the reunion was not a bad idea after all.

Messaging with Your Past and Maybe Your Future, by buffy46143

Okay. I know this is something I shouldn't be doing. It's Saturday night and I am young and single. I should be out on the town, partying and keeping up appearances.

I am not an avid reader. I really only read stuff I have to normally, but I was trolling the internet instead of working yesterday and my favorite lesbian site had an article about the best fanfiction stories with lesbian characters and the picture on the screen was of two characters I actually like on a show I somewhat like, but when you're gay, there aren't always a lot of options for great shows with great lesbian characters out there. Sometimes, you get lucky. I stumbled upon *Skins* a while ago and Emily and Naomi's story actually resonated with me in a way that not a lot of other stories have been able to. Maybe it's because I'm a cynic. Who knows?

Anyway, I followed the link to the story, preparing to read a page or two or however they do that stuff since I've never actually read fanfiction before and I started this thing Friday after work around 6pm and it is now Saturday around 9pm. I haven't really put my iPad down once except to go to the bathroom and grab food now and again, but every time I do that, I bring the thing with me so it's not really like I'm pausing the reading. I haven't even showered since Friday morning. I have fallen into the black hole of fanfiction. I have already familiarized myself with the terminology. For example, I learned that AU means alternate universe. Who thinks this stuff up? I don't even know how many stories I've read, but it's probably over 100. Some are short. Just a chapter or two and some are much longer. Some are written well and others not so much, but I read them anyway because seeing how someone else views my favorite characters fascinates me.

Time to move on to the next story to see what this author has in store for me. I read the synopsis and notice it has an M rating. I've discovered in the last 24 hours that I really only like reading the mature fics. It's not just because those typically include sex, but they also usually include more adult themes. Not all the time, but most of the time. I'm 25 and I find that while the stories taking place when the characters are in high school are sometimes compelling, it's hard for me to go back that far and recall what those emotions are like at that time in a person's life. So, I've been focusing my time today on the stories that take place when the characters are somewhere around my age. The author's screen name is Citybythebay and this is the second story she's written. I've checked the reviews before reading a few other stories and they're a mixed bag. Some of them even reveal parts of the story I haven't read yet and I'm not a fan of spoilers so I've decided to just chance reading stories and form my own opinion.

I close my eyes in an attempt to cure their exhaustion from all this reading and open them again to begin reading chapter one of Citybythebay's story. In a matter of minutes, I am hooked. The story is 40 chapters long and is about the length of a classic novel and apparently it's still in progress. Lord knows how many more chapters there will be, but after chapter 5, I know I will read every single one. There's something about her writing style and the way she seems to

understand the characters in the same way that I've always understood them. The characters themselves are not actually a couple on the show. In fact, on the show, one of them is actually straight, but they have an undeniable chemistry that others like me have noticed and in this story, while it begins where the show left off at the mid-season break, it continues on in its own little way gradually getting these two characters to realize they belong together. It's well after 11 when I'm caught up to the 40 chapters she's already posted and now I'm desperate to know what happens next. How did I become this person? It's like I have to know what happens, but I have to wait to find out. The last time she posted was today so I'm probably going to have to wait awhile. This is ridiculous. I'm Santana fucking Lopez. I'm a Grammy winning artist who's about to drop her 3rd album and I'm obsessed with fanfiction.

I decide to check out her profile since she has one. It's pretty basic stuff. No name or significant information other than she has a cat and lives somewhere in Northern California. She obviously loves the show she's writing about. There's not much else there except the mention of her other story, which is not about the show, but a crossover between *Pretty Little Liars* and *Vampire Diaries*. Not really interested in that one right now since I'm exhausted and need to give my eyes a rest. I notice there's an icon next to her name though. When I hover over it, it reveals that it is for something called a private message. I click on it and I am taken to a blank e-mail like page.

"Oh." I say out loud to no one since I live in this Los Angeles 3 bedroom alone. It's not really even fully furnished since I just moved in about a month ago after living in New York for 7 years. I moved there right after high school. I tried college for a minute, but it wasn't my thing. Music was my thing and I got scouted by a label when I was 20 and the first album followed and then the second and the tours and the publicity and the fact that to my friends and family, I am out and proud, but to the rest of the world including my fans, I am a very straight pop star who has a boyfriend. He's just for show and is actually a really good friend who knows the deal, but he lives in LA to shoot the TV show he just landed so in order to make things appears legit, I moved out here. I actually really like it. I still have my place in NYC so I can go back whenever, but I like the weather and the constant view of girls walking the beach in bikinis. Venice Beach is the place for me right now.

I'm staring at the blank box with the blinking cursor. I feel nervous, which makes no sense. It's not like I have to send her a message. I can just click this thing away and go to bed. I think I'm nervous more from the fan perspective. I'm a fan. I'm like one of my fans who feels a connection to me. I feel a connection to Citybythebay and it is weird thinking about sending her a message saying that.

"Fuck it." I tell myself and start typing.

Citybythebay,

I just wanted to say that I read all 40 chapters of your story in a couple of hours and now I'm caught up. I really hope you post the next one soon because I'm already going through withdrawals. I love the way you write these characters. I know right now they're working through all this angst or whatever, but I'm a sucker for a happy ending

Don't tell anyone. I have a reputation to protect. Anyway, I just wondered what you had planned for them and maybe you can let me know when you're going to post the next chapter.

Now, how do I sign it? It's not like I can use my real name. Everyone who's listened to the radio or streamed Pandora in the last 5 years knows who I am. My screen name, which I created before realizing I really didn't need to if all I wanted was to read the stories is insertnamehere. I thought it was funny at the time.

I opted not to sign it at all and just clicked the send button. An hour later, I was showered and sliding into my bed. My eyes closed and I was about to drift off into sleep when the phone buzzed next to me. It was only an e-mail, but the sound was to my personal account, which no one really used since I rarely gave it out to people. I decided to take a look and then fall asleep. I opened my app and saw that there was a PM from Citybythebay.

"Well, that was fast." I opened up, unable to wait to see the response.

Insertnamehere,

That's an interesting name choice. I'm glad you like the story so far. I know there's a lot of conflict now, but conflict is necessary to story. If there's no conflict, no one would read it. Who wants to read 40+ chapters of happy people with happy lives and have everything wrapped into a bow? I know I don't. I like reading because it takes my mind off of my own problems. Having said that, you will get your happy ending. These two are endgame. I've got about 5 more chapters to post and I try to post daily so you shouldn't have to wait too long. Anyway, thanks for the message.

-Citybythebay

She was right. I hate happy people with happy lives and wrapping things in a bow. That's not real life. I know things seem pretty good for me now, but they haven't always been that way. I'm from small town Ohio. Not exactly easy being a gay and living there as a teenager. I guess you could say I had a bout of gay rage back then, but I was a cheerleader and in the glee club so needless to say I had issues. Sure, I was popular and I ended up dating my best friend, but it was still very lonely. I went through my fair share of busted relationships. When I got my deal at the label, they asked that I keep my lady loving a secret. I figured it was just until I was famous, which I knew I would be and then I could come out with a hot girlfriend on my arm, but the album did well and then the next one did well and I got worried that if I told the world, my next one might not do so well. I know it's the modern era and all and it shouldn't be an issue, but unfortunately it still is, so I keep my fake boyfriend and I figured when I find someone I really love and want to spend my life with, I'll take that step. Honestly, I'm not even sure how it hasn't been leaked yet. Everyone in my high school knew, people I met in New York before the album dropped knew. I didn't hide it back then. Maybe they're just understanding or maybe they all just think that it was a phase back then since I haven't talked to most of them in years.

City,

Your name is long so I'm going to abbreviate from now on. Thanks for the heads up. I didn't realize you were posting daily. Most of these other writers just leave me hanging. I've noticed many of them start stories and don't

seem to finish them. So, I'm holding you to the fact that you said you'd finish and that you'd do it soon. I'm sort of new to this fanfiction thing. I found a link and now I'm hooked. You're the first person I've sent a message to and your story is definitely the best written. Some of these stories seem like they're written by 10 year olds. Hell, some of them probably are. I don't think I'm going to post any reviews or anything, but just know that I think you're talented. If you're not a writer, you should be.

I hit send and stared at my phone, awaiting a reply. After a few seconds, I sat it back down and fell asleep almost immediately. I woke up around 9am on Sunday and grabbed my phone to check my texts. I was expecting one from my manager about an upcoming appearance he was trying to schedule, but I didn't have any messages. I did have several e-mails on my main account, which I scrolled through briefly before remembering last night. I quickly checked my personal account, which was the one I had linked to my Fanfiction account and there was one message from City.

From now on? I guess that means we're in this PM thing for the long haul, huh? You can shorten my screen name if you want, but you can also call me Lucy. I am not a professional writer. I just like to dabble here and there when I get an idea. I was an English major as an undergrad. Now, I'm about to finish up my MS in psychology and then it's onto my doctorate. I write fanfic during breaks from studying or working at my actual job. I'll post the next chapter around noon my time. I don't know what time zone you're in, but I'm PST. Let me know if you like it later. Don't tell me if you hate it. I'm not good at criticism. Constructive or not.

I smiled as I read it. I don't really know how it's possible, but I'm starting to like talking to this girl and I've only exchanged a couple of messages with her. I noticed the message came in around midnight so I decided to go ahead and respond even though I would normally make people wait for stuff like this.

Lucy,

I guess it makes sense you have a psychology thing since your story is kind of about that. I find human behavior fascinating. Well, humans are generally a pain in my ass and mostly predictable, but every now and then they surprise me. You can call me Maria and I'm on PST too. I live in LA. I read your profile (pretty tame if you ask me and no I'm not virtually stalking you) and saw you're in Northern Cali and your screen name leads me to believe that maybe you're in the SF area. True or false?

-Maria

Maria is my middle name. I use it sometimes when I check into hotels. Everyone knows Santana Lopez, but Maria Lopez is a nobody. I couldn't wait for the next chapter to be posted, but I really couldn't wait for my next message to come in. I decided to get some work done instead of reading another fanfic and went to the room I would eventually turn into an office, but now just has a small loveseat and some instruments lying about. The 3rd album was wrapped, but I had been writing songs for other artists for a few years now. Mercedes Jones was one of them. We went to high school together and she blew up right around the same time I did. We even did a tour together where we were co-headliners because neither of us wanted to open for the other. Rachel Berry even tried her hand at a solo album and had one of my tracks on it. That was a while ago though now and we don't really speak these days. No bad blood or anything.

She's just busy and so am I. She's got a couple of Tony awards and has her own Vegas show now. I keep meaning to call her, but then I pick up the phone and it feels like it's just been too long. I guess that's just how it goes when you get out of high school. You lose track of people after a while. I got back together with my first love Brittany and for a while, it was great, but then I got the deal and she got a tour as a dancer and we were both working all the time. I got her on my first tour, but things had changed too much by then and we ended things for good. We still talk almost weekly, but it's just not the same. She's been on a European tour for about 6 months now so we've just been e-mailing when we can.

The one I most regret losing contact with though is Quinn Fabray. We stayed in touch after high school. We even had a one-night stand when we were drunk and 19 and at a boring wedding, but nothing ever came of it. I got back together with Brit and she got back together with one of her ex-boyfriends and we talked less and less after that. Honestly, I heard she graduated from Yale, but I haven't really heard anything about her since then. I had to stop using Facebook the way other people use Facebook because I became one of those people you can Like on Facebook instead of someone you just friend. I have someone who manages my social media now anyway. I don't even tweet. Someone does it for me. I started thinking a lot about Quinn and after I got together with fake boyfriend number one a few years ago. It just felt like a Quinn kind of move. Find a boyfriend, convince yourself you're in love with him because it's easier than being alone. I hoped she was past that phase in her life and that she's happy now.

I went through the rest of the morning with no buzzing from my phone until right around noon when I heard that magical sound telling me that I either had a message from Lucy or a new chapter had been posted. I grabbed my phone and saw it was chapter 41. Another buzz though and it was from her.

Maria,

True and I'm a woman of my word. Hope you like it.

Lucy

I quickly opened the chapter. 5,000ish words opened up before me and she was right there was still some of that patented Lucy angst, but there were also happy moments that led me to believe that she was wrapping up the story soon. It left me with a cliffhanger though because one character said she loved the other one, but the other one didn't say anything back and then the chapter was over.

Lucy,

Please don't take this the wrong way, but Bitch! How could you leave me hanging like that? You better post tomorrow or maybe even later tonight. I can't believe she just didn't say anything. She just stood there. What the hell? Who does that?

Maria

A few minutes later after I had started making lunch, I got a response.

Maria,

People do that. I've done it before. I once had a boyfriend that told me he loved me and I just kind of left him standing there. I told him later though and we were together for a while, but the distance just got in the way. We sort of grew up at different rates, I guess. Anyway, you probably don't care about that. Yes, I will post the next chapter tomorrow. I will be traveling though so it might not be at noon. Probably after I get into my hotel. Hope you can wait that long.

Lucy

I waited a little while before responding because I didn't want her to just think I was sitting by my phone waiting for a message. Plus, I was a little confused. She's talking about a boyfriend, but she's also writing a story about two chicks falling for each other. Is this girl straight and just likes the character's story or is she bi or... wait. Why do I even care?

The rest of my Sunday was spent watching TV and writing drafts of a couple of songs for Mercedes. She was going to be in town next week and I told her I'd have something we could take to the studio by then. It wasn't until I was going to sleep that I decided to actually message her back.

Lucy,

When you say boyfriend... I'm just curious. You seem to have a pretty good grasp on lesbian sex given those scenes you write, but you had a boyfriend. Maybe you have a boyfriend. I don't know. Maybe this is too personal. It's probably too personal. Sorry, I don't really have a filter. I just kind of say what I want and let people deal with it. Forget I asked. Changing the subject. You're traveling tomorrow? For work, vacation with that boyfriend I assumed you have? Anywhere cool?

Maria

I fell asleep waiting for a response. Monday morning rolled around and I had a phone interview with a local radio station to promote the album. I finished that and then went for a run. I had to keep myself in shape given the rigors of touring. When I got back, I still didn't have a PM from Lucy. She's traveling, I told myself. Be cool, loser. I told myself again and again. She'll reply when she can. I took a shower and decided to try to unpack some of my stuff for the guest bedroom. I'd bought furniture for it, but the accessories I bought from Pottery Barn were still in the bags I brought them home in. After a few hours of going room to room to get this place looking like someone actually lives here, I finally heard the familiar buzz of my phone.

I ate dinner while reading chapter 42 and the whole chapter was a damn flashback. There was no resolution to the unreturned I love you from the previous chapter. I reread chapter 41 and then read 42 again to see if I missed something, but no. She was leaving me hanging again. Buzz.

Maria,

Sorry it took so long for me to get back to you. I am traveling for work. I went straight from the airport to meetings and I just got to the hotel and I prioritized posting the next chapter over unpacking and ironing my clothes for tomorrow. Just so you know.

I do not currently have a boyfriend. Your question is personal, but I don't mind answering it since I'm the one that brought up the topic to begin with. I haven't dated a guy in the past couple of years. The guy I was referring to was someone I knew from high school and we got back together while I was in college, but it didn't last much longer that time. I dated a couple of guys after that, but I ended up meeting a girl a few years ago and I fell for her. It was completely unexpected and something I was terrified of. Full disclosure though, it wasn't the first time I'd been with a girl. I had a one-night stand when I was a freshman in college. Typical straight girl experiment, I thought. Then, I met her and it scared the crap out of me because she was gay and she didn't really think I wanted to be with a woman. She thought it might be another experiment, but I assured her I really wanted to be with her. We were together for about six months, but then I found out she was cheating on me with her ex pretty much the entire time we were together. Don't tell anyone on me, but I keyed her car and wrote whore on it. It didn't make me feel better, but at least I did something to let the world know what a skank she was. LOL I got over that whole thing a while ago, but I haven't found anyone (girl or guy) that's made me feel like getting into yet another relationship.

Oh and I'm in your neck of the woods, to answer your other question. Anaheim technically. I'm at the convention center all week. I work for a marketing firm right now. I got the job out of college before I decided to go to grad school. They let me work from home now, but once a quarter I have to go to conventions. This time, it's Anaheim. Last time was Dallas. Next quarter, Orlando.

Now that I've given you my personal relationship history (or at least some of it), you feel like filling me in on your details?

Lucy

She wrote whore on someone's car. That's awesome and definitely something I would do. I was really starting to like this girl I had never met and for all I knew could really be a 60 year old man or a pimply faced teenager who just sounds really mature. Still, I felt like there was something here. I can't explain why or what it means, but there's something about this person that makes me want to talk to her more. Maybe it's because her writing got to me or maybe it's just because of the way she responds to my messages. I don't know. Before I fell asleep, I responded to her message.

Lucy,

I have my own sorted history with girls. There was my first love that flamed out a couple of times. We're still friends, but it was hard. There was one girl I met when I lived in New York who I actually really liked there for a while, but when my ex came calling, I had to let her go so I could give her and I a real chance at being together. I had my own straight girl hook-up once so I can understand how your ex might have been worried. It can be tough when you like a girl you think is not an option and then she is an option, but you're not sure if she's really an option or she just thinks she's into girls now and will change her mind. I don't even know if that makes sense. Not that I'm defending your ex though. She sounds like a bitch who deserved more than just you taking a key to her car. I'm currently single. No girlfriend for a while now. My job kind of complicates things for me in that department.

Can I ask you another personal question? How old are you? You don't have to answer. I know some girls don't really like when people ask them that. I'm 25. Just so you feel like it is give and take here.

Oh and don't think you're off the hook for that flashback. You know I wanted resolution and you're pacing it out. Am I wrong in think you're just doing that to drive me nuts?

Maria

Tuesday, I had two interviews at LA morning shows followed by a photo shoot for Entertainment Weekly followed by dinner with my agent and publicist and manager and my fake boyfriend. It wasn't until after 9 that I got home and could check for a new chapter and reply.

Maria,

A little narcissistic of you to think that, isn't it? LOL Honestly though, I did have the flashback and chapter 43 as one chapter at first, but when you and I started sending these messages, I decided to draw it out a little bit. I figured it would drive you crazy. Chapter 43 will be posted once I'm done writing this. And now there will be 46 chapters instead of 45.

I am 26. Just had a birthday actually. I noticed you mentioned your work, but you didn't say what you actually do. I assumed hit woman. Is that correct? That would make things complicated. How do you come home from killing someone and make dinner for your girlfriend? Or is it a Mr. and Mrs. Smith kind of thing?

I'm just throwing this out there and feel free to say no, but I'm thinking maybe we could meet. In person. If you're up for it. I'm only in town this week and then it's back home. Again, you can say no. I'm not a crazy person, but if you don't want to meet, that's fine. I just kind of feel like maybe we could be friends. Is that weird? I don't have a lot of friends these days. Lost track of people over time and then I don't have a lot of time to make new ones with school and work and of course, writing fanfiction stories and messaging my adoring fans. I just think we could take advantage of the fact that I'm in town. I can meet you somewhere. I have a rental car. I don't know how far you are from where I am. I hear LA traffic is a bitch. If not, it's cool. I understand. You might think I'm the Craigslist killer or something

Lucy

P.S. I'm not, by the way. Just so we're clear.

She wants to meet. I know there's another chapter there waiting for me and I do love this story and want to know what happens next, but I also really do want to meet her. I was thinking about her all day. What she might look like. What she might dress like. Is she a girly girl or a tomboy? Hell, is she a top or a bottom or is she flexible on that? What is wrong with me? I'm thinking about having sex with this girl and I've never even seen her. I don't even know her last name. Now, I'm living in a Carrie Underwood song. She's nice, by the way. I've met her. I can't just meet Lucy though. She'll know who I am and while it's not like I've revealed a lot about me through our messages, she would know I was gay and if she decided to make an extra buck by telling a tabloid, it could cause problems for me.

"This is stupid." I told myself.

Lucy,

I can meet you. I live pretty far away (LA traffic time) from Anaheim though. Probably a couple of hours in traffic. Maybe more. I can drive down there or we can meet in the middle if you want. Have you ever been to LA? If not, and if you have the time, maybe we can just meet in Santa Monica. By the pier. It's a public place with

tons of people so if you are the Craigslist killer, good luck trying to get away with it. If not, I can Google some place a little closer to you. I'm pretty free this week so whatever time you're available will work.

And I'm not dodging your work question. I'm not a hit woman. At least not yet, but I think we can talk about it when we meet. It will give us somewhere to start. I'm going to read your newest chapter now.

Maria

I was nervous again. I don't get nervous. Even when I'm on stage. I performed in front of the Grammy crowd and on the Academy Awards. I've sang the national anthem at various sporting events including the Super Bowl last year, but this girl I've never met and probably won't even like in person makes me nervous. It didn't take long at all for the next buzz.

Maria,

How about tomorrow around 3? I'll be at the convention until noon and then I'll leave from there. I've never been to LA. I've had a layover at LAX and I've driven through it, but never really checked it out. I'd like to go to Santa Monica. I've seen it on TV. It looks like fun. Do I sound like a lame tourist? Sorry about that. I don't get out of San Francisco a lot with the exception of these work trips and those are mostly business. I haven't even been home in a couple of years to visit my family. I'm a horrible daughter to my parents, but that's a much longer story. I can maybe fill you in tomorrow. It'll give us another topic to discuss instead of trying to fill in conversation with weather and politics stuff that to be honest, I don't really care about.

Lucy

I responded immediately.

Lucy,

There's a hot dog stand between the beach and the pier. I'll meet you there at 3. I'll get you a lemonade. Do you like lemonade?

Maria

I read the next chapter and knew for a fact that this girl had to be amazing. The characters finally had their heart to heart and feelings were revealed. Normally, I'm not into that romantic crap, but the way she wrote it wasn't all fuzzy and mushy. It was poetic, but also realistic. They both recognized that their relationship wasn't perfect. They both made mistakes. They knew it would be work. It was exactly how I had heard these two talking about this in my head. They were going to try going on a first date and see how that went before calling it more than that. That was a little weird considering they'd been friends forever and had confessed their love, but I understood why they'd want to see if it could work before they put a lot of pressure on themselves to call it more.

Lucy responded that she did indeed like lemonade so I told her to look for the girl carrying the two cups next to the stand. I was going to wear a hat and my patented big shades and hope no one recognized me at least while I waited for her. There were restaurants around that I figured we could duck into if anyone recognized me. That would at least get us off the street so we could talk in private.

I tried to fall asleep, but the thought of meeting her in person without actually knowing what she looks like or even hearing her voice kept me tossing and turning. What if I had built this whole thing up in my head? I think it's more than it is? I woke up if I ever even actually went to sleep and went on my run followed by my shower. I tried to work on my songs, but that just wasn't happening so I decided to re-read my favorite parts of her story so they would be fresh in my mind. It was at around 1 that I realized I needed to actually get ready so I wouldn't be late.

I arrived with my big hat and sunglasses at the beach at 2:45 just so I wouldn't be late. I parked the car and walked the few hundred yards passed the beach volleyball players and the people playing Frisbee and swimming in the water I won't dare to get into. I got to the hot dog stand at about 2:50 and got in line to get the lemonade I had promised. It was long for this time of day, but I had time to kill and waiting at least gave me something to do to distract me. I kept my head down and looked at e-mails on my phone regretting not actually exchanging numbers with her in case she had to cancel or was running late. Hopefully, I'd get an e-mail if that was the case so at 3 when I had my lemonades in hand, I started refreshing my inbox to see if anything was there when I heard that voice I hadn't heard in years.

"Santana?" It was low and somewhat hushed, which was a good thing because there were people standing all around.

I looked up and there she was, Quinn Fabray. She was wearing her work clothes, a black pencil skirt and princess cut style blouse and her hair was long and straight and the same shade of blonde it had been the last time I saw her.

"Lucy?" Then it dawned on me. "Lucy Quinn Fabray." I said to her.

"Santana Maria Lopez?" She replied as it must have entered her brain that we had been messaging each other without even knowing it.

I didn't know what to say to her. The lemonade was beginning to sweat in my hands, but I was beginning to sweat beneath my hat too. The sun suddenly felt like it was aimed directly at me. I couldn't even process my thoughts. Quinn and I had lost touch so long ago. I couldn't believe it was her that I'd been talking to.

"How did I not put this together?" I really asked myself, but I asked it out loud so she kind of laughed a little.

"Well, I didn't put it together either, *Maria*." She emphasized my middle name.

"Well Fabray, take this damn lemonade already before it gets all watered down." I passed it to her and our fingers touched. I felt a shock of electricity go through me, but I think it was more in my mind than in reality.

"Thanks." She was being polite. "Are we just going to stand here?"

"Do you want to sit somewhere?"

"The beach looks available."

"I can't sit in the sand in these pants." I told her.

"I'm in a skirt, Santana. I was thinking more about a bench or something." And the politeness was gone.

"Fine, but not on the beach. In the shade. It's freaking hot out here."

We walked silently toward a hotel that was next to the stand and had a bench out front. I took a seat and she sat down next to me, but on the other end so we were a couple of feet apart.

"So, this isn't awkward." She took a drink.

"No, not at all." I agreed. "How did this even happen, Quinn and why did you call yourself Lucy?"

"Hey, you're the one that PMed me, remember? I was just minding my own business--"

"Writing lesbian fanfiction in San Francisco?"

"Among other things. Lucy is my name these days. Most people call me that at work. It's been a long time since we've talked. Really since your career took off."

"Are you blaming me?" I was getting defensive because I felt like she had me at a disadvantage. She knew I was flirting with her in those damn messages and she knew I was famous and wasn't out and she knew me. She knew the real me. The me that not even my fake boyfriend gets to see.

"No. I was just making the comment. You got busy with that and I got busy with school and Puck and then we stopped talking."

"Whatever happened with him? Was he who you were talking about?"

"Yeah, we tried the long-distance thing for a while, but it just didn't work. He thought he was ready and I thought I was ready, but we really weren't and we decided to just end it. It was mutual. We talk every so often. Mostly about Beth. He finished his stint in the military. He's back in Lima now. He works at McKinley now actually."

"What?" I laughed through my shock.

"He's the football coach."

"Well, I guess that makes sense. Just tell me he's not also teaching a class."

"No, thank God." She paused. "I tried reaching out to you a couple of times, but you're a hard person to get a hold of."

"When you're famous, there's like this army of people around you at all times trying to keep other people away. Just know it wasn't personal. If I would've known, I would've gotten in touch." I paused. "And for the record, I did try to reach out to you a few years ago. You changed your number."

"I got a new phone number." She took another drink. "You really tried hard. Did you call me once and give up?"

"Back off, Q. I tried a couple of times, but then, yeah. I got busy and figured there was a reason you weren't calling me back. I've been a little occupied making successful albums and touring and filming guest spots on TV shows and-"

"Yeah, I get it. You're successful. Congrats!" She stood. "It's been nice catching up with you, San."

"Where are you going?"

"If we're just going to make excuses for why we lost touch, I don't really see the point in sticking around. I came here to meet someone that-"

"You liked?" I said before I thought about it.

She took a deep breath and tossed her drink in the trash.

"It's dumb, but yeah. I liked Maria. I can't explain it, but I did and I thought I'd be meeting someone new today."

"So did I." She had her rental car keys in her hand. "Fabray, sit the hell down." I told her. She took a beat and then sat next to me. "I liked Lucy too. I've been trying to understand it since that first message, but we should at least talk about it."

"Fine. According to the recent Enquirer I saw at the grocery store, you are dating that guy on that new doctor show."

"Yeah well, I don't want to have to do one of those ridiculous coming out articles in the Advocate or be on the main page of Afterellen and do all those follow-up interviews and then I'm known as Santana Lopez, the lesbian pop star and I've already been Santana Lopez, the lesbian cheerleader and the lesbian high school student and I just want to be Santana Lopez, okay?"

"When did you get like this? What happened to the Santana Lopez I used to know? The one from Lima Heights Adjacent who used to threaten to kill people regularly?"

"I still do that. Those people just don't necessarily know I'm gay. Some of them do. The people I care about know. I mean, you know."

She smiled and I saw it, the thing I saw back at that hotel the night we spent together. There was a spark there in her eyes.

"Well, you know about me now. No one else does. My parents do, but that didn't exactly go well. That's why I'm the horrible daughter."

"You came out to Mr. and Mrs. Bible Thumper?"

"Yeah, before I found out about the cheating and car keying I told you about. I told them about she who will not be named and they freaked the hell out and I haven't been back sense."

"I'm sorry you apparently Lord Voldemort but I'm really sorry about your parents being stupid too, Quinn."

"I do not know what I was expecting. Look how they reacted to Beth."

"How is she, by the way?"

"She's good. I get to see her every couple of weeks. That's why I moved to San Francisco. Shelby took a job there and I really missed seeing Beth. So, I followed."

"And you're almost done with school?"

"Yeah, I'll have my MS at the end of this semester."

"Psychology, Fabray? Really?"

"Yeah, why not?"

"So, when you get your Ph. D do I have to call you Dr. Fabray? Cause I'm not going to."

"Who says we'll even be talking then?" She sassed me and it was just like old times.

"Please, you know you want to go out with me, Q."

She smiled again and looked me in the eye.

"I don't think that's a good idea, San."

"Why didn't we try back then, Quinn?" I figured I'd put it out there. "After that night?"

"Because you were still in love with Brittany and I really did just think it was a one-time thing. I didn't know until later that I actually liked girls."

"You look really good, Quinn." I reached my arm over the back of the bench. She noticed.

"You really think this is a good idea, San? Be honest." She turned toward me.

"What happened to the super romantic fanfiction writer whose characters figure it all out after years and years of not being together? I'm not proposing or anything. We still have a lot of catching up to do, but you're in town for a couple more days. Can't we just see what happens?"

She looked around and then back at me before leaning in.

"What about your adoring public? Someone might recognize you."

"I live like 10 minutes from here. We could catch up and I could cook dinner."

"You cook now?"

"I do, yeah. Don't sound so damn surprised."

"So, is this like a date?" She asked.

"Okay. I'm gonna get really lame for a second, but you're not allowed to hold it over me forever. Deal?" I asked and leaned in, setting my untouched lemonade on the ground.

"Okay?"

"I think this was supposed to happen. I mean, think about how it all had to work out to get us here at the same place, at the same time. I only started reading fanfiction on Friday and I found your story and I loved it. I don't know where the writer in you came from, Quinn, but you're

really good and your story is really good and I almost didn't send you a message because I thought it would make me like a fan or something, but I did send it and I knew something was up with your first reply. It just felt different. I can't explain it, but in a way, it makes sense. I was always a fan of Quinn Fabray. Sometimes, I was your only fan, remember?" She smiled and rolled her eyes. "So, I think we should do whatever we would have done if we were just Lucy and Maria, two strangers meeting on the pier. In my mind, before I knew it was you, I hoped it might turn into something, like a date maybe."

She stared at me contemplating what I had just said.

"Fine. I'll give you one date. I can't stay late though. I've got to drive back to Anaheim and I've got to be at the convention center at 8."

I stood, picking up the useless lemonade and tossing it in the trash.

"Don't go putting restrictions on our first date, Fabray."

She stood up and was only few inches away from me. I could smell her perfume and God, it smelled good.

"I'll follow you. Where did you park?"

I smiled at her and turned to walk toward my car. We parked in the same lot and I made sure to get her number just in case this time. It only took a few minutes to pull into my garage and make our way inside the house I was now a little embarrassed wasn't fully put together.

"This is it. Home sweet home. Well, for the last month or so."

"It's nice. Can I have the tour?" She asked. I sat my purse down and took off my hat and sunglasses. "There you are." She walked over and moved the hair behind my ear. "Much better when I can see your face, San."

"When did you get so smooth with the ladies, Lucy Q?"

"Apparently about the same time you started falling for cheesy lines."

I gave her the tour and explained why certain rooms weren't done yet. She told me I was making excuses. I told her that when she finishes an album and returns from a 6-month tour, she can talk to me about excuses for not finishing the decorating. We sat on the sofa and caught up on our years apart. I told her about my career and the famous people I knew. She caught me up on Beth and school. Then, we shifted to talking about the old times.

"God, I can't believe I let you two cut my hair in a hotel room." She brought up our glee club competition, last minute self-esteem boost Brittany and I provided.

"That's really not the most exciting thing you ever let me do to you in a hotel room."

"Ha ha!" She faked.

"I'm going to check on the food." I went to the kitchen to make sure nothing was burning and I stole a glance in her direction. She was looking toward the fireplace that I never used and the light hit her in such a way that I could see how remarkably beautiful she is in profile.

"Wow." I whispered to myself.

"Did you say something?" She turned to the open kitchen.

"Uh no." I lied.

"Do you mind if I borrow your iPad to check my e-mail? I left mine at the hotel."

"Sure."

I went back to the food that was almost done and I prayed it tasted good.

"San, you're on my story."

"What?" I looked up.

"You left Safari on my story." She smiled. I think she just figured out that I really was a fan.

"Not like it's a big secret that I like your work, Q. Dinner will be done in about 10."

"Do you want to know how it ends?" She asked as I made my way back to the sofa.

"You know I do."

"Logout."

"Okay." I took the iPad from her and logged myself out of my fanfiction account. She took it back and logged herself in.

"Here." She passed it back. "It's been done. I just have the chapters stored here and I wait to post them."

"What? It's been done this whole time and you've been making me wait? You're such a bitch, Fabray."

She laughed while I clicked to open the next chapter.

"Truth?"

"Yeah." I wondered what she was going to say.

"I've been delaying posting because I was enjoying our messages and I was afraid that if the story ended, they might end too."

I looked up from the chapter I had already started to read and met her eyes. I set the iPad on the table and leaned in. I hadn't kissed this girl since we were 19 and I couldn't wait any longer. I leaned in further and our lips met gently and briefly. I pulled back to check her eyes to see if it was okay and she smiled, not with her lips, but with her eyes. I leaned back in and kissed her more deeply this time. My hand went to her cheek and I could feel one of hers on my leg. I wanted to move closer. I wanted to be on top of her, but something inside told me to just enjoy

this moment. This first kiss. Yeah, we've kissed before, but back then it wasn't going anywhere and this time, it just might. We broke away and I found myself again checking her eyes. She cleared her throat and I smiled.

"You know, when I asked Maria to meet, I was kind of hoping for a friend. Maybe something more if it went that way, but this..." She paused and started using her fingers to play with my fingers in my lap. "... it's better than anything I could have hoped for. It's also more complicated that I would have hoped and we have a history and-"

"Hey Goldilocks, relax a little." I told her while linking my fingers with hers. "We don't have to decide anything right now. I just like being here with you, okay? I've missed you, Quinn. I don't think I realized how much until I saw you today."

"I've missed you too."

"Can I just finish reading your story while you let me put my legs in your lap and then we'll have dinner and I'll walk you to your car and kiss you good night and you can drive back to your hotel and text me when you get there so I know you're okay and worry about the rest tomorrow?" I was partly pleading because we did have stuff to talk about, but I really didn't want to worry about that tonight.

"Yeah, that sounds good."

I moved to lie down and my legs went to her lap while I picked up the iPad and started reading. I knew she was staring at me and normally I am not about people doing that, but her eyes on me just felt right. My legs in her lap felt right. So, I laid there and I finished reading the story that brought two characters together, but also two people who might not have ended up together had it never been written.

Two Months, by conceptoftwo

Santana Lopez was one of the world's most famous new artists, she was loved by many, her music was always at the top of the charts. Other than her music Santana was also well known for being a infamous player with the ladies. Everyone knew that she was a one night then never call again kind of girl but that didn't stop them from falling into her bed.

Quinn Fabray was a famous actress who had just finished a new movie. This one was going to be huge, one that could make her career. She was known as being the princess of Hollywood. Everyone wanted to be her and everyone wanted to be with her, but only a lucky few got that privilege.

It was 10pm on a Saturday and Santana was heading to an after party over in Beverly Hills hosted by her good friend James. This party was supposed to be a crazy one, full of A-listers, most of whom Santana knew pretty well so she at least knew this party would be a good one.

When she got there she saw that the party had already kicked off, she always made a point not to arrive at the party on time because she always had to make an entrance.

"Santana" Her friend James greeted her, he was the type of guy who knew everyone in Hollywood, so he threw these type of parties quite a lot.

"James, how are you?"

"I'm good, how are you my dear?" he asked back as he took a cocktail off one of the waiters trays which were going around the room.

"Not too bad, just finished my new single actually"

"Oh that's fabulous."

Santana chuckled at James' response. In a way he reminded her of Kurt only James was a lot more gay, if that was even possible.

"Anyway, Santana there is something I want you to meet tonight?"

"Oh yeah? Who is it?"

"Hollywood's new golden girl, Quinn Fabray. She's amazing, you have to meet her"

Santana smirked. This was going to be fun. "Lead the way"

James led Santana up to the bar he had set up for the evening. Quinn was facing away from her, Santana couldn't wait to see the look on Quinn's face when she saw her.

"Quinn" James tapped her on the shoulder.

She turned around; she was still as beautiful as Santana remembered.

"Quinn there is someone I want you to meet. This is Santana Lopez, Santana this is..."

"Lucy Quinn Fabray" Santana smirked out.

"You know each other?" James asked.

"We went to high school together" Quinn stated, not removing her gaze off Santana.

"You two came from the same high school. Wow, that must be some special place if two beautiful ladies like yourselves came from it"

"Well, it certainly did produce some characters" Santana said, thinking of the glee club.

"Anyway, I'll leave you two ladies to catch up. Have a good night" With that James walked away and onto his next acquaintance.

"So, how long has it been Quinn? Five years?"

"I think so. How have you been?"

"I've been good, although I gotta say I'm a lot better now that I've ran into you" Santana said, leaning closer into Quinn.

"Is that so?" Quinn smiled.

"Yup. Now tell me, what does *the* Quinn Fabray like to drink after all these years?"

"I'll have a vodka cranberry"

Santana asked the bartender for Quinn's drink, she loved that it was an open bar tonight so the prospect of getting Quinn drunk and into her bed seemed pretty easy. She just needed to work her Lopez charm and this should hopefully be a kick walk.

"I gotta tell you Q, I was hoping I'd run into you soon"

"Oh yeah? Why's that?" Quinn said as she took a sip of her drink.

"I missed you; it's been a while since I've seen anyone from back home, a part from Puck"

"I missed you too san"

"And I also wanted to let you know that I thought you looked insanely hot in your latest film"

Santana swore she saw a blush on the blonde's face. This only encouraged her to pursue even further.

As the night went on the two of them stuck to each other, drinking by the bar and getting drunk. Santana found that as she got drunker the flirtier she got with Quinn, although it wasn't like Quinn was complaining. Santana could definitely tell that she liked it.

As Santana finished the remains of her drink she decided that it was her time to leave, although she didn't want to leave without the certain blonde she had taken a liking to.

"So Fabray, do you want to get out here?" Santana asked as she looked the blonde up and down. She definitely was a fan of the blonde's figure and was extremely pleased that she hadn't lost her tone.

Quinn bit her lip in response to Santana's question. Was she really about to agree to sleep with Santana Lopez? She knew of Santana's reputation but she would be lying to herself if she said she didn't want this.

Quinn nodded her head and Santana grinned like a Cheshire cat. She was finally about to get into Quinn Fabray's pants, this was a great accomplishment.

"Alright then, let's go" Santana held her hand out to Quinn and intertwined their fingers as they walked out of the house.

Santana pressed Quinn up against the door of her house as they walked in. She didn't waste anytime in capturing her lips. Quinn's hands moved up to Santana's hair to grip on tight and force their faces closer together and their lips pressed harder.

Santana outlined the bottom of Quinn's lip with her tongue, on instant Quinn opened her mouth accepting Santana's tongue. Quinn moaned into Santana's mouth at the new sensation of their tongue's mixing together.

"Bed" Quinn mumbled against her lips.

Santana smiled into the kiss.

"As you wish" she detached their lips and took Quinn's hand again and led them up the stairs. Quinn giggled as Santana rushed them into her room, like she didn't want to waste any time.

As soon as they got into Santana room their lips found each other's once again. Santana led Quinn backwards, their mouths still connected and onto the bed where she climbed on top of her.

Santana moved her hands to the bottom of Quinn's dress which was now bunched up around her waist. Santana was still incredibly please that Quinn always wore dresses because right now it gave her much easier access. She lifted the dress off Quinn's body, as the dress came off Santana got to admire the blonde's body. She took a step back and moved to stand up so she could get rid of her jeans and top and then moved back on top of Quinn.

"You have no idea how long I have wanted this" Santana admitted as her eyes were glued to Quinn's black lace bra which covered her chest.

"So get on with it" Quinn reached behind her own back and removed her bra. Giving Santana the perfect view of her naked chest.

"She's feisty, I like that" Santana grinned as she leaned back in and attached her lips to one Quinn's breast while she massaged the other one with her hand. Quinn's head rolled back in response.

"Wait" Santana stopped what she was doing to Quinn's chest and climbed off her. She walked over the table in the side of the room where her laptop was. She flicked it open and turned on the webcam she had on top of it. When she was satisfied she made her way back to Quinn and back to her previous position.

"What did you do" Quinn asked between deep breaths.

"Oh nothing, don't worry about it" Santana said as she trailed her kisses lower and lower.

"Why is your laptop ope..mmmmm"

"Miss Lopez, we'll be ready for you in five" one of the interns on her video shoot told her.

Today she was filming the video for her new single; if she was honest she wasn't all that excited for it as she was aching all over from hers and Quinn's activities from last night. It seriously was a night to remember, she couldn't even remember the last time she had sex which was *that good*.

Currently Santana was sat on her laptop, waiting for her to be called in for the shoot, she brought it to kill time. See what was happening on twitter and to see what all the gossip columns said about her recently. Every time she saw a new story about herself she couldn't help but laugh at the craziness of it.

"Santana, were ready for you" the director of the shoot said to her.

Santana put her laptop down and went over to where the first scene was going to be filmed.

"And... action"

—

A loud knocking noise woke Santana up from her peaceful slumber. She looked over to her alarm clock and saw that it was 8am. Who the hell was knocking at her door at 8am on a Saturday?

Santana slowly got out of bed and made her way down the stairs towards the door. Whoever this was better have a good excuse for waking her up this early.

She opened the door and an extremely angry Quinn Fabray came barging in her house.

"Quinn? What are you doing here?" she asked tiredly.

"How could you do this?!"

"Do what?" Santana was incredibly confused at what was going on right now. She hadn't seen Quinn since that night they slept together and now she was shouting her head off at Santana.

"I'm talking about this Santana" Quinn shoved her phone in front of Santana's face so she could see something.

Santana Lopez and Quinn Fabray SEX TAPE! *See here...*

"What the fuck?"

"You could imagine my reaction when my agent calls me this morning and tells me I have a sex tape which is going viral on the internet."

"I'm so confused right now. How did they get this?"

"Why don't you tell me" Quinn stated, with her hands on her hips. Santana knew that look, she was definitely pissed.

"What, do you think I gave this to someone?"

"Well how else do you explain how this got out there?"

"I never released this to anyone Quinn, it was perfectly safe on my.... Oh shit" Santana had a realisation.

"What" Quinn asked as she saw Santana's current state.

"Oh fuck"

"What!" Quinn grew impatient.

"My laptop, I left it on my music video shoot"

Quinn groaned. "Well that's just great"

"I'm sorry, I accept full responsibility for this"

"Fat lot of good that does to me know Santana. Why did you even film us anyway?"

"I don't know I was drunk... and I kind of wanted proof that I nailed Quinn Fabray" Santana told her.

Quinn doesn't say anything straight away. Santana notices that she seems like she is thinking about something, coming up with a plan of some sort.

"Okay" Quinn finally comes out with. "I have a plan"

"I would expect nothing less" Santana mumbled.

"We will pretend like we are dating, give it two months and then this will all have blown over"

"You want to pretend date?" Quinn nodded. "Why?"

"The tape doesn't look as bad if I made it with my girlfriend" she said.

"So wait, you want us to pretend like we're in a relationship?" Quinn nodded again. "For two months?"

"Yes"

"Am I allowed to sleep with other people in this time?" Santana asked.

Quinn shakes her head.

"Why not?"

"Because you're in the public eye Santana. You have paparazzi following you around everywhere. We have to make it look like this is real. So that means no seeing other people."

Santana sighed at this, but then a thought came to her.

"Well, can I at least sleep with you?"

Quinn rolled her eyes at Santana and instead of replying, walked off further into Santana's house. They still had a lot to talk about.

"Is that a yes?" Santana called after her.

"I still don't see why I have to be here" Santana said to Quinn.

They were both in the car going to Quinn's movie premier to which Quinn had forced Santana to go to.

"Because my girlfriend would be here. Plus this is the first appearance we are both making since the tape so we need to address things." Quinn said like it should be obvious.

They soon arrived. Quinn got out of the car first and Santana quickly followed. They could both hear the crowd screaming their names.

Santana placed her arm around Quinn's waist and Quinn leaned into her, trying to make it look like they were together. Santana's hand slid down Quinn's back and down to her ass.

"Get your hand off my ass Santana" Quinn gritted out.

"It's supposed to look like we're dating Quinn" Santana said into Quinn's ear.

A bunch of interviewers were calling their names. They went up to the first one knowing that this would be the first of many which they would have to address.

"Quinn, Santana, you're both looking very beautiful this evening"

"Thank you" they both replied.

"Now, I have to ask. The sex tape went viral on the internet as you probably know, how did this happen?"

"Yeah, I can't even count the number of people that have complimented me on my ass or other skills" Santana playfully nudged Quinn. "And as for how it was released, I left my laptop accidentally on a shoot and someone decided it was a great idea to steal it and then upload the video" Santana told the interviewer.

"Well, we're not going to deny that you have a great figure Santana. How about you Quinn, what did you think of the video hitting the internet?" the interviewer asked.

"Well as you could probably predict I was not too happy. A personal moment shared with my girlfriend went viral for everyone to see, it feels like such an invasion of privacy."

"I'm sorry, but did you say girlfriend? Are you two dating?"

Quinn put a fake smile on for the answer. "Yes, we are" Santana followed Quinn's actions and mirrored her smile.

"Well, you heard it first here folks. Santana Lopez and Quinn Fabray are officially dating"

The two of them continued the interviews until they both decided that they had had enough and went inside to watch the see the film.

"I guess that wasn't so bad" Santana said to Quinn as they sat down. "The last one was kind of fun"

"You only like the last one because it was an attractive girl who said she's always imagined how you were in bed, and then she went on to admire your skills" Quinn rolled her eyes at the memory. "She barely even payed attention to me"

"Don't worry baby, you've got my full attention" Santana kissed Quinn's cheek jokingly.

"Santana"

"What? Just kissing my girl" Santana winked at Quinn.

—

"I can't believe you're actually dating Santana Lopez" Rachel Berry said.

Rachel was probably the only person from back home which she stayed in touch with. Currently they were at lunch together.

"Well, it's not exactly dating. It's just pretend" Quinn told her.

"Yeah but acting like you're dating all the time pretty much means you're dating for real, and you actually did sleep with her, which I would say how was it but I've seen the video so I already know" Rachel chuckled, Quinn rolled her eyes at this.

"She's joining us for lunch" Quinn informed her.

"How come?" Rachel asked.

"Because we need to make more appearances together to look like it's real"

"Okay, I guess it would be nice to catch up, oh look here she comes"

"Hey, sorry I'm late" Santana said as she sat down beside Quinn. Santana immediately leaned in to kiss Quinn but Quinn leaned back.

"What are you doing?" Quinn asked.

"Kissing my girlfriend" Santana smirked.

"Santana, we're inside, no one can see us" Quinn said.

"Kiss me or I will go to the press and reveal everything about us" Santana bribed.

Quinn sighed and let Santana capture her lips. Santana didn't go for a short kiss either, no as soon as Quinn started to let go Santana put her hand on Quinn neck to keep their lips connected. Even though Quinn originally protested, she did find herself getting lost in the kiss.

"Aw, you guys look cute together" Rachel's statement interrupted the kiss. Santana turned her head to see Rachel Berry sitting opposite her.

She turned her head back towards Quinn. "Okay, you didn't tell me that we were having lunch with Rachel freaking Berry"

"Well hello to you too Santana"

"Im sorry, where are my manners. How have you been hobbit?"

"I've been good Santana, I'm actually about to start in Funny Girl on Broadway, I'm..."

"Okay, I asked how you were, not for your like story"

Quinn couldn't help but chuckle, even after five years Santana was still the same Santana she was in high school.

—

It had been a six weeks since Santana and Quinn had started their 'relationship', things had been going great. To the world they were known as the 'it' couple, the couple everyone was talking about. Santana had to admit, even though they weren't exactly real, she liked it. They spent most of their time together, getting to know one another again and catching up with old times. It was like they were in a relationship, but they weren't.

One downside of things was that, Santana hadn't had sex in a month, and that was an extremely long time for her. Quinn had still not given in and let her sleep with her again, and to Santana that was beyond frustrating.

Today Santana was taking Quinn out for dinner, it was Quinn's birthday the day before and Santana had to be at the studio pretty late so she couldn't really do anything. She wanted to do something extra special for Quinn today, she wasn't sure why but she wanted to give Quinn a perfect evening.

Santana walked into Quinn's house ready to pick her up for their dinner. Quinn told her not to bother and to just walk straight in.

"Quinn, you ready?" Santana called out.

"Yeah, one second" Quinn shouted back.

A few moments later, Quinn walked down the stairs. Santana couldn't take her eyes off her, over this past month Santana found herself getting more and more attracted to Quinn, she just assumed it was all a part of the acting.

Quinn walked up to Santana and stood directly in front of her. Santana couldn't find her words; Quinn had literally taken her breath away. She looked beautiful.

"Cat got your tongue?" Quinn teased.

"You look... beautiful" Santana breathed out.

"Thank you" Quinn grinned. "So, where are we going?"

"Bosco" Santana replied, she knew that that was Quinn's favourite place to eat.

"My favourite"

The two of the left, they decided to walk since it wasn't that far.

When Quinn took Santana's hand and interlaced their fingers together. Santana didn't know what it was but when Quinn intertwined their fingers she felt some sort of electricity flow through her body. She had never felt that before. She figured she must have been coming down with the flu or something.

It was only a five minute walk to the restaurant, so they got there in a short time.

In the restaurant they were seated in their own private corner that Santana asked for especially because she didn't really want to be interrupted by someone wanting a photo or an autograph.

"So how did last night go?" Santana asked referring to the party Quinn's friends threw for her.

"It was good. Although Chris turned up"

"Chris, your ex-boyfriend?" Quinn nodded.

"What did he want?"

"He said that he wants to get back together" As soon as Quinn said this something in Santana didn't settle. Her jaw clenched at the thought of this.

"Are you going to? You know, get back together with him?"

"No"

Santana sighed with relief and a small smile arrived on her face. "Good"

"Why is that good?"

Santana wasn't really sure what she should say. "Um.. He doesn't deserve someone as good as you. You deserve someone who will treat you right, someone who sees you for the amazing person you are, because you are Q, you really are truly amazing and you should be with someone who knows that"

Quinn stared at Santana in disbelief at what she just said. Throughout the past six weeks Quinn felt like she was starting to feel someone for the Latina, but she decided to let it go. She knew of Santana's reputation and didn't want to get caught up in it. In two weeks Santana would go back to being the playgirl she once was and all of this would be forgotten, although that didn't help switch off the feelings which she was beginning to get.

The rest of the meal their conversation continued as normal, both of them trying to settle the feeling deep within them.

When they got back to Quinn's house they both went inside the house.

"Do you want anything to drink, I have wine?" Quinn suggested.

"Yeah sure"

Quinn got two glasses and a bottle of red wine out. They both walked over to the living room and sat down. 1 hour later and two bottles of wine down, they found themselves rather drunk as the wine mixed in with the alcohol they had at the meal.

"Oh, I almost forgot. I got you something" Santana stood up off the couch and over to her bag where she retrieved a medium sized box and then handed it over to Quinn.

Quinn opened the box, she couldn't believe what she was seeing inside. It was a diamond necklace, she had been looking at it in the store and thought it was beautiful.

"I saw you looking at it the other day and I figured I'd get it for you."

Quinn was silent, her eyes were starting to tear up, her heart felt like it was beating extra fast.

"I can return it if you want?..." Santana said as she noticed Quinn wasn't saying anything.

"No, no it's beautiful" Quinn looked into Santana's eyes. "Thank you Santana"

"It's no big deal. Do you want me to put it on you?"

Quinn hesitated for a moment. "No, I want something else"

"What?"

Quinn put the necklace down on the table and crawled her way over to Santana on the other end of the couch until she was directly in front of Santana.

"What are you doing?" Santana whispered.

Quinn didn't respond, instead she leaned in fully and connected her lips with Santana's. Santana immediately responded to the kiss. Every time she kissed Quinn it felt like fireworks and she didn't know why.

"Are you sure?" Santana asked her.

"Positive" Quinn mumbled into Santana's lips. "But, this time, don't film us"

Santana shifted them so that Quinn was underneath her. "No promises" she joked as she leaned down to capture Quinn's lips once again.

"I slept with her" Quinn told Rachel. It was their weekly lunch meeting.

"Yeah I know Quinn, I've seen the video..." Rachel replied.

"No, last week"

"Oh, wow. How come?"

"We went out to dinner and she told me that she thinks I deserve someone special who will see how amazing I really am, then we went back to my place and she gave me this beautiful diamond necklace and then it just sort of happened" Quinn explained.

"Do you like her?" Rachel asked.

"No" Quinn quickly dismissed. "It was just a spur of the moment thing, it probably meant nothing to her"

"But did it mean nothing to you?"

Quinn hesitated before she replied. She knew her proper answer. "No"

"Alright, Santana, what's the big emergency" Puck asked.

Puck was the only person which Santana had stayed in contact with all these years. Puck knew everything about Santana and Santana the same with Puck.

"I think I like her" she stated.

Puck was the only one, apart from Rachel, who knew about her situation with Quinn.

"Well no shit"

"What?"

"I've been waiting for you to admit that for weeks now. Santana, you're crazy about the girl" he said.

"Im not crazy about her"

"Hate to break it to you San but you are. You got Fabrayed real hard."

"I'm not Fabrayed. It's just that, when we kiss it feels like fireworks are going off in my mind and that we're in our own little world, I can imagine myself kissing her for the rest of my life. Whenever she smiles I feel joy within me because I can see that she's happy and knowing that she's happy makes me happy you know. It's just that these past two months I've felt like my world had become better and brighter because she's in it and I don't know what that means, I've never felt like this before."

"I know what it means." Puck said.

"What?"

"You're in love with her"

Was she really in love with Quinn? This whole relationship thing had only happened because they wanted the sex tape buzz to die down, now two months later like they had predicted the buzz had gone. Their plan worked, but the plan was never to fall in love.

"How long do you have left with her?"

"Two more days" it pained Santana to say that. Now that she thought about it she didn't want two more days, she wanted forever.

Puck was right; she was in love with Quinn Fabray.

"You gotta tell her San"

It was the last day of their fake relationship. Tomorrow news was going to go out that they had broken up. That Santana Lopez and Quinn Fabray were no more. Today was the day that Santana needed to tell Quinn, she needed to tell her that she loved her before they went their separate ways. There was just one problem, she was scared. She hadn't told anybody how she felt for them since Brittany and that just blew up in her face.

Back in high school Santana had told Brittany that she was in love with her but Brittany never said it back. Ever since that day Santana swore she would never put herself out there again because she couldn't deal with the heart ache all over again.

But now, she was about to. So to say she was nervous, was an understatement.

Quinn and Santana were over at Santana's house for a celebratory meal of the two months. They had just finished eating and now they were both sat on the couch drinking.

"I can't believe we actually made it through these two months without killing each other" Quinn laughed.

"You seem surprised" Santana said.

"Well, with the way we acted towards each other in high school I never thought we'd be in this situation"

"The situation where we slept together and I recorded it, then the sex tape went viral and we had to put on a fake relationship so we didn't look as bad. That one?" Santana chuckled, it was a bizarre situation, but nonetheless she was glad she was in it.

"Yeah that one" Quinn said as she took a sip from her wine glass. "Im glad it happened though. Its been nice spending this time with you"

"Me too"

This was the perfect opportunity for Santana to admit her feelings to Quinn. The window was open.

"Hey Q"

"Yeah"

Here we go...

"..." Santana froze.

"What?"

"Nothing"

The news of their break up travelled fast. Once one source had it, they all had it.

To say Santana was devastated was an understatement. Her nerves took over last night and controlled her, causing her feelings to be pushed back in and away from freedom. She was so close to saying them but when she looked into Quinn's eyes all she could think about was what if Quinn didn't want her in the way Santana wanted her.

Sure, they had slept together but sleeping together and love were two completely different things.

Maybe this was for the best.

"What the hell Lopez! Why didn't you do it?" Puck said.

"I don't know okay! I froze, I tried saying the words but nothing came out"

"Well you need to get your shit together. It's been a week since you guys 'broke up' what if she's moved on?" Puck mentioned.

"It would kill me"

"Well then you're not going to like what I'm about to say."

"What?"

"A little Jewish princess named Rachel Berry told me that tonight Quinn has a date with her ex-boyfriend Chris at Bosco"

Santana felt like her heart was sinking. It killed her to hear that Quinn was going on a date, but going on a date with the guy she said she wasn't going to get back together with? That hurt. It also didn't help that they were at the place Santana brought Quinn on her birthday.

"What are you going to do about it?" he asked.

"What do you mean? There's nothing I can do" Santana weakly said.

"Bullshit. You can go and tell that girl you love her"

"I tried that remember, nothing came out"

"Santana, for as long as I've known you, you've had a wall up to protect yourself from getting hurt. I get it, you put yourself out there once and it didn't go to your favour. But you can't let that stop you from living the rest of your life. Brittany saying no to you was the best thing that ever happened to you, because it led you to this moment right now. It led you to Quinn. You need to put all that shit behind you and focus on the future, you're future with Quinn. So get up off your ass and go tell that girl that you love her. Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game."

"You did not just quote that to me" Santana laughed at her best friend.

"I did and you loved it. Now go"

Santana stood up from her seat.

"Thank you Puck. You really are a great friend"

"Yeah yeah, I'm awesome. I know"

Santana ran out of Pucks house and got in her car. Right now she didn't care about speed limits, she didn't care about being a good driver, all she cared about was getting her girl.

She arrived at Bosco not moments later. As she walked in she spotted Quinn straight away, she immediately walked over to her ignoring the waitress calling out to her that you can't just walk straight in the restaurant.

"Quinn"

Quinn looked up to see Santana starring down at her.

"Santana, what are you doing here?"

Santana took a deep breath. "Im here to tell you that letting you go was the worst mistake I have ever made. I know what we had wasn't real, but it was real to me.

"What are you talking about?"

"Im in love with you Quinn. I don't know how you did it but you did, you made me fall in love with you. I should have told you on our last day together but I got scared and I froze, but im saying it now. I love you Quinn"

There it was. She finally said it, now the ball was in Quinn's court.

"Santana, I..."

"Im sorry, but we're kind of on a date here" Chris rudely interrupted. Santana looked at him in disbelief at how he could just butt in a conversation like this.

"Excuse me, miss. You have to leave, you can't just walk in here like that" The manager of the restaurant came up beside her.

Santana sighed. This was working out to her favour. She really could not catch a break.

"Miss" the manager kept persisting.

"Okay, okay, I'm leaving"

Before leaving Santana gave Quinn one last look, hoping she would stop her, but she had no such luck.

She exited the restaurant and started to walk back to her car. She felt like she was about to breakdown, this hurt more than she could explain. This was why she didn't put herself out there, because this was just too much.

"Santana" Quinn voice called out. She turned around to see Quinn running up to her. "You can't just leave me like that, not after what you just said."

"You didn't say it back"

"You didn't give me enough time"

"Are you saying?"

Quinn placed her arms around Santana's neck. "Yes, you goof. I am completely, undeniably in love with you Santana Lopez"

Santana's arms instantly went to wrap around Quinn's waist. Santana couldn't stop the grin arriving on her face. This felt better than imagined, the girl she loves, loves her back. This was all she ever wanted.

"You have no idea how happy this makes me" Santana leaned her forehead against Quinn's.

"Me too"

"Who new making a sex tape would turn out to be this rewarding huh? Maybe we should make them more often." Santana joked.

"Don't push it Lopez"

"Sorry. How can I make it up to you?"

"Just kiss me" Quinn said.

"As you wish."

The One Where They Live Happily Ever After, by empresskris

Artie looks over his glass at Santana who's been unusually quiet. He glances at Puck who shrugs. "Are things better with you and Quinn?" He asks tentatively.

Santana lets out a heavy sigh and pinches the bridge of her nose. It's been a rough couple of weeks and she's exhausted. Just thinking about going home and fighting with Quinn, again, drains her of all of her energy. "We fought about the trash again last night," she admits warily.

Kitty looks at her confused. "The trash?"

Santana runs her hand through her hair and checks her cell phone for the thousandth time, wondering if she should call Quinn. "I keep forgetting to take the trash out," she explains.

"You're both just stressed," Artie assures her. "Your transition has been pretty exhausting."

"Yeah you've been a real gem at work, too," Puck snorts.

Santana doesn't even bother protesting. She knows her patience has been at an all-time low. She's been snapping at everyone, not just Quinn. Kitty reaches out and pats Santana's hand. "Marriage can be hard! You two spent a year planning the wedding and then you're constantly traveling. You spent like four months looking for a house, you're barely unpacked and now you have this thing with your job. Artie's right. That's *a lot* of stress. I'm sure this vacation will help get things back on track."

"You're still having sex though. Right?" Puck asks seriously.

Santana rolls her eyes, ignoring the question. "I think she knows something else is going on."

"How? You're an amazing liar!" Artie says, his voice getting higher in disbelief.

Santana shoots him a look. "Gee, thanks."

Artie blushes and sinks further into his chair. "You know what I mean," he mumbles.

"Yeah, well, not when it comes to Quinn," Santana says reaching for her beer. "We've been planning this vacation for the past month."

"Do you think she's going to be mad?" Kitty asks.

Santana brings the mug to her lips. "I think she's going to be *pissed*."

—

Santana wipes her hands on the hand towel resting on the kitchen counter and pops her head around the corner towards the front door. "Hey," she says with a smile.

Quinn drops her bags by the front door and smiles as Rufus runs towards her, wagging his tail. She bends over to scratch behind his ears. She drops a kiss on his head and makes her way to the kitchen. "I figured you'd be out longer."

"I thought I'd surprise you with dinner," Santana says nodding towards the stove. She leans in and kisses Quinn on the cheek. "How was your day?"

"Long," Quinn says with a heavy sigh. She leans on the counter and peers into the frying pan. "I don't know how they'll manage without me for two weeks."

Santana turns her attention to the sauce on the back burner and smiles at her wife. "I don't blame them."

Something catches Quinn's eye and she turns towards the stapled pieces of paper resting on the edge of the counter. She picks up the flight confirmation and scans it quickly. Her eyes lift to Santana who holds perfectly still as Quinn glares at her. "Australia?" Quinn asks, her face reddening. "For ten days?"

Santana turns and motions towards the paper in her hands knowing this was going to happen. "Actually it's Australia for six and New Zealand for four."

Quinn glances down at the paper once more, her eyes landing on the departure date. "You leave tomorrow."

"Well actually - ,"

"When were you planning on telling me this?" Quinn asks, interrupting.

"I'm telling you now," Santana answers calmly.

"What about Myrtle Beach?" Quinn shouts, her voice growing louder with each word. "We had plans, Santana! This was our vacation!"

Santana turns off the stove and removes the chicken from the burner. "This is important, Quinn." She takes a step closer to her wife, her eyes sparkling. "Probably the most important trip I've ever been on."

Quinn tosses the confirmation back on the counter, her shoulders slumping. She looks tired. "You promised me that we could have a real vacation together. We haven't been on one since our honeymoon two years ago."

Santana reaches for the confirmation and steps closely to Quinn. She flips a couple of the stapled pages over and holds the new page out for Quinn to see. "I know. That's why you're coming with me."

Quinn glances down at the confirmation only to see her name sprawled across the top. "What?"

"You always said you wanted to travel, to see the world before you settled down." Santana drops the papers back on the counter. She reaches out to wrap her arms around Quinn's waist. "I

want to start now. I want to take you to the places you've always wanted to see and then I want to settle down with you. Really settle down."

"But your job - "

"I'm done," Santana says with a small smile. "I'm not a field agent anymore. Effective today."

"How?" Quinn asks incredulously. "I mean, is it really that simple?"

Santana shrugs. The process of leaving the field and taking a desk job isn't what's important. Not now. "You told me that the only way you'd ever have kids with me is if I took a desk job. The agency offered me one, and I took it."

All of the anger and disappointment seems to immediately roll off of Quinn. "Santana..."

"I told them it was either that or I'd leave. And we both know I'm too amazing to let go," Santana shrugs.

"I'm just... I don't even..." Realization etches across Quinn's face. She's beyond relieved to finally know the reason behind her wife's catty remarks and forgetfulness with helping out around the house. She had no idea what Santana was up to. "Is this why you've been so on edge lately? Planning this trip, your job..."

"I haven't been on edge!" Santana protests.

Quinn arches a brow, her arms finally slipping around Santana's neck. "You snapped at me for washing your shirts in hot water."

"It makes the colors bleed together!" Santana whines. Quinn merely looks at her. Santana sighs, knowing she's been found out. "It might have had something to do with it." She leans in to kiss Quinn softly, smiling against her lips. "I knew you'd be pissed when you saw the confirmation. If you'd only flipped the damn pages."

"Okay, okay," Quinn chuckles knowing she jumped to conclusions. "You always know how to charm me out of being upset with you."

Santana lets it slide that she technically didn't do anything wrong and kisses her again. "So does that mean you're up for a change of plans? And maybe talk about starting a family with me?"

Quinn smiles and holds Santana's face in her hands. "You know I am," she says softly. "Starting a family with you would mean everything to me." Her stomach does somersaults at the idea of having children with Santana. She leans in to Santana, brushing her lips across Santana's mouth. "But you still need to take out the trash," she mumbles.

Santana laughs and pulls Quinn closer. "Deal."

The Fontaine, by fantasticbs

My merlot is set on the table the moment I sit down and I nod in gratitude for the service. I need not do anything. Frank owns The Fontaine after all, and though I loathe coming here, there are some perks to being Frank Semper's wife - wine at the ready is one of them.

I listen to the faint horns as a gentleman comes to light my cigarette and quietly ponder how long I'll have to stay. Frank says it's good for the business - that people like to see a fine, church-going woman out on the town enjoying herself. In reality, he just wants me to cosign on his debaucherous club that's been serving 80 proof liquor since well before Prohibition ended.

My father would disown me were he still living, but perhaps I wouldn't be in this dim and smoky club had his breath not stopped 10 years ago. My mother wasn't sure how she'd manage with all five of us children, when lo and behold, Frank Semper, a known businessman about town, showed up at our door step to ask about me. My mother was appropriately affronted at first, after all, I was just 15, and Frank, though successful, had been rumored to run with a certain crowd, but conversations held in back rooms slowly lessened her concern and soon I was dressed all in white, a child bride at only 16.

Turns out Frank had been watching me for a while. The way he tells it, you'd think eye-balling a 13 year old while she plays hop scotch were a romantic thing. It was to him I suppose. He said he could always tell how beautiful I would become and that he knew that if he didn't swoop in to 'save' me upon my father's demise that someone else would.

I never felt saved.

The only thing that kept me from running away those first few years was seeing the shine on my little brothers' shoes, the pretty lavender dresses my sisters wore to church on Sunday, the hardwood of the floors at the school I insisted they be transferred to on Frank's dime.

And he obliged me. Everywhere we went he got compliments on his 'gorgeous, young' wife, on what a fine couple we made. I could see it in their eyes sometimes, the women, they knew it was wrong, but their husbands would nudge them and right as rain, a flattering comment would be thrown Frank's way about his pretty wife.

After a while, I settled into my role. I saw my siblings graduate, every one, and the boys went off to college. My sisters weren't as fortunate, but at least they could choose their husbands and I was mightily pleased when eyes that had so often grazed over me lecherously, looked away disappointed when trying to speak to my sisters. I taught them that, even as I couldn't set the example myself.

I stumble out of my thoughts as Frank and his best friend, James, push into the booth beside me. The pungent odor of Scotch wafts off of their skin and I turn into the furl of smoke twisting off my cigarette. It does me little good when Frank leans in to plant a sloppy kiss on my cheek.

James tips his hat my way. "Quinn, you look beautiful as ever."

"Thank you, James." I barely glance his way, trying to contain my irritation. "Frank, how much longer do I have to sit here? I'd like to get home to rest for the church festival tomorrow."

"Don't get your panties in a bunch, Quinnie! I've got a new performer I want you to see." He plants another wet kiss on my cheek and scoots to sit closer, while I near the edge of the booth.

I scoff. "Please tell me it's not another magician. That last fella had to be rushed to the emergency room."

"A singer this time and I think she's going to make this place a lot of money." Frank is rarely this excited, so a strange curiosity strikes me.

"Well, when's she going to be on?"

"Not fifteen minutes, sweetheart. You even have time to powder your nose."

It takes everything in me not to roll my eyes at Frank's annoying code-speak for 'leave the table', but I get up nonetheless and pass Frank's disgusting associate, Timmy Slim, named ironically for his girth. I'm just happy not to be squeezed in between the two of them.

Making my way to the lavatory, I'm reminded of just how ornate this place really is. Gold chandeliers hang above the table settings. The booths sit a level up for the high rollers and there's even a balcony for those here just to see the show. Gloved hands reach out to assist me up the stairs as I reach the side hall where the smaller, less popular Ladies room is nestled.

I have no need to use the toilet and breaking free from this dress just to pass the time seems silly, so I seat myself in the powder room and take out a pocket mirror to check that my hair is in place.

Just as I'm noticing a scrape along my neck, probably from Frank's 'affections', a woman comes racing in and up to the mirror. A black woman. Or is she black? I'm not sure, but either way, she's distractingly good looking.

She tosses her small leather bag down and opens it quickly, pulling out make up and hair brushes and placing them to the left and to the right. I'm a little taken aback to be honest. If she weren't so stunning I would have said something immediately, but because my eyes have lingered on her in the vanity, I miss my opportunity to slow her unpacking. She's finished emptying it out by the time I find my voice.

"Miss, I don't think this is where you're supposed to be." It bothers me to say it, but I can't bear the thought of someone else finding her here and saying so much worse.

She continues with her ministrations, barely shifting her eyes to see me in the mirror's reflection. She smooths a dark red onto her lips. It's a beautiful shade.

"Ain't that the truth! I'm supposed to be in Chicago on the Chitlin Circuit, but these fools insisted we stop at a few places down South. What town is this anyway?"

I'm thrown by her misinterpretation, but something in the way she speeds up her movements as she talks makes me think she misinterpreted nothing. "Bartlett. Bartlett, Tennessee. Pardon, but I think you misunderstand-"

"Tennessee! Well, at least that means we're headed North. I need to stop sleeping through these road trips." She races to the opening of the stalls and quickly squats to check for feet. I assume she finds none because her next move is to the door, which she shuts and locks it.

I clutch my purse to my side and stand. She smirks at me for it.

"I hope you don't mind, but we've got all the same parts, right?" And without further preamble, she slinks out of the frock she was wearing and unsnaps the side of her bag to pull out a shimmery gold dress - if you can call it that. It's shorter than any I've seen and as she throws it on, I notice it barely grazes her mid-thigh.

She looks like a showgirl from one of those Paris postcards the men pass around. My thoughts must bleed through to my facial expression because she winks.

"Gotta push the limits these days! Crowds can get rowdy without something to focus on."

I unconsciously stretch the hem of my dress further past my knees in silence.

"Bet you'd look grand in a thing like this." She's back to her make up, leaning in close to apply her eyeliner.

"I...I'd never consider it." It's as though my father has possessed me. "It isn't proper."

"Proper or not, you'd look grand." She stops and looks back at me as though to confirm her opinion, and with a glance up and down, she nods. "No harm in trying something new, time to time."

Bang. Bang. Bang.

"Santana! Santana, get your bony ass out here, now. We're supposed to be on!"

She smiles at me, like her lateness is a shared secret between us and then she's shoving all her things back into the bag as quickly as she can.

I begin to help her for some reason. I hadn't noticed I was even moving towards her, but that smile, it was so magnetic. I grab her frock from the floor and stuff it into the side pouch and she snaps it shut, before leaning into me and kissing my cheek.

"You're a gem! Hope you like the show!"

With that she unlocks the door and races out and I find my hand tracing my cheek where her lips just were as I stare at my reflection. I only have a moment before the announcer's voice can be heard booming through the club.

"AND NOW COMING TO THE STAGE, ISIS OF THE NILE!"

I find myself scurrying back to our booth. Slim is packed into my seat still, his gut halved by the tabletop, so I slide in beside James. I turn my back to him almost immediately to fully face the stage, which remains dark.

The piano begins to play and a single spotlight shines down making all the sparkles on her dress come to life simultaneously. It would seem she has no need to even sing, the way the eyes in the room all fall upon her in rapt attention, but when she does, the air becomes thick and heady. Her voice contradicts her slight stature. Her smooth skin. It's raspy and strong.

I can't imagine looking away. She works the room, leaving the stage to slowly approach each table as she croons. The men are dazzled and the women, charmed – somehow she makes it clear that she is just performing, that she has no interest in their husbands or beaux, while still making them feel special for a moment. She ends the song with a hand on the naked shoulder of a woman, solidifying that point.

The band falters for a second, not automatically moving on to the next song and she turns to them, signalling with a twist of her wrist. Her pianist shakes his head at the bassist and they both chuckle to themselves, starting up the next song as she begins to mount the steps to the booth landing.

I slowly recognize the song as 'Sophisticated Lady' and she glides from booth to booth, pausing to sing a line or two to the inhabitants. She addresses the abandoned floor for a moment, although they seemed absolutely content with her backside, some too content.

She finally makes her way to our table and it almost makes me gag to see her run a perfectly manicured finger along Timmy Slim's fat chin. She smiles with a wink for Frank and he beams with pride in a way I've seen only once before – waiting for me beside a priest at the altar.

He looks at her like she is his.

James elbows him approvingly. For some reason I can't bear to see it and I look back towards the stage to focus on the saxophone solo, but my view is quickly eclipsed by gold and I look up to see her nudging me to scoot over. James has already made the space having never looked away. She slinks in beside me with ease, as my body becomes opposingly rigid. She leans forward into my space to grab James' highball and take a healthy sip. The crowd laughs and I realize it must be a part of her routine, having no time to comprehend anything but the nearness of her.

She leans back over me to return the bourbon, this time bringing our faces inches apart. Her dark eyes look me over in those split seconds, as liquored breath pillows against my lips, sweet and buttery. She curls a lock of my hair behind my ear. Slowly. Like the solo isn't almost over, like she has all the time in the world.

She doesn't though, and I feel a hand press into my thigh instead of the leather of the seat as she scoots out of the booth with a grace that belies her speed, slipping back into the song right on time.

The show goes uptempo for a while and slows down, then uptempo again, but throughout, eyes remain fixed on wherever she has placed herself about the room. When she finally curtsies,

with a hint of sarcasm, the people stand and clap uproariously. She curtsies once more and then steps back into the shadows behind the curtain.

Tables talk animatedly and raise glasses as the house band strikes up some ambient music. Several gentleman sweep by our table to tip their hats at Frank on their way out and it occurs to me that my earlier assessment of Frank's look may not have been incorrect.

Eventually, their adoration isn't enough, he needs mine. "What did you think, Quinnie?!"

I prefer not to give him the satisfaction. "I think I'm well past the age for you to call me Quinnie." I shrug into my next sip of wine. "I liked the band."

"The band?! Those fellas are a dime a dozen. The girl? What did you think about the girl?!"

"What does it matter, Frank? Seems like the crowd was pleased enough with her."

"They were amazed! Slim says they sold out of champagne! I'm signing a contract with that girl's manager tonight! She's going to be my headlining act! We'll have to change the name of course, but none of that matters."

"What makes you think she'd want to perform in rinky dink, Bartlett for more than a night?"

I know I shouldn't have said it, but something about...Santana -that was her name- something about Santana being stuck here was unbearable. The way he looked at her.

His voice takes on an edge I'm familiar with.

"It doesn't matter what she wants, Quinn. It matters what I want and I want her here. Isn't it time you said hello to the ladies in the powder room?"

I down the last of my merlot and stand up abruptly.

Slim speaks above the din. "You're still my favorite girl, Quinn. Niggers are just for looking."

Frank punches him playfully. "Quinn's just for looking too, ya punk!" James seems uncomfortable and winces at me sympathetically.

I reach down and grab my gloves and purse and raise a finger to signal them to grab my coat.

"I think I've made a long enough appearance for tonight."

"Put your things down, Quinn. You'll leave when I'm ready." He motions my coat away and I know it's because I've ruined his fun, told him not to call me Quinnie. I stare him down, but it only takes a few seconds before I'm dropping my gloves back into the booth.

Frank's one of those men who for all public appearances seems to adore me, but when we're just with his friends or worse, alone, it's very clear that I'm just something else that he owns and if I can't make it to church or a few events due to a 'fever' then so be it, as long as I remember who is in control. Bruises heal. Cuts close. My brothers go to the best universities in the US.

I will have some satisfaction though. I set my glare on Timmy.

"My sister wanted me to tell you her boyfriend loved the chocolates you sent, Slim."

Timmy coughs on his drink. Frank and James laugh and point as he wipes away his spittle. I turn and walk towards the bathroom once more, fuming.

I grab at the door, but it's locked and I can guess why.

Bang. Bang. Bang.

"I said I'd be just another minute, Tom! Jesus! You got a girl back at the motel or sumthin?!"

"It's not Tom."

After a moment, the metal clicks and the door opens. She lets me in but quickly locks the door behind us, before returning to the mirror and wiping at some of her thicker make up. She's still in the gold dress and I only have a moment to wonder why that makes my heart jump before she turns to me with a now familiar grin.

"So, that's your fella? Turned into the green-eyed monster for a second there! Didn't mean to make you jealous." She's teasing, but the idea that I would ever be jealous regarding Frank is beyond laughable – it's offensive.

"Jealous?! I don't know what ever you mean."

"Oh, come on! No one watches Fepper."

I quirk a brow, confused.

"Jonathan Fepper, the saxophonist, I would have thought you had collected his name, the way you ignored me to take in his pathetic ad libbing. Pretty lady like you, he wouldn't know what to do with himself if you smiled his way." Santana chuckles to herself, but I can't get past the idea that she thought I was jealous.

"I was simply trying to keep my dinner down."

"And what's that supposed to mean?! Hey, look, maybe you took that the wrong way earlier. I ain't got any kind of interest in your man. Quite the opposite in that matter of concern."

"No, you took it the wrong way." My need to deny him is so strong that I can't control my mouth. "I may be married to Frank, but that is surely not by choice."

In all my years of being trapped with him I've never uttered such words outside of our home and never once without a resounding slap to follow.

The ladies at church, they know how to shut down an outburst like that before you even think to form it – complimenting a man for leading his flock, reemphasizing the obedience of the wife at all times, letting the silence stretch after he makes a scene instead of comforting you. They'll tell you their ages-old secret recipe for pie crust, but it is clear they expect you to clean all the stains of your dirty laundry alone, even the bloody ones.

Santana is surprised, but not overly so.

"And here I was singing Sophisticated Lady to you. I had no idea it could ring so true."

Unlike her, I find this whole interaction startling. "You sang that to me?"

"Well, to who else? A lady, fine as yourself, doesn't spend time alone in the powder room less she ain't got no reason to return to her seat." She laughs to herself. "My band almost abandoned me for continuing to look for you well past when I was supposed to be back on stage. Pardon me then, that I did take some offense to you staring at Fepper with me right beside you."

I try to find my bearings, try to reign in this comfort she fosters. "Well that was very presumptuous of you."

"If not accurate." Again, she seems to brush off my brittle behavior. "So, tell me, how's a girl like you get married to...what's his name, Frank? - if not by choice?"

I hear a group of ladies try the door a few times and complain to each other before leaving. It reminds me of the outside world on a number of fronts.

"That's none of your business. I've shared too much as it is and you don't belong in this bathroom."

Santana tosses her smeared face cloth into the trash hastily, but doesn't lose her jovial tone. "You white people are all the same. It's fine to have me sing to you for hours, but dare I share a vanity and suddenly I'm gonna snatch your purse!" She fakes a move as if to grab it and I flinch. Her grin widens and then fades away altogether, replaced with disappointment. "If it's all the same to you, I just need a place to change back dresses. The mop closet they offered me is flooded and I won't change amongst the men."

She sounds so weary and guilt presses into my lungs for stooping so low.

"I didn't...I didn't mean that. It's just, people around here, they..."

Just then there is a faint knock and both our eyes dart to the door.

I walk over and unclasp the lock, barely opening it far enough to see out and am met with a familiar face. Walter, the floor manager.

"Oh, it's you, Mrs. Semper. Some ladies asked that we unlock the bathroom."

"Walter, I'm in the middle of something with a girlfriend here and we'd like to keep the space locked. Would you mind putting up a sign to direct them to the other lavatories?"

"Yes, mam. Not a problem, mam."

I close the door and put the lock back in place.

"Thank you." Santana chews her lip, but won't look at me. "There's no need for the sign though. My manager will be around soon enough. He was harrassing me just before you arrived."

"I gathered that." I wait for her eyes to reach mine. "He likely won't be by for a while though. My husband was so enchanted by your performance that he'd like to sign you to a long-term contract tonight."

Santana's eyes take on a fiery intensity.

"What?! I mean no offense to your husband, though it seems you wouldn't take any, but I'm on my way to Chicago. I can't stay in...where are we again?"

"Bartlett, Tennessee."

"I can't stay here." She sits on the upholstered bench and runs her hands through her hair in aggravation, loosening the waves.

I sit beside her cautiously. "Don't you have any say?"

"Where I sing is akin to where you sleep, Mrs. Semper."

"Quinn."

She glances at me now and self-consciously wipes at the last streaks of her mascara.

"Santana"

We sit in silence for awhile, before the banging starts again.

"Santana! Hurry on up, now! I got good news for the whole band!"

She takes a deep breath beside me, exhaling as she stands and slinks out of her gold dress. I watch her walk. I stare at the skin she's revealed.

Something about our shared lack of control has made this evening more intimate than it should be between two strangers in a powder room.

She places the last of her things into the bag, then turns back my way to retrieve her dress. I pick it up from the floor to save her the bending and raise it between us, holding onto it for a second longer when she tries to take it.

"I'm very sorry you won't be going to Chicago."

She meets my eyes and I can see that she believes what I have said. "I'm sorry your marriage isn't what a girl dreams."

I release the dress and she shakes her head at our circumstances before walking to the door and unlatching the lock. Just before she opens it, I feel compelled to correct one inaccuracy.

"I'm no sophisticated lady, Santana. That would require love lost and I've never found it."

She glances back at me sadly. "I guess I'll have to sing you another song then."

She's out the door and I'm left alone.

Note: continued on <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10323826/>

Parallel Love (7), by ive-gotta-gay-go-go-ive-gotta-go

(FabrayQS)

January 1st, 2019

Quinn's POV

She is sitting in front of me in bed. Her hair resting delicately on her shoulders. She wears her signature smirk on her face while she chews her breakfast.

Last night was great. I met all of her friends; I really loved her overprotective side. She snapped at a person named Sam for staring at me intently and trying to entertain me with his impressions. It's amusing; in a week, I managed to see all of her. From her fresh and caring side, to her deepest concerns. For some reason, I just cannot shake this eagerness out of my chest. I want more; I need to know more about her. There was a rising emotion inside me and I was grateful enough to fulfill the rest of my days with her.

We have not had any problem with the merging after we kissed. It was like her energy-projected mine tremendously. Her energy was durable enough to keep us close to each other.

I smiled, diverting my eyes for a second to eat, but surely getting lost in her perfection. Her making up from last night looks intact, she's simply stunning. She scrunches her nose while she chews her food. I just wanted to lie here all day long; nothing else matters.

"I thought you loved bacon." She says, tilting her head to the right side.

"I *do* love bacon." I said, taking a bacon strip from my plate. "However, your face is more interesting than this delicious bacon."

"Whoa, this is a progression in our relationship." I smiled, my cheeks turning warm with her words. "A progress when Lucy Quinn Fabray says I'm more interesting than bacon. How sexy." She says rolling her eyes.

I scoff and she laughed. "I said interesting, not delicious."

Her brow arched immediately, she places our plates far from us and whispers. "Really, so you think I'm not delicious?"

"Never said that; if I'm not incorrect, I could say we are still chatting about bacon."

She smiles pecking my forehead. "Because I can show you how delicious I can be." She kisses my lips quickly and then jumps on me, tickling me.

"Santana!" I yelled, moving my legs in the bed, attempting to escape from her hands. "Rule number seven, don't tickle me."

"Like your cute rules are going to stop me." I laughed, gasping for air as she continues tickling my sides. "Actually, I can win this game." I rolled over, trying to escape her hands but she grinned mischievously at me. She noticed the position we are in and stops tickling me. I filled my lungs with air and she smiles widely. "I can call myself a winner."

"You can call yourself a sore *loser*." I smiled at her. "You just stopped tickling me, you didn't win anything."

"According to the position I am now, I can call myself a winner." I shook my head, placing my hand on her thighs.

"Simply because you are straddling me, doesn't mean anything, Lopez."

She lowers herself on top of me pressing a chaste kiss on my cheek. "Whatever." I smiled at her, tangling my arms round her. "I can always let you win." She chuckled, sticking her nose close to my neck.

My hands find her nape as she presses fond kisses to my skin. I needed a deep breath sliding my hands over her spine.

"Q." She muttered in reply, my heart speeding with her sudden question. "Did you find me attractive when you first saw me?" I smirk sliding my hand through her hair.

"What's that supposed to mean?" I answered laughing.

"*Easy*. Did you find me attractive when you first saw me?"

"Of course. I thought you were the most beautiful girl standing in my kitchen." I chuckled.

She glares at me. "How many girls have you brought to your kitchen?"

"You are the first one." She smiles, shaking her head. "Why? What's wrong?"

"What if when we close the portal," Her face changed. Sure, this wasn't a great topic to discuss. "You don't find me attractive?" I cupped her cheeks, kissing her lips gently.

"That's impossible."

She quickly adds. "But what if it happens?"

"I don't think it'll be a problem. If you cross my way to the subway, I'm sure you'll get my attention."

She sighs in relief and then pecks my lips. "Damn, I'm hot."

I pushed her from me and she laughed. "You are full of yourself, Lopez."

"I know, I know." She says shrugging. "I certainly know I will never forget your eyes. You are stunning." My cheeks felt warm. Her eyes were traveling every inch of my facial expression as she rests in bed. "I love your red cheeks." She whispers and I moved closer to her.

"You are a *sweet talker*." I tipped down, kissing her lips and she smiles.

"You are simply too beautiful. I am lucky to have you." I stared at her for a second. She says she is lucky to have me when *I am* the luckiest woman alive for having a second change with her.

"No, I am." I whispered.

"C'mere." She spreads her hands and I embraced her placing my head along her breast. "I will find you." She says lovingly. "Because, I strongly believe we should be together." I kissed her chin and she chuckles. "I mean we are the hottest woman alive." I laughed. "Imagine us walking along on the sidewalk or shopping together. The world will just stop to stare at us." I couldn't believe her, she is just too much.

"That's what you are thinking about?"

"No, but that's an easy way to divert the topic." I took a deep breath. "See, it's not fun."

We were quiet for a few minutes. I could pick up her thoughts over here and I bet she can hear mine. The impression of lost was present in both of us. That feeling when you start analyzing your future, but you just can't until you present is stable, it's scary. It's scary to predict your happiness, sure, you can keep up your joy and what you wish in life nonetheless, you are never a hundred percent certain of what will happen.

Santana shifted in bed slowly. Her face in front of mine; she shuts her eyes, wrapping her hand round my waistline. "If you are at the present time," She opens her eyes looking into mine. "And want to reach the future what do you do?"

I wrinkle my nose, replying her words in my head. "If I want to know the future? Without any intervention or a scientific way?"

"Yes. How do you reach into the future? How will you know tomorrow is possible?" I looked into her eyes. I could see hope in them.

"There's no way to find out if tomorrow is possible. We simply wait." She smiles. "We just wait until it happens." I articulated and she nodded smiling widely.

"That's it Q!" She pecks my lips and rolls off the bed.

"Santana, explain yourself."

"You'll close the portal right. You'll have to do it eventually; I sure don't want you to disappear one day." I nodded placing a strand of hair behind my ear. "What I'm trying to say is... you are just a year ahead of me. Just three hundred and sixty-five days." She scratches her forehead, looking at the floor. "What if you close the portal and I simply wait."

"What do you mean?" I asked her sitting on the bed.

"What if when you close the portal I wait a whole year before meeting you? That will allow me to-"

"Keep our memories." I whispered. *Was this actually possible?*

"Think about it, babe. I am the one who is merging into your time. In one case you shut the portal, I'll be back in my timeline. You'll be in Boston. I'll sell the loft and move to California." She takes a deep breath. "What if I left everything like it is? Selling the loft and everything, however, I don't move to California. I just wait... for you."

I was frightened; the agitation in her speech makes me want to believe this is entirely genuine.

"What you are trying to say is... That once I shut the portal you will be a year without me?" She nodded in reply. "Santana, you'll miss me. Do you know how hard it would be for you to not see me for over a year?"

"Quinn you are not thinking right. We can spend a whole life together in the same time and you are just worrying about not seeing me for a year?"

"What if it doesn't work?"

"We need to try." She walks back to the bed cupping my cheeks. "Think about this, it makes sense. Think about us, together with our memories." She kisses my lips tenderly and I nodded. "I—I know it's not going to be easy. I—I just need to try."

"What are you going to do for a year without me?"

"I don't know. I'll work; get an apartment close to here. It doesn't matter, I just need to wait. I'll wait until today."

"Today?" I asked her quickly.

"Yes, baby, you need to close the portal today. You need to hurry and finish with this so we can meet." Tears gather in my eyes. She tenderly recollected them with her thumbs. "If everything works okay, you won't have to wait. Once you close the portal, I'll be here. We need to try and if it doesn't work—"

"I'll drive to California, find you and ask you out." I pronounced, my voice shaking with the possibility of this being true.

"Just like that?" She whispers pecking my lips.

"Exactly like that."

I would be lying if I am not scared shitless about this. There was a possibility of us being together, there was a change for us to keep our memories, to start all over again. There was a possibility that she remembers the first time we saw each other in the kitchen, our first kiss, how she wished me a happy birthday, how she met my sister. This changes everything; we can still be ourselves if this works.

"You are going to wait for me." I said and she simply nodded. "You are going to be a whole year without me just so we can keep up our memories."

"Yes, I'll do that because I love you." I gaze at her face; I could see her worried expression, her insecurities. Quickly, I moved forward to close the distance between us. She grazed her lips with mine dispersing electricity to my body; the kiss wasn't sloppy or fast. It was a *validation of love*.

Her breathing changed and I quickly forced her toward me. Hear her saying those words meat the world to me. "I love you too." I whispered in her lips and she smiled. Her lips found mine once again, suckling and nibbling at them delicately.

"We can do this," She said, breaking the kiss. "I will miss you." She says smiling. "But think about this? Present Santana should remember present Quinn." She presses a gentle kiss on my lips. "We have focused on complicated things, that we forgot you are *modifying* the present already by *communicating* with me in the *past*."

"This can work." I said, looking into her eyes. Her wish to accomplish this was huge and so my love for her.

"It's so simple." She smiles gripping the hem of her shirt and dropping it someplace in the room.

"What are you doing?" I said, biting my bottom lip; my mind becoming dizzy with just a look of her body.

"I am going away for a year." She kissed my lips several times. "This will be my motivation to see you again and wait patiently." Her eyes scan my body slowly. Everything felt right. Her eyes weren't of a stranger anymore, her lips felt more amazing with every kiss. There was nothing unfamiliar about her. Every touch felt secure, intended.

"You are beautiful." She says straddling me. Suddenly, the desire for our bodies to be touching each others increased. Her fingers found the hem of my shirt in seconds. I separated my lips from hers. Her beauty hypnotized me. My hands found her sides, tracing tan and toned skin. Everything about her complexion was beautiful.

She smiles at me unclasping her bra in the front. I slowly moan at her bare chest. I let my hands fall over her perfect skin. I pressed a searing kiss onto her lips before flipping us in warm sheets.

I worked down her neck and gazed at her beautiful face for a second. Her brown locks were spread across white sheets, her hands arched on top of her head. Her breathing became erratic with every kiss. She was panting, seeking for air.

"You are so fucking beautiful." I whispered against her ear. Her nails scratched my back seductively. Her fingers slipping inside my underwear.

"Off." I stood and took off my underwear while she took off hers. Our lips met again, her kisses were increasing with our fervor. Her hands caress my skin with so much care, with so much passion. It's endearing to have her body against mine. My senses were heightened; all I could feel was her breathing and slow moans. Her skin was soft and warm under my touch. I kiss down her breast, stopping at tights abs. Her stomach was jumping up and down in delight.

Her hands spread against the bed sheet as I traveled my way down to her core. It's difficult for me to concentrate on something in specific., she looks so beautiful I just don't know where to look

at. I have her right in front of me. Her naked body feels *amazing* under my touch and I just can imagine spending the rest of my life with her.

I needed a deep breath, lowering my lips every second. Her knuckles white from having too tight a hold on the bed sheets. I looked at her flushed face. Her lips are parted, her eyes shut as I slid my tongue over her folds. She squirms with pleasure, moaning lowly in a deep heart was beating fast in my chest; the butterflies in my stomach were spreading her wings as my love for her was overcoming my body.

The knot in my stomach was increasing with every flick of my tongue in her folds. My body was yearning for more. I pecked her clit one more time, her back arching in pleasure before I moved up, kissing her stomach. Her left arm snaked my neck. I moaned embarrassed when her hand cupped my breast. Her mouth rounds my nipple softly, moving her hips and making our centers collide. She growls in pleasure while I started going slowly on top of her.

Her center was warm, her moans increasing with every push. I kissed her deeply, showing her how much I care about her, showing her all of this will not be in vain. That one day we will be together and it will be worth it.

Our bodies move in sync. Her leg was up resting on my spine, creating the perfect contact of our nude bodies. My movements became faster, precise. Her moans echoed in the room while our bodies look desperately for a release. She holds my back keeping me steady while she slips her tongue inside my mouth.

I could not focus on anything but her movements and how she was holding my body against hers. The air became non-existent in between us. My back was sweaty as she moans slowly close to my neck. "I love you." She muttered before squirming in pleasure. Her moans turned shaky and her breathing shallows as electricity ran through our veins.

"That was amazing." I whispered, resting my head along her breast. Her hand finds my back as she caresses my flesh. Her fingers drawing lazy patters on my skin. I placed a warm kiss on her chest as she breathes hard through her nose.

"Can we do that again?" She said kissing my forehead and rolling over me.

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We woke up two hours later. We discover every inch of our bodies. Our desire for each other's turned into something magical we only knew how to create. Only in seven days, my life changed in a unique way. Just to have her close to me means so much, I can just wait until I can have her forever.

Everything was ready for me to shut down the portal. I turned to look at the floor. The machines from Mrs. Susan's apartment were placed in a circle in the living room. I could see silver circles on the walls and on every surface of the loft.

"Ready?" Santana walks closer to me and I nodded looking at my watch. The energy bars are high, the decompression box was buzzing slowly around her.

"Yeah." I whispered and she cupped my chin smiling.

"It's okay; I will see you in a minute."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, I'll see you in a year." My hands were shaking. I smiled at her looking at her face. I caress her hair resting on her shoulders, her smile, calming me a little. "I love you." She pecks my lips and I hold her still, kissing her deeply.

I had to trust that it would work out. "I love you too." She pecks my lips one more time before stepping in the middle of the circles.

I took a deep breath, clicking my watch. The object started buzzing followed by two clicks. She smiled at me with so much love, that for a second I thought I couldn't shut down the portal. I lower the energy on the decompression box, the cylindrical flasks starting to fill with blue energy slowly. I fastened my eyes with hers; I desired to continue staring at her until she goes away.

"Everything will be fine. I love you." She said, tears forming in her eyes. "I'll miss you, wait for me, okay."

I quickly nodded, tears falling from my eyes as the decompression box started buzzing loudly and she disappeared in front of me. I sighed inspecting my watch. The energy was nonexistent. I slowly sat on the floor disconnecting the decompression from the energy machine my sister attached to purify the energy.

The silver circles disappeared, she wasn't here. I removed my watch from around my wrist, placing it on the wooden floor. I stood, cleaning my watery eyes and looking at the door. *What should I do now? She said she would be here. If this works, she will be here.*

My heart started to pick up its pace. I couldn't stand there waiting for her to appear and enter the loft. If this didn't work, I might just get on a plane and look for her. I stumbled and walked slowly to the door. My hand slowly slides it open and I close my eyes, she *must* be here by now, she *must* be here by now.

"Please... Please work." I whispered and I heard steps on the wooden base. My heart was racing and I stepped out of the loft, finding the woman I love walking over to me.

My eyes traveled her body up and down. She looks different and yet more beautiful. Her dark locks were longer, cascading over her sides beautifully while her dress hugs her curved body. I smiled at her in disbelief, as she walks slowly towards me. She opens her arms and I quickly hold her close.

"I missed you so much." I pulled her back and kissed her lips deeply. She moans, sliding her arms around my neck. It could sense how desperate she was to kiss me and I simply couldn't help myself. *She was really here.* It was everything I wanted and more. "It worked, babe." She whispers in my lips. I cupped her wet cheeks, kissing her deeply. "Fuck, I missed the way you smell." She growls and I laughed pulling her tighter to me. "And your laugh." Her eyes find mine lovingly.

"And your beautiful eyes." I couldn't hold the tears at bay. She kissed my lips several times. "You look hot, babe." I smiled and she kisses my lips once more.

"I love you." I said squeezing her close to me.

"No more than me." She says, wiggling her eyebrows. "I can't believe it worked." She says placing her head against my neck.

"Thank you." I said, pulling her back and staring into brown eyes. "Thank you for doing this for me."

She smiles pecking my lips. "Did I change anything?" She ask, her face worried.

"What –what do you mean?"

"I send you flowers on Monday. The biggest I could find." I furrowed my brows at her. "I remembered you telling me someone sent flowers to you the day we met." She smiles and everything fell into place.

"What did you write on the card?" I asked her.

"Seven." I kissed her deeply and she smiled. "I paid for your coffee on Tuesday before whoever it was, could ." She laughed. "No one is going to woo my girl without my consent."

"Baby, I just received *one* bouquet of flowers on Monday." She arches her eyebrow. "You did that for me? Yourself in the present sent me flowers and paid for my coffee."

"So it was me all the time." I nodded hugging her. "So why- why we were so worried?" She laughed, pecking my lips. "I followed you everywhere Q. On your birthday, I saw you wearing the red dress." She caresses my cheek tenderly. "You looked so beautiful. It took all my power not to climb up on you at the restaurant." I chuckled, my eyes watering with every word she pronounced. "I tried to wake you early the day of the meeting, but I couldn't. I took in your flushed cheeks before opening the doorway to our date." She smiled, placing a strand of hair behind my ear. "I walked with you under the snow the day you went to see Frannie at four in the morning. I wanted to make sure you were okay.

"I saw how desperate you were on New Year's. I've waited all morning downstairs, waiting for this day. But the memory of you kept me strong over a year." She expressed joy. "I was your stalker. I had you, far but close at the same time."

"And I couldn't be more grateful of having you." I kissed her lips. "Everything we did paid off. You are safe, with me and I'll never let you go. I love you."

"I love you more."

"No, I love you more." I said and she laughed.

"Quinn, I know for you, it's been a few minutes since you last saw me, but," She bends on one knee in front of me. My breath was caught in my throat as she pulled a small velvet box out of her jacket. "I've waited a year to ask you this," She smiled widely at me, opening the velvet box. "Marry me?" She removes the silver band from the box, tears falling down my cheek as I saw a

different ring from the picture I saw in the future. Everything was different, Frannie changed the past for me to sustain a new future. Our memories will live on forever and I sure was ready to spend my lifetime with her.

"Yes!" She stood kissing my lips.

Sometimes life makes you walk through rocky and dusty tracks. A change in the past will shape a new future. It's up to us to decide how the future will be. Once, I thought I'd never have a happy ending, however, today I know second chances are possible.

Seriously?, by KatieMacLove

"Quinn." Santana whisper yells in my ear as she pokes me in my side. I grunt something and roll over.

"Quinn!" She pokes me again.

"Sleeping." I sigh and go back into my slumber.

"Quinn!" She kicks me wither cold feet.

"WHAT?!" I yell and sit up and turn the lamp on, blinking a few times.

She blinks at me and a weird look crosses her face.

"Well? What did you wake me up for?!"

"You farted."

"You woke me up because I *farted*?" I ask incredulously.

"It was loud and it scared me." She says haughty.

"I wouldn't have farted if you didn't cook tonight." I say as I turn over, cut the light off, and fluff my pillow to snuggle into it. She gasps and rolls over to turn the light back on. I let out a heavy sigh and turn to face her.

Her mouth is open and she looks positively insulted. Good.

"You think my cooking make you fart?"

"I'm saying if I haven't farted like that before I ate your cooking, it's probably not my fault."

"Are you saying I can't cook?"

"I'm not saying you can." I say before I give her a quick peck, flip my pillow, and cut off the light. She stays silent for a minute and just as I go back to sleep she slaps me with a pillow.

"What the hell, Quinn? You can't say shit like that and go back to sleep!" she hisses.

"Ouch! What the fuck do you want me to say, San? I'm trying to go to sleep." I grumble. She pokes me in the stomach.

"Do you think I need a new recipe?" she asks in a whisper.

"Why are you whispering? It's just us."

"Because, now answer my question!" She says, still whispering.

"I think you should just not try to cook chilly and let me go to sleep." I kiss her and cut the light off once again. I kiss her shoulder as I snuggle into her. "I love you. Goodnight."

"Okay. I love you too, Q. Night."

Behind the Wanky, by Kenmura

Santana looks up at her metallic old wall clock, one eye barely open and a good long second passes before she actually notices the time and realizes she's only got half an hour to prepare for another busy day at Louisville University. She overslept. *Fuck*. Santana jumps out off her bed and runs to the bathroom, strips off her clothing just as she remembers her promise to Brittany of having a brief '*good morning*' chat. They have been having problems with communication like most other long distance relationship couples, which is exactly why they made an agreement to greet each other at least every morning through Skype. It's not easy at all for them to be apart when they had basically been attached at the hip in all of their high school years and not a single day had gone by without them seeing one and another. She hurriedly jumps to her PC, opens Skype, scans her friend list names looking for 'Brit-Brit' and clicks the profile to call while looking at the clock on her wall again. In 25 minutes the first practice of the day starts and she cannot allow herself to be late. Unbeknownst to her, she had accidentally clicked another name, 'Bitch', on the list. And before even waiting for the call to be answered, Santana rushes to the bathroom to have a quick shower.

In a narrow-spaced dormitory, empty plastic cups lie scattered on a wooden desk topping dozens of coffee-stained documents that carry words such as 'justice' and 'injunction'. Quinn is nearing the end of a painfully boring all-nighter and with a relieved sigh she takes a final look. She scans her assignment for typos when suddenly a window from Skype pops up, showing the name of 'Santana Lopez' on her laptop screen. *Santana is calling?*

Quinn is definitely surprised to see her long time on-and-off frenemy's name appearing on her screen. Especially at 5.35 AM. Her eyebrows arch in confusion. You know how it is when you got a bunch of "friends" in your messenger but never really talked with them? That's what Quinn and Santana are having. Quinn considers to ignore the call, because who calls at 5-something in the morning anyway? Not to mention from Skype. But seeing how Santana doesn't give up and cancels the call, her curiosity wins the mental battle. She reluctantly clicks the 'accept' button and a camera screen from the other side shows a very naked Santana across the side of the room. Well, covered with a towel - Her hair, that is. Quinn freezes, not knowing how to react. It's not like she hasn't seen Santana naked body before, both of them had been naked in front of each other plenty of times when they had to shower in Cheerios locker room. But definitely never on her laptop screen where every inch of her friend's caramel skin is up for display. Quinn begins to think of herself as one of those horny frat boys who likes to pay a subscription every month to watch a certain porn site. *pft, not that I know anything about those kinds of repulsive activities.*

As she starts to wonder whether or not the call is somehow a mistake on Santana's part, Quinn looks away from the screen, thinking of what to say. She hears Santana rambles on as she dry her hair, in what seems to be a hurry, while facing away from the camera, "Hey, babe. I'm really late for practice... Sorry I just left the call on while I showered but it was necessary to cut time. Isn't it funny how we thought we wouldn't have another cheerleading practice by 2012 and here we are doing the exact thing for the 5th year in a row?"

Quinn realizes that her guess had been correct. The call had been an accident. Quinn concludes that it was supposed to have been Brittany and not herself on the receiving end.

"Uh, San..can you hear me? I think you made a mistake.." Quinn clears her throat as she starts to talk, hoping Santana can hear her. She diverted her eyes somewhere else outside her screen, deep down knowing she can just minimize the camera view, but is reluctant to do so.

"I can't believe I overslept! Carrie will kill me. If you think Sue was bad, you should see how Carrie does her job. She gave us homework! Oh my God, what kind of cheerleading coach gives homework? She made us do a long essay on the history of cheerleading and the impact with economy!", Santana continues to talk while glances to the PC from the side of her eye, enough to see a blonde girl picture on the screen. Quinn can't help but think of the terrifying idea that Sue is only one out of - perhaps many - mentally deranged coaches out there.

Santana walks to her closet, opens the door and bends over, reaching for her training shoes kept inside. Quinn gasps at the sight and frantically tries to minimize the window of the camera without turning off the call. "Santana! Ugh...why can't you hear me!?" Quinn exclaims as she gets more and more frustrated with her clueless friend.

"Anyway, I really miss you, babe. That's why I'm really trying hard to keep our agreement to call each other every morning no matter how busy we are." Santana finally manages to put on her uniform completely and walks to her PC, patting herself internally on the back for having succeeded to prepare in such a short period of time. However it doesn't take long until her eyes finally divert the focus towards her PC screen and that the picture displayed isn't Brittany's, but Quinn's. "What the..." She sprints to the table, and picks up her earphones. "Quinn?"

"Yes. Quinn. Not Brittany, Santana", Quinn makes an annoyed face even though she knows well enough that her friend can't see it.

"Oh my God, I'm sorry.", Santana clasps a hand over her mouth while holding back a laughter. "I must've clicked the wrong name!"

"How come you clicked my name? My name started with 'Q', San. That's a long way down from 'B'. Or do you have a very short list of friends? I wouldn't be surprised." Quinn comments before hearing a playful hurt gasp from the other end.

"Well, Quinn, FYI, I actually have a very long list of friends that sometimes it gets confusing. And the reason why I mistakenly called you is because I put your name as *Bitch*, Santana says smirking, making sure she puts an extra pressure on the last word.

Quinn practically rolls her eyes into the back of her head, "Of course it is."

This time Santana lets herself laugh knowing she won this round. "Look, I really gotta go. Got practice that will start like...now." She says, taking her bag as she stands up, and gets ready to end the call. She hears Quinn sighing,

"Next time, leave me out from your perverted online naked show." Quinn feels her cheek blush as the words slip out of her mouth.

"Right..." Santana stops, not sure of what to say, and begins chuckling to hide her embarrassment of realizing that the change in settings makes her camera turned on automatically every time she's on call. It has unmistakably backfired. "Nothing you haven't seen, Q." She says, winking to the camera, before ending the call. Santana practically runs out of her dorm room, knowing she's going to be in a lot of hell for being late.

Quinn sighs and shakes her head, thinking how she actually misses her loud-mouthed fierce friend. Maybe they can actually use Skype to catch up once in a while. *Or maybe not.* Quinn finally decides she needs a good rest. A couple of hours sleep before the first class today will give her the energy she needs for another long day at Yale. She remembers to save her assignment and is about to close her laptop before an idea pops into her head. Quinn re-opens her Skype window, and searches through her friend list for the name of 'Santana Lopez' and edits it to 'Stripper'. *1-1*

One Night She Was There, by LazyWriterGirl

"I'm here because I left Dani."

"Cleaned your room yesterday, come in."

The time is eleven-thirty at night in New Haven, Connecticut and it's now been an hour since their little exchange at the doorway. Quinn has stayed silent so far because she isn't exactly sure what to say; how do you comfort your best friend – she uses the term loosely, because it would be too long to say *your-best-friend-and-sometimes-enemy-with-whom-you've-had-sex-twice* – who lives in a city that's an hour and a half or more away who's shown up at your house at ten-thirty at night, wet and snivelling in the rain, only to say that she's there because she's left her gorgeous-hot-rocker-girlfriend? It's times like this where Quinn wishes she had one of Miss Pillsbury's ridiculous pamphlets handy.

The Latina sitting on the opposite end of the couch doesn't say anything. She isn't crying anymore, but there's this almost-frighteningly concentrated look on her face, and Quinn's curiosity is biting at her conscious. Santana showed up with a duffle bag in hand, but why? It takes a while before the blonde makes any sort of movement, and when she does she ends up awkwardly patting one smooth, tanned leg. "If you don't want to talk I understand, but I'm here if you do. I'm going to make some popcorn and hot chocolate, and you can pick a movie. Sound good?" She thinks that even sad, Santana looks awfully pretty...but wait. That has nothing to do with anything.

The Latina looks long and hard at her but Quinn can tell she isn't angry; it's more like she's looking at Quinn from every possible angle, trying to figure out if she doesn't know the blonde the way she thought. It's highly possible; they may have known each other since kindergarten and Santana may have been her friend even before Lucy Caboosey became a distant terror of a memory, but there are still more facets to Quinn of which even she is unaware. As she rises from the couch, she hears Santana practically whisper a reluctant "Okay", her gaze still focused on the blonde's back, and Quinn barely knows what to make of it.

As she prepares the water for the cocoa and pops a batch of popcorn into the microwave, Quinn leans back against the counter. She can't possibly think of any problems that could have led to Santana leaving Dani; whenever they've spoken in recent times all that Quinn has ever heard is how "amazing" Dani is as a musician, a girlfriend and a lover. Granted that was over a month ago, but surely nothing could have caused such a significant shift in their relationship since then? In her mind, Quinn also rules out abuse; neither Santana nor Dani would do that. For all of her talk, Santana isn't usually violent, and Dani wouldn't harm a fly. Quinn's not even joking; she's seen the girl gently shoo a fly away from herself before.

Quinn gets back into the living room just as the previews of the movie are ending. *The Land Before Time* pops up on screen, and to anybody else it would seem an odd choice, but Quinn isn't anybody else; some people use *The Notebook* or *A Walk to Remember* as their I-need-to-cry-but-this-will-make-it-less-obvious movie, but Santana uses cartoons (high-quality cartoons, of

course). Judging by the fact that it isn't Up that they're watching, Santana is going to try to hold in her tears for a bit before just letting everything out. "Here you go, S," she says gently as she sets the Latina's mug (because of course she has her own mug at Quinn's place) on a coaster. Santana shoots her a small smile.

"Hope you don't mind," she says, gesturing to the movie. Her finger hovers over the remote control 'play' button and Quinn knows that if she were to protest, Santana would change the movie to something else. But why would she do that? She just shakes her head because really, she doesn't mind at all, and Santana presses play.

For a while Quinn wonders if maybe she's misjudged the severity of the situation. They're just watching the movie in companionable silence and every so often Santana will make a comment. Then, right at the scene where Littlefoot asks his mother why he has to go on alone, Santana breaks down.

"Your heart...it whispers. So listen closely." Those words, spoken by a dying, fictional female brontosaurus mother, seem to strike Santana with all the force of a hammer blow, and it confuses Quinn to no end. Sure, she always tears up a bit during this scene but Santana is just a mess right now. The blonde makes a motion to turn the DVD player off, but Santana stops her.

"Don't, Quinn...please don't." It's the first time that Santana has said her name this entire time, and something about the way that it sounds makes the blonde sit back down. Never once in her whole life has Santana said her name with so much vulnerability, not even in the throes of passion on the night of Mr. Schue's not-really-a-wedding. It's almost as if her name is the real plea, and Quinn moves a little closer to the brunette, who in turn huddles into her side as if all the warmth is gone from her body and Quinn is a human heater.

"It's not your fault. It's not your mother's fault. Now you listen to old Rooter... It is *nobody's* fault," Rooter's old voice pours through the speakers, and Santana clutches even more tightly to Quinn's robe. The blonde, before she even realizes what she's doing, strokes Santana's dark hair, murmuring small words of comfort. This scene, she thinks, is about death – she doubts that Dani is dead or Santana would have said something much different when she'd first appeared on Quinn's doorstep – but it could also be about the ending of things in general. She knows that as a friend, she must let Santana grieve for a relationship that is obviously over and if this is how she wants to do it than all that Quinn can do is be there with her arms open.

The rest of the movie proceeds and Quinn just holds Santana as the odd sniffle escapes her. When it's finished and they've turned it off, Quinn takes the mugs and the popcorn bowl and excuses herself to wash them. Santana's giving her that searching stare again and it's a little weird, except for the fact that nothing seems to be weird between them anymore. She's finished just in time to see Santana's head dropping a little as she searches for something else to wash, and that's when Quinn realizes that the other young woman must be exhausted.

The train to get from New York to New Haven doesn't leave until eight, which means that depending on when Santana officially grabbed her things and declared herself as having left Dani, Santana has been loitering about the station for hours. Then there was the travel to

consider, and knowing Santana she would've taken the bus to get to Quinn's, meaning that she'd probably been standing due to the influx of students returning to their dorms or headed out to pubs, whichever. And she'd had that duffel too!

"San, I think you should head up now," she says softly. She's almost hesitant to touch her friend; normally so resilient, Santana looks as if at any moment she may just shatter all over Quinn's carpet.

"Quinn I...I want to talk." She doesn't say "now", but Quinn understands.

"I just think maybe we should head up first? You look really tired, and this way I won't have to worry about carrying you up to your room." Your room, she said. Quinn frowns only slightly; since when has the guest room been Santana's room? "Cleaned your room yesterday, come in," she'd said earlier in the night. Odd.

For her part, Santana doesn't argue, even rolling her eyes good-naturedly at Quinn's little joke. They head upstairs together, as soon as Quinn makes sure that everything is in order and the door is locked. Quinn is glad that she'd gotten her contractor to add in an en suite bathroom to the guest room; she figures Santana will appreciate the privacy. It's about two or so in the morning when she finally heads over to Santana's room (the guest room, she corrects herself). Quinn finds her kind of just sitting on the bed, looking a bit dazed. "It's your fault."

"Excuse me?" She's not quite sure that she'd heard correctly. The change on Santana's face is instant, and if they hadn't been friends for so long it would have scared the shit out of Quinn. It's the look that Santana has only ever had after saying something that she had wanted to say, but in the wrong way. Usually it ends up as a huge misunderstanding, but that would mean that Santana is blaming her because she doesn't want to? It doesn't make much sense and either way Quinn can feel her own anger already priming itself for a screaming match, but the Latina beats her to it.

"You heard me. It's your fault. This whole fucking mess that I call my life is, mostly, your fucking fault, Fabray," Santana practically spits the words out. Some goddamn gratitude, Quinn thinks.

"Look, I don't know what the *hell* is wrong with you, but I'm willing to let it go because number one, you're my best friend and number two, you're obviously going through some complicated shit that I can't quite grasp right now. But don't you fucking *dare* blame me for your problems Santana. You and I haven't spoken in at least what, a month, and all of a sudden you show up here and accept my hospitality, right before blaming me for something I don't even know shit about?"

"Of course you have no idea what you've done, Quinn, because you haven't fucking *done* anything, and that's why I blame you for everything!" Santana's voice is even more raspy than usual, and Quinn has a brief thought that it is the sexiest thing she's ever heard; at least she thinks that until the words actually register in her head.

"You're impossible," she shoots back, because it's true. "I don't know why I ever wasted my time being nice to you Santana." That stops Santana's next words. Quinn can see what looks like the beginning of tears forming at the corners of the brunette's eyes and she wonders if maybe she's gone too far. Surely a careless comment like that couldn't have affected Santana that much? "I didn't mean that San...If you would at least *explain* why this bullshit is my fault, maybe I can help you." She doesn't know why she throws that in there, but she has a strange feeling, like maybe she really could help the Latina if she only knew more on the situation at hand.

Santana looks a little spent as she sits down slowly. "Dani knows that we slept together on that Valentine's Day a while back."

"So fucking what? That was three years ago, and at least a month before you even met her!"

"That's not the point, Quinn." Santana is being so stupidly difficult that if Quinn didn't want care much about her friend or her future, she would throttle the girl right then and there. She doesn't say anything. Instead she crosses her arms tightly over her chest and waits. "The point is, when she asked me if I slept with you because I was drunk or because I had feelings for you, I told her the truth."

Wait. Why would that matter? Quinn knows Dani; the girl has spoken about her wild party days so surely a drunken one night—unless...ohshitohshitohshitohshit. "You're kidding."

"I left Dani, but only because she let me... I left Dani because she told me she didn't think I was being fair to her, to myself, and to you by staying with her when clearly there's somebody that I love more."

Quinn panics. Yes, she'd accepted a while back that she's bisexual, even before sleeping with Santana, but for that matter she isn't sure if she's even interested in Santana on that level. Scratch that, she knows she's always amused the idea. She's always entertained the idea of sleeping with Santana again, but recently she'd started thinking about what could have possibly happened if they'd talked about maybe dating? Would Santana have dumped her and gone and dated Dani anyway? Or would the Latina be living here with her, or would she be living in New York with Santana, together as a couple? Whatever, though, she thinks. This is too much to deal with; Quinn immediately begins to compile a mental list of all the reasons why this isn't actually happening and Santana doesn't actually love her.

"You're joking San, you've got to be. You saw us just now; one minute we're on my couch and you're holding onto me like I'm the only thing helping you breathe, and I'm comforting you while a Don Bluth cartoon plays out across my screen. The next minute we're yelling at each other and you're blaming me for how fucked up your life is and I'm essentially insulting our whole friendship."

"Come on Q, you're smart," Santana says, "don't you think that maybe I'm blaming you for all of this because if I didn't fall for you, neither of us would have to deal with this shit? Do you think that I like this? You weren't there when I said it out loud for the first time but god *fucking* damn Quinn I have *adored* you ever since day one." Santana holds up a hand to stop Quinn from

speaking. "Yes, I slept with Britt. I dated her and I loved her. But it was never the same as the way that I love you."

"You can't say these things to me, Santana!" Quinn is on the verge of tears herself, though she isn't sure why. "It's two in the morning and everybody else who's sane is asleep and you're telling me these things and not saying anything about what you're going to do about it. How am I supposed to feel?"

"I'm not going to do anything about it," Santana says simply.

"What?" Quinn asks. She's surprised that Santana would give up so easily; it does help to convince her that the other young woman isn't as serious as she thought though.

"I don't know what I was thinking, coming here." Santana's voice sounds so mournfully sad all of a sudden. "You're clearly repulsed by the idea...I'm sorry for even mentioning it. I'll be out of here in the morning, soon as I wake up."

"Santana." Quinn doesn't know why she doesn't want this conversation to be over. She expected more from Santana; the girl is renowned for her fierce personality. Quinn should be happy though; even if Santana really does love her, the girl is giving it up so that they can just go back to normal. "Come on Tana, talk to me."

"Goodnight, Quinn," Santana says lowly, and she slips under the covers. "Please close the door and turn of the light when you leave."

The blonde doesn't get much sleep. She shouldn't think so much about the things that she and Santana said to each other. In particular, she shouldn't really put so much stock into it; it shouldn't bother her, she thinks...unless she likes Santana too, as more than friends?

But she couldn't. Quinn remembers the night they'd spent together, albeit drunkenly, with fondness, yes, but that doesn't mean that she's in love or anything. It's seven in the morning and Quinn hasn't slept at all. She just has to know. Why is this stupid non-issue bothering her so much? At first she feels creepy and a little past desperate, standing outside of the door to Santana's room (the *guest* room, she corrects herself) but the feeling goes away. She's Quinn Fabray after all, and she doesn't need to feel anything but confidence in her own home.

Santana looks so peaceful in her sleep; so much sweeter than her regular day-to-day facial expressions. Quinn can feel a smile creeping onto her own face slowly, and she slaps a hand over it in surprise. Maybe, she thinks, maybe she's just flattered that somebody as attractive as Santana has such strong feelings for her. That's probably it. "Q...stop standing there...creepy." Quinn blushes in the dark, the only indication being the heat on her face. "Come...here." This is it. This is the turning point. She could turn around and leave and simply tell Santana that she had imagined her there. Instead, Quinn slips under the covers, surprised when Santana turns to face her. The Latina certainly looks awake now.

"This doesn't change anything." She knows it's a lie. Of course it changes things, even if she isn't quite sure how. She knows it and Santana knows it, and the Latina's smile is infectious.

"You came over here to check up on me..." Santana sighs but it sounds happy enough. "You're always looking out for me, Quinn. Can you blame me for falling in love with you?" Quinn shakes her head. She isn't sure how they've even gotten to this point, talking about love and each other in the same bed. She was just supposed to be comforting her best friend over a lost relationship! Everything feels so very disorientingly disjointed but Quinn can't quite say that she dislikes it.

"I don't know what you want from me, Santana..."

"Well right now, I kind of just want to sleep. We can talk later, promise, no screaming. It'll be all mature and shit."

"Mhm. Fine, go back to sleep," Quinn says. She can't fight the smile that inches back onto her face as Santana snuggles into her arms. It isn't like she's ready to be the other girl's girlfriend or anything, Quinn thinks as she pushes back a few stray hairs from the Latina's face, but they know each other well and that's a start; they fight a ton, sure, but they support each other when it really counts. It might not be so bad, she thinks, to let this go in whatever direction it may. She'll have to thank Dani tomorrow, Quinn thinks as she begins to fall asleep. Minutes later her eyes snap open. Or would that seem really rude?

"Quinn go to sleep, fuck, your thoughts are so loud I can't get my dreams on." Quinn rolls her eyes and she knows that Santana can feel it. What kind of mess are they getting themselves into?

A True Victor, by lightblue-Nymphadora

"Cornibus Williford here, along with my dear friend, Merope Narin. So, Merri, today's the big day!"

"The 200th Hunger Games! The journey to the Games begins today for our lucky Tributes. The annual Reaping has already gotten off to an interesting start this morning. Districts One and Two offered Tributes who actually know each other."

"That's right, Merri. Both sets of Tributes were a part of the District Exchange program - an effort by President Baratheon Locke to encourage Panem camaraderie. Earlier today, when one of the Tributes was chosen, the others decided to volunteer."

"Now, you always see Tributes from the first two Districts, and sometimes from the others, but going into the Games as a group of friends...woo boy."

"I know, Merri. Let's watch the footage from this morning as we prepare for District Six's Reaping."

Tributes

Santana stood breathing hard as she watched Quinn walk up to the podium on-screen. District One's Tribute. There hadn't even been a chance to call a boy's name before Kurt had rushed forward, volunteering. One tense moment later, when the Peacekeepers had prised the boy from another larger boy's arms (what was his name? Derrick? David?), Kurt was onstage with Quinn.

It was their turn now. Normally, one of the coordinators would read out their names, but their high school teacher had insisted he be the ones to call them to their doom.

"Our female tribute," he said, in a clear, carrying tone. "Is Twyla Garrigan."

"I volunteer!" Santana yelled, stepping out. There wasn't a moment's hesitation. If Quinn was going in, then so was she. Plus, Twyla was a chunky asthmatic thirteen-year-old who wouldn't last five minutes in the Games. Santana marched forward, head held high and a slight smile on her face. She wasn't smiling because of the honor or the glory - she was smiling because she knew what would happen next.

Sure enough, just like District One, one of the boys sang out before a name could be called. A tall, muscular boy, with slightly darker skin than Santana, was striding forward. He took her hand and kissed her on the forehead when he got to the podium.

"Our Tributes!" Will Schuester called, tears in his eyes. "Santana Lopez and Matteo Rutherford!"

As soon as their names were announced, the Peacekeepers ushered them inside. The goodbyes weren't held anymore, and you couldn't bring trinkets from home. Well, you couldn't be given anything at least. Not since the 184th Games, when the Tribute from District Seven had poisoned himself on the train. But if you had something on you, you could bring it. Schuester had given all thirty kids in the top form a small pin on their last day of school. Nothing big, or fancy, just a small silver number two. As she was rushed away from the podium, she turned to him and tapped it twice.

Matt's grip on her hand didn't loosen as they were marched to the car, and then driven to the train. Neither of them spoke. Their coordinator, a svelte black man named Jen0 Tomesein, didn't try to force conversation. He sat across from them, humming quietly until they boarded the train.

"Okay," he said, turning to face them. "I know this is a lot to take in, but I do have to show you around. There are common areas at the front and back of the train. We should be arriving by this evening, but if you want to nap, your sleeping quarters are right next to each other down that hall," he said, pointing toward the front of the train. "Lunch will be served in this car in two hours. How are you both feeling?"

Matt simply shrugged.

Santana did the same, but added, "I'll feel a lot better when we can see Quinn and Kurt."

Jeno nodded. "You already know Shannon, your mentor." At their blank looks he added, "Coach Beiste. She's having a rest right now, but she'll be joining us for lunch. Excuse me, I need to see if there have been any messages."

He wandered off down the hall toward the back of the train, leaving them standing in the middle of the dining car.

Finally, the two let go of each other's hand. Matt wandered around for a moment, but Santana just stood there.

"It's not real yet," he said quietly.

"No. But I'm guessing it's going to hit us when we get to the Capitol."

"If it doesn't, I'm going to seriously worry about you both in the Games."

They turned to see Coach Beiste standing there.

She sat down on one of the couches behind the square table, and poured a drink from the large glass pitcher. It fizzed in the glass.

"What is that?" Matt asked, sitting down next to her.

"Seltzer water, with a hint of lime," she told him, taking a sip. "Come on over, Santana. Tell me how you plan to survive the next week." When both stared at her with terrified expressions, she smiled and nodded. "Good. Good. That tells me you're taking this seriously. That tells me that just because you're from one of the...oh, what do they call us? 'True Victor Districts' - that

you aren't getting cocky. You know what this is, and how serious it is. That's good - that's the first key to survival."

"And what's the second key?" Santana asked, sitting across from Matt.

Beiste poured both of them a drink. "Something you were both born with. Charm and good looks. Not fair to some of the Tributes, but hey - we all end up looking like a million bucks when they're done poking and prodding us. But you two? You both already have the look. Strength, grace, all of that. And you're not assholes, which is a plus."

Both of them sniggered.

"Seriously?" Matt asked.

"You think the Tributes from last year had sponsorships pouring in?" Beiste asked him. "Hell no. Every gift they got, I had to beg for. Why? Because they were cocky, and, frankly, evil during the training period. True, every once in a while the sponsors like a good villain, but they were just bastards - god rest their souls."

The train rumbled on, the three of them sitting in silence for a long while. Santana stared out of the window at the passing landscape, while Matt fidgeted with his tie.

"What else?" he asked, when the silence became too much.

Beiste glanced at each of them and folded her hands over the table. "It's going to be...you won't feel it until you're in the arena. And I don't mean initially - I mean deep into the arena. When you're lost, or hurt, or think you hear someone just behind you. At first, it's a rush. You have to use that rush to get what you need. Water, supplies.... There are plenty of mentors who tell their Tributes not to mess around with the bloodbath, but if there's a way for you to get in and out, you take that chance. I've seen both of you at the training school - you both need weapons. Especially you, Santana."

"Why her especially?"

"We can't all be big enough to rip someone's head off," Santana said with a grim little smile.

Beiste put a hand on each of their shoulders. "You'll both be great. I know it."

"So, what do you think?" Santana asked, spinning.

Quinn, who'd been standing by the chariot, beamed at her. "You look good. Granite - I get it."

"I didn't think charcoal grey would really suit me, but it works. And you look delicious, as always," she added in an undertone, enjoying the blush that crept to Quinn's cheeks. "Where's your dude?"

"Right here. And can we talk about how bad this suit chafes?" Kurt said, waddling over in a purple monstrosity.

The chariots were lined up, their passengers being fussed over by the designers and chaperones. Santana did a quick scan of the competition, beckoning for Matt to join them. "Have you met any of them yet?"

"A little one from District Six, and the boy from District Nine."

"The one who won't stop crying?" Kurt asked, casting a sympathetic look toward the chariot holding two fifteen-year-olds.

"That's the one. Tried to cheer him up, but...." Matt trailed off, shrugging.

"Have you met our mentor?" Quinn asked, taking Santana's hand.

Santana squeezed gently and nodded. "Sue. She's crazy, but I have a feeling she knows the score - if you get my meaning. Ours definitely does."

"Tributes to your chariots!" one of the organizers called.

"Keep your eyes open," Quinn whispered to Santana. "Sue mentioned finding people for an alliance."

"Beiste said the same. See you later."

The carriages went out one by one now, with each set of Tributes doing their interview at the end of the long ride.

"We've got to really sell it," Matt said.

"Smile, wave, look excited to be here," Santana said as she boarded their coach. She watched the screens as Quinn and Kurt left the dock first. When the two turned on full "wreathed conqueror" mode, she had to stifle a laugh.

Quinn had apparently taught Kurt the Fabray Serial Killer Smirk of Doom. They both looked utterly relaxed, but not arrogant. They looked sharp - smart. A silent threat.

Well done, both of you, she thought, as they took their seats next to Cornibus Williford.

"Welcome!" he said jovially. "Kurt and Quinn. Our beautiful Tributes from District One. How are you both this evening?"

"We're excited to be here, Corni," Kurt said, a picture of happiness.

The audience laughed at the nickname. Cornibus grinned.

"Corni? I like it. See the cleverness we get folks? Quinn, tell me, how did it feel to be the very first Tribute chosen this year?"

"I was a bit shocked at first, but I wasn't scared," she said, calmly. "I knew Kurt would be with me if I had to go. I was ready."

"Did you two make a deal to go together?"

"Not at all," Kurt said. "But Quinn's my oldest friend. I wouldn't let her go alone."

"That's noble of you, son. Even though it meant leaving someone behind...."

Kurt bowed his head. "Yes, Corni. I...can I give him a message?"

"Go right ahead, Kurt."

"Dave, I know you're watching. I'm going to make you proud."

There was a loud "Awwww" from the audience, and Quinn put her arm around Kurt's shoulders.

"Aw hell," Matt muttered. "No one wants to follow that."

This time, Santana really did laugh.

Their coach rolled forward, and Matt took her hand. The cheering of hundreds of people filled their ears as they were driven down the long lane. Santana knew how to play up - they'd had to do it at school, whenever the donors from the Capitol would visit. She smiled and waved, and blew kisses at the small children in the front rows. Matt grinned and flexed his muscles - with his left arm only, because he wouldn't let go of Santana's hand in his right.

Cornibus welcomed them just as enthusiastically, and didn't waste any time. "Tell us what you were thinking when you volunteered."

"There's no way I'm letting Twyla near that arena this year," Santana said, to laughter.

"There's no way I'm letting Santana near that arena without me getting in on the action," Matt said, to even louder laughter.

Cornibus guffawed, slapping his knee. "Brave and witty, am I right folks? Matt, if you could tell your family one thing right now, what would it be?"

He thought for a moment, biting his lip. "That I love them, and that I'll be strong for them."

"Wonderful, heartfelt sentiments. Santana, is there someone special that you left behind? Someone you'd like to send a message to, perhaps?"

In a nanosecond, the annoying sexism of that question irked her. Sure, give Matt the family line and try to work a love story out of me.... Wait a second.... "Not, exactly, Cornibus. I didn't leave someone behind. I brought them with me."

"Oh-ho!" he said, giving what was probably meant to be a discreet glance towards Matt. "Is that so?"

"Yes. You just met her, in fact. It's Quinn."

—

Beiste met them back in the hall when the interview was over. "Well...not what I would've gone with, but I can't deny that was -"

"Brilliant!" Quinn said, coming out of nowhere to hug Santana. "Absolutely brilliant. I...I didn't even think to -"

"Right, all this sapphic tenderness is making my soul bleed."

"Evening, Sue," Beiste said. "I see you're just as ornery as ever."

"But of course, Shannon. I have to whip these sorry pampered princesses into shape."

"I'm a boy," Kurt supplied.

"Save it, Porcelain. If you can't handle my loving terms of endearment, you can't handle the arena. Now, I came over to meet your sacrificial lambs, Beiste, and make sure no rabid, festering fleas of failure would jump onto my own."

"Do fleas carry rabies?" Kurt muttered to Santana.

"Calm down, Sue," Beiste said, rolling her eyes. "They're tired. You'll have the next three days to torment them."

"After which I'll seem like a picnic, because the Gamemakers will take over that task." She looked Matt and Santana over once, nodded, and beckoned for Quinn and Kurt to follow her to the elevator.

—

It was day two of training, and lunch time. The four Careers sat together, scoping out the rest of the Tributes.

"He's going to get her killed," Matt said, shaking his head. "I know what this is, but...she shouldn't die some awful way because of him."

They all looked over to where the District Six Tributes sat. The girl, Frae, was the youngest that year - twelve years old. The boy she was with, a sullen young man of sixteen, had been very protective of her. Unfortunately, he'd also made enemies of just about every other Tribute there.

"What about Crying Tom, the Constantly Bombed?" Quinn asked.

The crying boy from District Nine had found a way to stop crying - alcohol. Strictly speaking, it wasn't allowed. But the Tributes could basically have anything they wanted, and the kid wanted booze.

"Jesus. If he doesn't fall off his podium and detonate a landmine, I'll be shocked," Santana said.

"We just have us," Kurt said.

They ate in silence.

—

The Games

Bright sunlight. And silence, save for the countdown. Five...four....

They had a plan, and it would work. Santana closed her eyes.

Two...one.

Chaos. And speed. And now Santana understood what Beiste had meant about the rush. There was nothing but collecting what they needed. And she couldn't even worry about the others in those moments, as she sprinted forward and grabbed a backpack. She dove, rolling, and dodged a punch from one of the boys. A spear went through his chest, and she spotted Kurt atop the Cornucopia. She didn't have time to wonder how the hell he'd got up there and that quickly, but pulled the spear out and kept moving.

Quinn was fighting a girl from District Ten. She swung an axe she'd managed to grab, and hit the girl in the chest.

Santana had a spear, but that was Kurt's. She heard Matt call - one of their codes. She tossed the spear back up to Kurt and ran into the shade of the cornucopia. Two knives, a sword, and a bow and arrow. That would have to do. She spotted something out of the corner of her eye, and managed to swoop down and pick it up as she ran to help Matt.

It was all over in a matter of minutes. Those who hadn't been willing to fight had fled into the line of trees. The four of them looked around at the carnage - some of which they'd caused.

"North," Kurt said firmly. "We have to keep moving north."

Santana handed the bow to Quinn and one of the knives to Matt. He'd managed to grab a lethal-looking mallet as well.

"What's in the backpack?" Quinn asked as they ran.

"Not a single clue."

"When we get to some water, we can figure it out," Matt said.

A mile in, they stopped running and listened. There were no other sounds but that of the forest. Kurt, who'd been leading the group, began inspecting the plant life. Quinn leaned against a tree and watched as Santana went through the backpack.

"Water bottle, socks, a set of...eight matches, and Vaseline. Oh, and I grabbed this."

"Bread and cheese? Well spotted!"

"How long do you think it'll keep?" Quinn asked.

"Long enough to count as last resort food," Kurt said. "I think we'll find water if we head east. I think I hear something big - hopefully it's a river."

They trudged through the brush for nearly an hour, ignoring their rumbling stomachs and parched coughs. They finally heard it, the sound of running water, but that wasn't the only sound. Matt pointed two fingers ahead and two back, nodding for Quinn to follow him. Santana and Kurt crawled forward to see who had found the river first.

It was the boy (called Argo) from District Six. He was splashing his face. On the ground next to him, the girl from his District, Frae, lay eerily still.

"He killed her," Santana whispered, rage boiling inside her. They all knew what this was, and the girl had been dead the moment she was Reaped, but there was something wrong about this.

"See any traps?"

Santana scanned the bushes around them as the boy drank deeply from the rushing river. "No. Throw?"

"No. I want this one face to face," Kurt growled, and ran out of the brush.

Santana followed him, readying her sword for a fight.

The boy didn't have a weapon though, and he shrieked.

Kurt dropped the spear and grabbed him, covering his mouth. "Shut up, you idiot! You want everyone to know where we are?"

"Please - please don't," Argo choked. "I can help you."

"How?" Santana asked, holding a sword to his throat.

"I know where the other Tributes are."

Quinn had run over, axe in hand. She stooped down next to the little girl. "The fuck did you do to her?"

"Is she dead?" Kurt asked, not letting go of Argo.

"No. I think she's been poisoned." Quinn cradled the wheezing girl, trying not to cry as she looked at her.

"Mushrooms," Argo said, grinning evilly. "I can -"

"Kill him. Now."

Santana didn't need telling again.

A moment later, two cannon shots rang out, and the group had moved upriver. Santana filled the water bottle. The girl had had one as well, which Kurt had taken. There were rocky cliffs to the north, and they set up camp under a slight overhang.

"No blind angles," Matt muttered, going through a mental checklist. "Water. We can build a fire there...."

There was an odd whistling noise, and a parachute descended from the sky. It attached itself to the rocks above them, and Santana had to lift Quinn up to reach it.

"Already?" she asked. "What's in it?"

"It's for me - from Sue. A pen and pad!"

"Er...what for?"

"So I can keep track of things," Quinn said, and as if that was enough explanation, tucked the presents into her jacket lining and zipped it up.

"Who should hunt?"

"I set three traps along the treeline," Kurt said. "Good for any animals trying to get to the water over there, or any Tributes creeping up on us."

"I can shoot," Quinn said. "But I'm not sure what I'm looking for."

"I'll come with you," Santana said.

The two of them walked farther into the woods, staying silent and listening for the sound of any sort of wildlife. A few times, small things scurried out of the bush. They didn't waste arrows, but Santana had fashioned a slingshot out of a strip of cloth. She was awful at it.

"Let's hope we find something to shoot," she muttered, retrieving one of the rocks.

"We will." Quinn paused for a moment. "You know we have to talk about it. One of us isn't going home."

"That would be me," Santana said. "If it comes down to it, I can't kill you."

"Santana -"

"No," Santana said. She was careful, aware that all of Panem was watching. "No, don't. We'll figure something out, okay?"

"Okay," Quinn whispered.

Santana leaned in and kissed her before they kept walking.

—

That night, a few large birds roasted over the fire they'd made. Quinn watched the recap of the fallen Tributes, writing them down on her notepad. She took something out of her pocket.

"What is that?" Santana asked, handing around pieces of roasted fowl.

"A figurine," Quinn said. "The girl from District Six, Fera, she was holding it. I figured whoever gets back should get it to her parents."

"Yeah," Santana said. "Here...put it away for now. We need to eat."

—

"How did they find us?" Matt asked as they ran.

"I don't know."

They'd made it two days, hunting down Tribute after Tribute. They hadn't had to work too hard, but now they did, as all of the remaining Tributes had joined forces against the Careers. Kurt was utilizing his skill now, running, but making use of the landscape to get further and fire arrows at their chasers. Matt had received an electrified trident the day before, but he was trying to avoid using it too much. He didn't know how much battery life or whatever it had.

Quinn skidded and turned with the spear, taking out one of the attackers. Santana threw her two knives, embedding both in the boy from District Eleven. The girl from District Five had a sword. She was fighting Matt, while the girl from District Seven fought Santana.

There was a scream, just as Santana choked Seven out. She turned, knives ready, to see Quinn fall. The world went slow and silent. She couldn't even hear herself scream out Quinn's name. She threw the two knives, taking out the boy from District Five. She ran over and grabbed Quinn.

"It's okay," she said, the world rushing back now. "It's okay - it'll be fine."

"San..."

"You're okay, I've got you," Santana said, starting to cry. She looked down at the sword wound that marred Quinn's chest, and knew there was nothing she could do.

"My eyes are up here, asshole," Quinn whispered.

Santana let out an agonized breath that could have been a chuckle.

"I love you," Quinn said, panting for breath.

"I love you too."

"Santana," Matt said, putting a hand on her shoulder. "We need to move. There are still two Tributes out there."

Quinn closed her eyes and gave out one last rasping breath.

Kurt undid the small gold number one pin and pinned it to Santana's shirt, just next to her number two. "Come on," he said gently.

The canons began to sound.

"Who's left?" Santana asked in a hollow voice.

"Tom, from District Nine, and Cyrel from District Eight."

Something cold and fierce swept over Santana, and both boys noticed it.

"Let's go," she said.

—

They watched as the Ostrich Mutts savaged Cyrel. They'd killed Crying Tom, the Constantly Bombed earlier, having set fire to a large part of the forest to smoke him out of his hiding spot. He hadn't come out fast enough.

"Santana?"

She turned around, and was struck by the electrified trident. She went flying back, hitting the rocky ground. It hurt - god, it hurt - but she wasn't dead. Her vision swam for a moment, and then she saw Kurt and Matt squaring off.

"Right Kurt, you're not going to be a suicide," Matt said.

"Turn up the charge all the way," Kurt said. "I want it to be quick." He nodded once, and turned around.

Santana tried to get up, but her body wasn't cooperating. She didn't see the trident hit Kurt, but a moment later there was a cannon blast. She gasped and tried hard to sit up as Matt came back over to her.

"Just relax," he said. "It's okay - you're going home. Now," he said, pulling a handful of mushrooms out of his pocket. You'll be okay in a few minutes. You've still got your knives, so if this doesn't kill me, I want you to put me out of my misery. Okay."

"M-Matt... I -"

"It's okay," he said again, then stuffed the mushrooms in his mouth. He lay down next to her and closed his eyes. He began to convulse after a minute.

"Matt," Santana said, finally able to sit up. Her legs still felt like they'd been asleep for a long time, and she tried to ignore the pin prick feeling in them. Scooting over, she looked down at Matt's face. His eyes were clouded over, and he had no pulse.

The cannon sounded. And then the announcement was made - she had won.

—

Survivor

"Just one last question," Cornibus said.

Santana nodded. She was trying, trying so hard, not to start screaming at him. She wanted to go home - to bury herself in the blankets on her plush new bed, and not emerge for days.

"Did you manage to return Frae's toy to her parents?"

"Yes, I did. I saw them on the Victory Tour."

There was an "Awww" from the crowd, and Cornibus patted her on the knee.

She managed not to punch him.

"That was good of you. A true victor, folks!"

There was a cheer, cut short when Santana said,

"No."

"I'm sorry?"

"No, I'm not a true victor. Quinn, and Kurt and Matt were the victors. They won. I just survived."

Cornibus seemed not to know how to answer that. "Well...uh...we thank you for coming on the show. Let's give her a hand, folks."

In a daze, Santana walked off the stage to where Jeno was waiting.
He wrapped her in a thick cloak and said, "Let's get you home."

Living A Lie, by mulierositas

Note from author: This story is labeled M for several reasons, mostly because the story is centered around a Nazi concentration camp, but also because Russell Fabray turns out to be a huge racist douchebag who is capable of doing despicable things. Plus I have a bad tendency to kill story characters – You have been warned!

Lucy Quinn Fabray had from an early age been told that there were different kinds of humans. Her father, Russell Fabray, had always made sure she knew that she was one of the few lucky once in the world to be born into the magnificent species that was the powerful Aryan race. From as early as Lucy could remember, she had been constantly reminded by her father that she should be proud to be his daughter. Because he was after all the reason that the blood, that was currently pumping through Lucy's veins, made her a part of the master race.

Lucy loved her father dearly and why shouldn't she? He had never given her any reason not to, he had always treated her as the princess she was. So Lucy had never questioned why she so whole heartily believed that there really were other people in the world that was beneath her. She had never once blinked in disbelief when her father had told her that those people, or subhumans as he preferred to call them, needed to be neutralized to make sure their own race wouldn't be destroyed by them trying to intermix their weak genes, into the master race's pure bloodstream, in an attempt to ruin the purity of their perfect race. Lucy never questioned his motives or beliefs, he was after all her father and in her eyes he could never do anything wrong.

In fact Lucy had been one of his greatest supporters, when he had been promoted to become a commander at one of the newly built concentration camps in Germany. She had been overjoyed for his promotion, even if it meant that they had to move away from their beautiful home and all her perfect friends to live somewhere she had never been before, but Lucy would gladly do anything that could help her father achieve the glory he without a doubt deserved. Still the change hadn't been easy for her, she was after all a young woman standing on the threshold into adulthood, so losing all her friends and her childhood home had been hard on her. However she would still willingly sacrifice everything she had, if it meant that her father was happy. So even though Lucy ended up shedding a few tears over the whole move, it still didn't take her long to put it behind her. It certainly hadn't hurt that before she knew it, she once more had several new perfect friends and a shiny new perfect room in the perfect house. Lucy couldn't have been more happy if she tried. Now the Fabray's had everything, at least that was what Lucy thought. She was wrong.

Russell Fabray didn't think that everything was perfect, at least not yet. He thought that to be a perfect family his youngest daughter needed to give him a suitable son-in-law. Lucy's older sister, Frannie, was already married with the renowned Captain Krause in the German forces, she was already expecting twins. Now Lucy's father had decided that it was high time Lucy got her perfect match, which he had been so lucky to find in Biff McIntosh, who happened to be the son of one of Germany's largest export families. If Lucy thought that the Fabray's were rich, she was sorely mistaken, because compared to the McIntosh's they were poor. That was why this

marriage would be the perfect match according to her father. Not to mention that this marriage would most likely help him get relocated to Berlin to finally be a part of the power elite, which he had worked his whole life to become a part of. Of course in Russell's mind nothing could stop this from happening, but foolishly he hadn't reckoned with the fact that his beloved daughter, that he had thought had worshiped him almost like a God from she was a little baby, would be the one to rain on his parade. He was utterly shocked when Lucy had declined the offer, that he had so excitedly presented her with.

In the upcoming days after the refusal, Russell had desperately tried to reason with Lucy. He had even told her that this marriage between her and Biff would be the perfect marriage according to the Nuremberg racial laws, because neither of them had any hereditary diseases, which meant that they were both racial pure. Their combined offspring would be strong and racially pure, with no subhuman traits polluting their pure bloodstream. As tempting as that probably sounded to Lucy, his princess had still refused to accept the marriage arrangement, stating that she had no wish to leave her father's side for a man that she hardly even knew. Russell had almost exploded then, but he wisely knew that Lucy didn't react well to violence. So instead he cleverly came up with a better solution. She obviously needed to get to know Biff first. Russell had therefore quickly contacted Biff's father, so the two of them could agree on the terms on how to make Lucy see that Biff was the ideal partner. It didn't take them long to come up with the perfect solution. The best thing for them would be to arrange it so that the Fabray family would come up to the McIntosh's luxurious vacation home in the Bavarian Alps, where they could stay with them the McIntosh's for a week, which would be plenty of time for Lucy to get to know Biff and agree to the marriage.

Everyone involved had thought that the stay had been marvelous, well everyone except Lucy. She couldn't believe that her father seriously wanted her to marry such a stuck up and extremely self-centered man as Biff had turned out to be. Of course she obviously knew that this marriage would be perfect for the Fabray families reputation and up till now she had thought she was willing to do everything it took to please her father, but apparently she had been wrong. However Lucy wasn't stupid, she knew how she could please her father without actually agreeing to anything. So on their last day with the McIntosh's, she had finally agreed to the proposal, but only on the condition that her and Biff would have a long-term engagement period, in which she could live at home and under no circumstances did she want to get married before this dreadful war was over. Both families had been so overjoyed over the prospect of her finally accepting, that they had all easily agreed to her terms.

The next day there was a photo of Biff and her in all the major newspapers in Germany, proclaiming the engagement of Biff McIntosh and Lucy Quinn Fabray. Lucy found it a little bit funny that the two of them hadn't even kissed yet, but if she had anything to say about it that and the marriage would never ever happen. She just had to make sure that her father milked this engagement for all it was worth and when they were finally relocated to Berlin, like he deserved, she could finally break it off. Till then her father would be happy and as long as she didn't have to

see Biff again for a long, long time Lucy would be happy too. Little did she know that it wouldn't turn out to be that easy.

One evening, not long after their return from the Bavarian Alps, Lucy came down for dinner and walked straight into a heated argument between her parents in the dinning room. She quietly sat down to listen to what the problem was and quickly understood that her father was mad about his secretary having to take a month off from work, because of her soon to be wedding and the following honeymoon. Lucy's mother, Judy, had tried to reason with her husband that this clearly wasn't the end of the world, but apparently her father didn't agree.

"As if it wasn't bad enough that she's getting married and leaving me with the problem of replacing her, but on top of that she's marrying that snotty little brat that dared to criticize my leadership! You know the one who clearly wasn't old enough to be a SS officer, let alone a concentration camp inspector! I still believe he was only given that job because of who is father is." Russell was clearly aggravated. He was marching back and forth in the dinning room. "I bet he'll even end up making her pregnant! Which means that I'll have to find another full-time secretary." Judy was still trying to calm her husband down, she knew what he was capable of if he got too mad, she had unfortunately several permanent scars littered around her body to prove it.

"Can't you just take one of the other secretaries just for this week, till you can find a more permanent replacement? I'm sure they wouldn't mind." Russell stopped and glared at her.

"I can't just use anyone! Do you know how many people there are that would love to get a hold of my papers? Do you know how many enemies I have that would love to take over my job? I need to find someone I can trust! I can't just hire someone without making sure that they're a part of the master plan of making this country the greatest in the world! What if I hire a spy that is trying to undermined our cause? What if I end up hiring a liberal? Or even worse, what if they turn out to be racially impure! If someone found out about it, I would never come anywhere near Berlin! Don't you see that this is a really delicate matter? I can't just hire someone! Every candidate needs to be thoroughly checked out to make sure their trustworthy, not to mention pure! The people I need to contact would need at least a week to check out every applicant's background. I don't have a week, she's leaving tomorrow!" Russell was getting more and more agitated. Judy was slowly sinking farther down in her chair, silently dreading the now clearly unavoidable violent aftermath later on. Thankfully she was saved by her daughter.

"But daddy can't you just use me till you can hire a new secretary? I have this week off from school." Lucy was smiling at her father like she had solved the easiest problem in the world and her father immediately lighted up when he heard his daughter's voice. He hadn't even noticed that she had entered the dinning room, or the fact that dinner had been served ten minutes ago. He smiled brightly at her.

"That is an excellent idea my beautiful princess, why didn't I think of that. You would never betray your own father, would you?" It was obvious that it was meant to be a rhetorical question, because Russell didn't wait for an answer before he continued. "Well that settles that." He looked

down at the dining table. "Ah, dinners served I see, let's eat before it gets cold." He sat down and started a polite conversation with his daughter about what she had learned at school. Judy slowly breathed out in relief and thanked God for her daughter saving her from a sure beating.

That night Lucy had problems sleeping, she was so excited to finally being able to accompany her father to work. She had always wanted to see these infamous subhumans her father had always told her about. She had never seen any of these dreaded animals before, that she knew was threatening to ruin the world she loved so much. So the next morning she couldn't even wait for her father to finish eating and she constantly nagged him to hurry up so they could finally leave for work.

Russell smiled and laughed at how adorably cute his daughter got when she didn't getting her way, but he obviously loved how happy she ended up being when she finally got what she wanted. The big smile she gave him when he told her that it was finally time to leave was well worth it. He was actually looking forward to having her by his side for the week. However after he had finally thought about the whole matter a little bit more thoroughly yesterday, he had quickly decided that he needed to watch out so his daughter didn't end up witnessing some of the more unpleasant sides of his work. Not that he had any doubt that his pride and joy would be able to handle it, but more out of him not wanting her to be anywhere near, or even breathe the same air as most of the filth they had stored in the camp at the moment. The whole thing had actually turned out to be a bit of a dilemma for him, as to how he would be able to spare Lucy from coming too close to these filthy animals. He was obviously too busy himself to watch over her, but luckily for Russell he had thankfully one of the brightest minds in the region, so he had quickly found a solution to that problem too. He would simply put one of his guys to be on "Lucy Duty" for the whole duration of her stay. That would entail keeping her out of certain areas and make sure she didn't end up in any trouble. He had already picked out the perfect guy for the job.

As the driver turned into the camp, Russell studied his daughters eager expression with a smile on his lips. He couldn't have been more proud of how well his baby had grown up if I tried. There was no doubt in his mind that he would miss having his baby girl around when she married that McIntosh kid, but Russell quickly reminded himself that it was more important for the Fabray family to become a part of the McIntosh family, than him being nostalgic over the fact that his favorite daughter would be leaving him soon. All Russell really needed was to be on the McIntosh's good side, so he could finally get access to their connections in Berlin.

The moment their chauffeur turned the car into the camp grounds, Lucy was almost jumping up and down in her seat because of the excitement coursing through her body. If she could have, she would probably have pressed her face to the car window to see as much as she could, but Lucy obviously knew that a proper lady didn't behave like an animal. Still that didn't stop her from eagerly scanning her eyes over every little bit of the concentration camp that she could see from the car.

As they drove towards the office buildings, Lucy finally managed to get a good look at some of the subhumans, but to be honest she was immediately a little bit disappointed at what she saw. The picture her father had painted her of them had always been of a group of rabid animals, ready to attack and kill you in seconds if you dared to approach them. However these subhumans, that they were currently driving by, looked surprisingly like normal humans. So when Lucy finally stepped out of the car to walk into her father's office, she was actually really disappointed by what she had seen so far. Still she tried to hide her emotions so her father wouldn't see, because she knew that he was really excited to have her working for him. She obviously didn't want to let him down just because she was disappointed.

However it didn't take long before Lucy's mind was occupied with other things, since her father quickly put her to work behind his secretary's desk, sorting out a mountain of paperwork that hadn't been filed away before his old secretary left. Lucy was in fact so busy that she didn't even notice the handsome soldier entering, before he discreetly cleared his throat to get her attention. The unexpected sound made Lucy jump in her chair and she quickly look up at the newly arrived soldier standing in front of her desk. She involuntary blushed in embarrassment that she hadn't noticed him before. She made sure to give him one of her most charming smiles.

"I'm sorry, I didn't hear you come in. What can I do for you?"

"I'm here to see General Fabray, he wanted to talk to me. I'm Lieutenant Sam Evans by the way." Sam smiled back at her and quickly extended his hand. Lucy quickly shook it in greeting.

"Just one moment, I'll check if he's busy." It didn't take long before she came back from the other room with a smile on her face.

"He can see you now, just walk right in." Sam gave her a cheeky smile, before he schooled his facial expression in preparation of meeting his boss.

After Sam disappeared into her father's office Lucy sat in her chair, distractedly looking out of the window in deep thoughts, anxiously waiting for Sam to exit again. She couldn't help herself from thinking that Sam had to be a much more perfect example of the Aryan race than Biff was. She blushed once again when she suddenly caught herself thinking about how perfect their children would look, if he had been the one she was supposed to marry instead of Biff. When Sam finally came back out, Lucy quickly got up. She wasn't going to admit it, but she might have blushed even more when he gave her a big toothy grin and a subtle wink, before he walked out off the front door. She was a little bit disappointed that he hadn't talked to her, but she quickly understood that he probably couldn't since her father had been walking right behind him. He was now the one standing in front of her desk.

"That was one of my Lieutenants, Sam Evans, he's a good soldier. His father is actually part of the Gestapo, which you know are stationed in Berlin." Lucy could see the respect on her father's face. "I asked him to look after you while you're here." Russell saw that his daughter was about to protest. "Yes I know that you're old enough to take care of yourself, but honey this isn't the safest place to be." He pointed to the window. "I would never forgive myself if anyone of

those animals out there managed to harm you in any way. I have a lot of men out there, but you can never truly understand what those things are capable of doing to a beautiful girl like you. That's why I made sure that Evans will always escort you, whenever you're outside of this office." Lucy didn't like to be treated like a child, but she also clearly remembered all the horror stories her father had told her, about why they needed to contain these subhumans. So she obediently nodded her agreement. Russell smiled and turned around to go back into his office, but stopped when he remembered something.

"Before I forget, you need to know that Evans has been given strict orders to keep you away from certain areas of the camp. Before you start to complain, he's only doing that for your own good. These areas have some of the worst animals I have ever seen and I will not have my beautiful baby going anywhere near them. This is not negotiable Lucy! If I hear that you have been anywhere near any of those places, I will send you straight home! I couldn't live with myself if something were to happen to my little princess." Once again Lucy obediently nodded her head and quickly gave her father a kiss on the cheek, but on the inside she was jumping up and down at the thought of the possibility of finally encounter these fierce animals she had dreamed of seeing.

The joy Lucy was feeling after her father's revelation was quickly subdued, when she found out that it would become a lot harder than she had thought to get passed Sam Evans to see these fierce creatures. No matter how much she flirted with him, it still didn't help. He just blankly refused to take her anywhere else, than where General Fabray had told him was safe for her. Not even the fact that she had managed to make him shyly admit that he already knew who she was and that he had actually on several occasions tried to talk to her, since they had attended many of the same gatherings, had ended up helping her in her attempt at tricking him into showing her the forbidden areas of the camp. To be honest Lucy couldn't even remember meeting Sam before, but to be fair she had always had a lot of suitors, so it was rather hard to remember them all. However she eagerly noted that it seemed like Sam was more than just a little bit smitten with her, that fact could come in handy later. So even if she hadn't succeeded in making him help her break her father's rules, she was confident that she could use his obvious crush to get her will sooner or later. For the time being she had just decided to given up for now and spent the rest of her lunch break watching, from afar, some of the newly arrived subhumans line up in rows, before they were herded in different directions. At least Sam had been willing to share some of his knowledge about what was happening in front of them.

Apparently they were being separated, firstly by gender since they obviously didn't need them to try to breed more subhumans. Which reminded Lucy of her father's saying that they all had a bad reputation of behaving like primitive animals with rabbit tendencies, so separating them seemed wise. After that the two groups were than separated by strength, since they needed the strong once to work for their living. When Lucy asked what they did with the weak that couldn't work, Sam had gone eerily quiet before coughing and scratching the back of his head. Then he pointed towards the nearest line that was slowly walking past them in the distance. Lucy could see

that they were heading towards one of the grey buildings and Sam quickly explained that they were going to be disinfected in the showers first, since they didn't want the guards to catch any of their vermin or diseases. Lucy couldn't help feeling her heart jump in unexpected sympathy, when one of the guards hit one of the smaller children for trying to run back to the other group, most likely wanting to see his father again that probably had been picked out to be in the strong group. Lucy couldn't understand why she suddenly felt bad for the little boy, that obviously hadn't done anything wrong, but he was after all the offspring of the filth her father had told her was trying to take over their rightful living space. Those things were all trying to ruin everything that was good about their country, so he probably deserved everything he got, didn't he? When the soldiers had finally managed to fit the whole group inside the shower room, which Lucy thought was way too small for such a large group, Sam took her hand and said it was time to get back to the office.

Later that day and the next day too Lucy tried to spot the little boy again, but to no prevail. She couldn't see him anywhere. The truth was that she couldn't see any of the kids she had seen walking past her. It felt a little bit strange that she couldn't see any of them. When Lucy started looking a little bit closer at the subhumans, that she could see. She quickly noticed that she couldn't recognize even one, that resembled someone from the weak group, that she had seen walk by her that first day. It was then it suddenly hit her that she actually couldn't see any children or old people either. After that it didn't take Lucy long before she noticed the fact that there were barely any women behind the fences, there were mostly men. That was something she found to be really strange, since the group that had walked by her had been only women, with the exception of some of the children that also included males. When Lucy finally asked Sam about it, he once more scratched his neck and told her that it wasn't so unusual, because the weak group had to be in isolation for at least a week before they could be put out with the others, just in case any of them had a contagious disease. That explanation actually made sense to Lucy, but it still didn't explain why there weren't any other children or old people in the camp and why there were so few women. For each day that went by, Lucy got more and more questions.

Like the fact that she knew that her father had told her from she was a little girl, that the people she saw behind the fences weren't humans, but somehow that didn't stop her heart from hurting when she saw how badly some of them seem to have been treated. She rarely saw them being beaten, but Lucy quickly started to suspect that her father had told his guards not to do that in front of her. Which had quickly been confirmed on two separate occasions, when the guards had stopped a beating because they saw her coming. After that Sam had made sure to make their presence known, which was probably why she hadn't seen anymore beatings. Either way Lucy could still see that a lot of the subhumans had wounds after what had to be severe beatings. It really made her heart bleed to see how thin and unhealthy they all looked, just standing there, staring back at her with big empty eyes. However what really surprised her was the fact that not one time did any of them lash out at her or say anything rude, like she had thought they would. This whole experience had ended up being so surreal that Lucy didn't know what to believe anymore. She had tried to get some answers from Sam, but the more she asked the more he started shutting down, or he ended up trying to distract her with other really boring

topics that she couldn't care less about. Slowly all the unanswered questions was starting to drive Lucy crazy, she needed some answers. That was why she decided to take matters into her own hands to find some of them, but first she needed to get ride of her watch dog.

Note: continued on <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10322829/>

You and I (Collide), by Nayanna

I lay with Quinn resting her head on my chest, this is becoming a ritual. I go to New Haven, we have sex and then this special moment happens, something that reminds me that I need to stop this, I'm falling too deep but at the same time I don't want them to end, I want them ingrained on my memories.

"I have to go."

Quinn and I have this friends with benefits thing for a while now, after Schuester's epic fail wedding but the lines are so blurry, does she feel the same?, my life is so complicated, I'm living with two Broadway losers, that unfortunately are so special to me, like part of my family. If somebody had told me that they would be my friends I would have used my razor blades.

"Don't go yet."

She put her hands on my neck, I hold on her waist, she has these beautiful eyes, green and golden, they remind me of the beauty of nature, adventures and home. She kisses me softly with patience and passion, I can feel her smile on my lips, I've never been happier, never feel like I found my place.

She starts to caress my hair while kissing me, I tightened my grip on her waist, my head feels like exploding, my chest feels so full, everything on me belongs to her. We separate when the air becomes a need, she has her eyes closed with this pleased smile.

"I love you."

She opens her eyes, scared, she's looking for words, her smile disappears. I could deny everything, pretend and continue our friends with benefits or I could be honest and stop wondering what could have been, I choose to be brave.

"I love you."

"Santana, you don't mean that."

"Quinn, I know you are scared but I'm scared too, I never felt this way before, and the time I felt something remotely close to this, I ended up losing my best friend, I don't want to lose you but I can't keep pretending, it hurts so much."

"Santana I... I don't know what to say."

"I don't expect anything from you, it's just the way I feel, you and I bring the best and the worst of each other, at the same time we push each other to be better without losing who we are."

"Santana, I thought we wanted the same thing."

"I thought that too, but I want more, I want everything that is you, complicated, beautiful, messy, smart, crazy you."

“You’re crazy, Santana. Don’t say things you don’t mean.”

“I mean everything I say, you need to process what happen, I understand, when you’re ready to talk let me know, I’ll be waiting.”

“Santana wait, what if I’m not...”

“It’s okay Quinn, after all I finally found you and I collide.”

On my way to New York, I feel so light; I am terrified but at the same time pleased with myself. Maybe everything would be worthy.

—

“Santana, you have been acting weird the past two weeks.”

“You even try to rip my eyes out for joining *I won't say I'm in love* at our Disney marathon.”

“It was her moment Rachel, and you tried to steal her thunder.”

“It’s not my fault, all Disney songs are made to be performance with an amazing voice, my voice.”

I tuned them out while they bicker about Disney songs. Quinn haven’t tried to contact me, I’m trying to be reasonable and give her space, I love her but she has been hurt before and needs more time, or that’s what I said to myself.

“Are you okay, Santana?” Rachel asks. She may be a little egocentric, but she cares, they are really worried about me. Before I can answer someone is knocking and Kurt goes to open it. Rachel hug me, they may be crazy, but they’re great and I regret ever hurting them.

“Santana, it’s for you.”

I stand up, but I stop moving when I see who is, Quinn start playing softly the guitar, Rachel and Kurt are as surprise as I am, she walks slowly closer to me, when she starts singing she stops playing the chords.

*The dawn is breaking
A light shining through
you're barely waking
And I'm tangled up in you*

She plays the guitar again, Kurt and Rachel seem delighted with the performance, it reminds me of the glee days, the song is really familiar but I can’t figure it out. She stops playing the guitar again while getting closer until she is standing in front of me.

*I'm open, you're closed
Where I follow, you'll go
I worry I won't see your face
Light up again*

She can't play and sing at the same time, it's quite funny and charming, she is making an effort for me, before she continues, she look deep in my eyes and took my hand for the next verse.

*Even the best fall down sometimes
Even the wrong words seem to rhyme
Out of the doubt that fills my mind
I somehow find
You and I collide*

She plays again, the last words is what I said to her before leaving, she feels the same way, this is her way of showing me, we are the craziest match, one that makes sense.

*I'm quiet you know
You make a first impression
I've found I'm scared to know I'm always on your mind*

*Even the best fall down sometimes
Even the stars refuse to shine
Out of the back you fall in time
I somehow find
You and I collide*

Rachel and Kurt starts the backs ups of the song, they have no idea that I don't want them in here right now, I decide not to bother, this moments is for us only.

*Don't stop here
I've lost my place
I'm close behind*

She plays while singing this verse, she looks so beautiful and exposed, and I have never been more in love that right in this moment.

*Even the best fall down sometimes
Even the wrong words seem to rhyme
Out of the doubt that fills your mind
You finally find
You and I collide*

She looks ashamed every time she sings the first part of this verse, I stand closer, almost touching her, and mouth "I love you", she smile softly and continues playing looking at my eyes the whole time.

*You finally find
You and I collide
You finally find
You and I collide*

"Santana, I'm sorry it took me so long to realize that I love you too."

I can't contain the smile that grace my face, her eyes light up, I kiss her hard, with all the love, passion and everything I want to say for the past two weeks.

"Tana, I can't promise you that everything would be perfect, I mean you and I, we're crazy but you are right we bring the best and the worst of each other without losing who we are and I love you."

"I love you too, but at least next time play and sing simultaneously, charming and all, you'll have to do better if you want me to forgive you."

"Sorry, Satan, I learned this song two hours ago, it's harder than it sounds."

"Wanky."

We both laugh, Rachel and Kurt haven't leave the apartment and they have an amused and surprise smile

"You are so immature."

"You love it, Fabgay."

"Whatever, girlfriend."

I kiss her again, girlfriend sounds amazing, before it can progress to anything more physical, we hear some *awwws* coming from my roommates that hadn't understand we want privacy.

"Let's make up for the time apart."

She blush cutely while Rachel and Kurt seem uncomfortable, I take her hand and walk to my bedroom, before I close the curtains, I need revenge, those losers are talking about the song and how cute we look.

"You guys better buy some earplugs, we have two weeks to make up for!"

I jump on the bed and kiss Quinn, while Rachel and Kurt curse, yeah I have a complicated life, but this is so worth it.

I Don't Want To Feel The Pain, by SCWritings

Quinn was cramming for a test in her dorm room one day when her phone started lighting up. She sees Rachel's name flash across her screen. Deciding to ignore it, she silences the phone and keeps working. The phone goes off again.

The blonde rolls her eyes and answers the phone. "What's up, Rach?" Anyone could see that Quinn's face visibly drops. "He's what? No. How is that possible?" She keeps listening to what Rachel is saying, but can only get a few words picked out of the sobbing that was happening on the other end. "Are you sure?" She hears the 'yes' loud and clear over her phone and that's when she began to cry. Tears rolled down her cheeks in silent sobs, marking her face with the makeup she applied earlier in the day. Finn had passed away.

She hears the girl on the other line distantly say something about a tribute week for Finn at the Glee Club, and how Rachel is going to stay home from it. The blonde tried to go, but her week was full of tests and projects that were due, so she couldn't just take the whole week off. Quinn got updates from Kurt a couple times a day and then Rachel ended up going. The small brunette was devastated that Quinn couldn't make it, but she had Kurt's hand to hold the entire time.

She got the news of the letterman's jacket that was stolen, and Mr. Shue eventually told the class that he had it, in which he gave it back to Kurt so he could give it to Santana. She got the news about Santana's break down and she heard Kurt recite the speech Santana wrote. She got the news of the tree that is now in the place where she and Finn were making out for the first time and Sue caught them. She cried every night that week and it is that Friday night when she hears a knocking on her dorm room door.

She hurls herself off of her bed hastily wiping at the tear streaks. She slowly opens the door and finds Santana slumped against the opposite wall wearing Finn's jacket with her eyes looking distantly through the air.

"Santana?" Quinn calls out to her. Santana's head slowly lifts up and her eyes meet Quinn's. The blonde gasps at the sadness in the brunette's eyes and reaches for her best friend's hand. Santana looks down and then lifts her own hand to tangle in Quinn's and she pulls Santana into her dorm, wrapping her in a hug as soon as they were inside.

They both cried together on Quinn's dorm bed. All night, they both cried until they fell asleep tangled together at four thirty in the morning.

The next day had Quinn sleeping in since it was Saturday. She wakes up and looks around with a smile on her face until she smells Finn's jacket and remembers what had happened this previous week. She finds herself unable to keep her thoughts away from the young wanna be teacher. Usually she would get up to go to classes by now, but she finds that she has nothing to occupy her thoughts. That is until the brunette next to her twitches in her sleep.

She looks over Santana's face and she sees it in the most relaxed state she's ever seen it in. She slowly replaces her head back into the crook of Santana's neck, where it was resting before and closes her eyes, basking in the relaxation she felt with her best friend tangled up on the bed with her.

It isn't long when she feels Santana start to wiggle around in her sleep, seemingly coming into the real world. The blonde sees the exact same thing happen to Santana. She opens her eyes, and has a content smile on her face until she remembers everything that has happened. She meets Quinn's gaze and it's almost as if the pain dulled slightly, just in that moment.

"Why weren't you there?" Santana asks, and the pain comes back full force to both of them. Quinn looks away from Santana's stare, feeling guilty even though there's nothing she could do about it.

"I wanted to be there, San. I really did. There were so many tests and projects this last week. I couldn't just leave," Quinn responds with a crack in her voice at the very end.

Santana winced when she heard the crack, seeing just how much pain the blonde was in. "Brittany wasn't there either."

"I know."

Santana takes a deep breath. "She's pregnant."

Quinn's eyes go wide, but she instantly squeezes them shut, realizing how much pain her eyes were in after crying pretty much all night. "What?"

Santana rolls onto her back away from Quinn and stares at the ceiling, thinking about how just a week ago, her life was normal. "Yeah, she's dating some nerd at MIT. She wants to marry him someday."

Quinn scoots closer to her friend, missing the warmth Santana provided as soon as she rolled away. "San, I'm-"

"It's fine, Quinn." The blonde looks at her skeptically. "Really. I'm fine. It's been a whole year and I worked my ass off, but I'm over her. I really am." A smile plays on the brunette's lips at how free she felt, but then she is once again weighed down by the pain of losing a part of her family.

The two are silent for a long time. Content on just being close to each other and letting the pain sink in. "When does it stop?" Quinn asks Santana, referring to the heartache the two of them were going through right now.

Santana sighs and answers as best as she can. "One day, you'll wake up and realize it doesn't hurt as much as it used to. That the splintering pain in your stomach and chest just turns into a dull throbbing in your heart and a never ending knot in your stomach. Then it kind of goes away and you're left with painful memories."

Quinn snuffles. "It hurts. San, it hurts so bad. This past week I have been able to avoid thinking about it until at night, but by then I was too exhausted to really think about it. I don't want to hurt anymore."

She doesn't know if it was because she is in a different place, or because Quinn and her shared the bed, cuddling all night, or if it is because of the repressed feelings she had for the blonde, but she looked down and caught Quinn's gaze and then leaned in to press her lips against her friend's.

Quinn pulls back and Santana hangs her head slightly, keeping her eyes closed. "What are you doing?"

The Latina shakes her head. "I'm trying not to think."

Quinn nods and allows herself not to think as she leans back in to Santana and cups her cheek. Santana opens her eyes and Quinn nods once again before capturing Santana's lips with her own.

They both throw all of their focus onto each other. Quinn allows small moments where she brings herself back to reality and she's met with enjoyment and actually liking the way Santana's lips feel against her own. She likes the way Santana's skin raised it goose bumps as she runs her fingers under the hem of the brunette's shirt beneath the jacket. She likes the way Santana's nails scratch her scalp after she does that thing with her tongue. She likes the small whimpering noise Santana makes if Quinn nibbles her bottom lip. She likes everything about Santana, so she brings herself out and back to reality by breaking the kiss.

The two are panting against each other's mouths when Santana speaks, "Do you want to stop?"

Quinn contemplates her decisions for a minute. She wants to forget the pain and suffering she has gone through this past week, but she doesn't want to throw herself at her best friend. She wants to go further with Santana. God, does she want to, but she doesn't want to go that fast, especially when she finds herself actually developing a serious liking for the girl in the bed with her. She wants to in reality, but Santana might only want to so she can forget her pain. "I do, but I don't."

Santana takes a deep breath, trying to cool the heat between her legs and control the throbbing that's down there as well. "Care to elaborate?" she asks as she looks back into Quinn's hazel eyes.

Quinn stares back with as much sincerity as she can. "I want to forget. I want to go further, God, San, I really want to. But I don't want to just do it, I don't want to go fast, and I don't want to do it if you're just going to leave later after a session of comfort sex."

Santana blanches at Quinn's words. She was not expecting that. She was expecting, 'Oh, yeah, well, I'm straight. Even though I was moaning into your mouth and touching you in ways no one has ever touched you before, I'm straight, so get out.' She wasn't expecting, 'I like you, so I want to take my time.' She opens her mouth to respond, but she ends up asking something else instead. "Do you have feelings for me?" Quinn nods. "We'll go slow."

A smile creeps upon Quinn's face and an equal smile flashes onto Santana's face as they both get up and decide to go out to breakfast. To get out of the boring and depressing dorm room and out into the world.

Santana could be Quinn's light at the end of the tunnel, and Quinn could be Santana's. They could be each other's savior.

Free Day, by seemenopeu

The sound of sneaker shuffling was almost tranquil for Quinn. She watched as the the team danced out the routine and licked her bottom lip, tasting a bit of copper. They finished the routine and though Quinn had not been watching that close, she could tell by some of their faces that it wasn't perfected yet. They needed perfection to win Nationals, but exhaustion was a big factor on why they weren't getting it.

She placed her hands on her hips dismissed the girls. Sue never gave her permission, but this was Quinn's team too and if one of them dies from her leadership skills then they had no way of winning.

She waited for all of them to shuffle into the locker room before following, heading straight for a mirror. Quinn frowned at it, noticing that she had bit through her lip during practice. Again.

"Are you worried about something, Fabray? You're boyfriend still fooling around with Berry?" Santana said from in back of her. She sat on the bench in back of Quinn and tried to hide her concern with a nasty comment.

Quinn smiled through the reflection, "Thanks for the concern, Santana. I was just worried that your cement boobs may make it difficult for you to continue to be a flyer."

Santana smirked and looked down. They had been going back and forth at each other like this for ages and it stopped being hostile comments and started being subtle care wrapped up in the hostility. It kept Quinn on her toes but also made her appreciate the girl more and more.

"Fabray!" Sue's voice echoed from off the walls. Everyone cringed without even seeing the woman's face and Quinn quickly turned to walk to wherever she was. She found her in the hallway in front of the locker room, with a sneer on her face, "Who told you to stop practice?"

"No one, Coach," Quinn stood up straight.

"Then why is it over?"

Quinn took a deep breath. Sure, she was the only one who could tell Sue what was on her mind, but it didn't stop her from being extremely intimidated, "The girls were exhausted. If they pass out on the field or worse, die, then you'd be faced with a lawsuit."

Sue stared at Quinn, a flash of anger on her face before just annoyance, "Whatever, Blondie. Just remember, next time, I'll dismiss practice. Not you."

"Yes, Coach."

"Useless," Sue muttered before walking away. Quinn blinked her eyes, trying to let the comment pass her, before turning away in her toes.

Quinn drove herself home, which was new because Finn usually drove her home. He usually was the one who drove her to school too, but not today. He was working on a duet with Rachel for glee. He was probably cheating on Quinn with her.

Quinn clenched her jaw and cursed herself for even thinking that. Now she'd probably think about it all night.

She parked her car next to her father's and waited a moment before fixing a smile on her face and heading in. Quinn was hit with the smell of spaghetti and garlic and frowned at the growl at her stomach. She looked up at the stairs and wished she could just go to her room, and then headed for the kitchen.

"Quinn!" Her mother greeted from by the stove, "How was your day?"

"Fine," Quinn smiled as she grabbed a water bottle from out of the fridge, "Is daddy in the study?"

"Yes, he'll be down in a minute," Judy looked around and whispered, "He's not in the greatest of moods so best behavior, Darling. Okay?"

Quinn nodded her head, taking a sip of her water.

Dinner was quiet, which was almost unusual. Usually it was spent with her father telling his day and asking Quinn how her day was and then ending with something about her sister Frannie. Those were how the good nights went.

But the way Russell tossed his food around on his plate, made the whole night shift into a bad one.

"What is this shit, Judy?" Russell started, right on cue, throwing his fork onto his plate.

"It's spaghetti, dear," Judy responded.

"Okay, but why are you feeding us it?" Russell took a swig of his scotch, a drink too strong to go with dinner, "You too lazy to make anything else? You don't do anything all day. Why are you being lazy?"

Judy didn't respond and Russell huffed before looking at Quinn who was poking her fork at her food, "And what the hell is your problem?"

Quinn looked up, "Nothing, daddy."

"Why the hell aren't you eating?"

"I'm not hungry."

"You're not hungry," he repeated, "Eat the food, Lucy."

Quinn looked down at the food, "I can't."

"I said eat the food."

"I just," Quinn started to argue back but changed her mind, "Can I be excused?"

Russell pinched the bridge of his nose with his pointer finger and his thumb, "Just get out of my sight."

Quinn got up from her seat and made it quickly upstairs, happily sighing as she laid on her bed. She stared at the wall and waited for time to pass her by. For it to forget her like the stories of people that she's read about. But barely a minute had passed before her eyes grew tired.

She turned away but jumped once she felt her phone buzz. Quinn looked at it, expecting to see Finn's name but instead saw Santana's, so she answered, "Hello?"

"Q?"

"Yeah?"

"What was wrong with you at practice?"

Quinn bit her lip but quickly stopped, realizing that that's the reason why Santana's calling her in the first place, "Nothing."

"I guessed it, didn't I? You're worried about Finn."

Quinn sighed, "San, leave it."

"Look, Quinn, fuck Finn. He doesn't deserve you."

Quinn shook her head, "I don't deserve to be happy, do I?"

"Of course you do, Q."

Quinn suddenly felt a lump in her throat, "I don't want to talk about this anymore."

"Quinn, I-"

"See you tomorrow, San," then she hung up. She crawled under her covers and hugged a pillow, deciding that she was going to try to get sleep tonight.

The next day at school, after four hours of sleep, Quinn walked the hallways, splitting crowds in half by the mighty power of her Cheerios uniform. She was heading to the choir room, the day of Finn and Rachel's duet and the last day Quinn has to think of them being together all by themselves singing love songs to one another.

She sat herself next to Finn's stuff and eyed him standing too close to Rachel in the front of the room. They were whispering to each other and Rachel giggled and Quinn sucked in a shaky breath.

"You okay there, Tiger?" Santana's voice asked from next to her. Quinn looked over to Santana, who was now sitting by her, and gave an unconvincing nod, "Look, if your that worried then go through his phone or something. His stuff's right there."

Quinn wanted to say that she wasn't that type of girl, but she was. So she reached through his stuff until she found his phone. He didn't even have a lock on it as she swiped it open. She didn't have look farther than that as probably the most incriminating feature on his phone was on the home screen; a picture of Rachel Berry.

Quinn put the phone where it was and grasped on to the edges of her chair. She felt like jumping the small girl in front of her but what would everyone think? What would Santana think?

Then they started to sing and Quinn had to turn away. Their voices harmonized so well together and it made her skin crawl. Finn was Quinn's and Rachel was just coming out if nowhere and taking him from her. It wasn't fair. It just wasn't fair.

The song was over faster than she could have imagined and Quinn felt herself leave before her mind caught up. Sure, it wasn't polite for her to leave like that but what she wanted to say would have been worse.

Her name was called after her and she turned to see Finn catching up, a goofy smile on his face, "Did you like it?"

Quinn creased her eyebrows, "Does it look like I liked it?"

"I just thought you had to go to the bathroom," Finn joked but turned serious once he noticed the look on Quinn's face, "What's wrong?"

"I want you to stay away from Rachel," Quinn blurted out, "I don't want you two around each other anymore."

"That's crazy, she's my friend," Finn looked to the sky before saying, "That's like me telling you to stay away from Santana."

"She's not trying to steal me away from you, Finn," Quinn took a deep breath, trying to calm herself, "Rachel is... Just stay away from her."

"She's my friend, Quinn."

"Stop saying that. You know she's not just a friend."

Finn scrunched up his face, "What are trying to say?"

Quinn folded her arms, "You know what I'm trying to say."

"This is crazy."

"Look, you have to choose, Finn. If you want to stay with me than you can't be around her anymore."

Finn shrugged, "I don't even think you're worth the trouble."

Quinn flinched, that hurt more than she would have thought. She nodded her head before turning on her heel and walking the other way.

Quinn drove in circles just so that she wouldn't get home early. Once she decided that it was time, she parked her car and welcomed the cooking scent from her home. This time she was hungry. Maybe if she would eat a bit, today wouldn't hurt so much.

Dinner went smoother than the day before, her father more talkative but she could tell that his mood was still a bit sour.

Quinn took a large bite out of her lasagna and jumped at the sound of her father throwing his fork down on the plate again.

"Pasta again, Judy?" He announced.

"Yes," the woman took a small bite, "There was a bargain at the store."

"So now we're a bargain family? Are we broke or something cause last I checked, I was making enough money to feed us properly."

"Yes, Dear."

"Don't yes dear me," he then turned to Quinn who was in the middle of another bite, "Whoa slow down, Lucy. You don't want to get fat again."

"I'm hungry," Quinn said after swallowing.

"I didn't ask."

"Well, what do you want me to do? Eat or not eat? Make up your mind," Quinn felt a surge of confidence flow through her. Her day was crap and she didn't feel like putting up with him, too.

"Quinn," Judy warned.

"Shut up, Judy," Russell waved her off and turned his full attention to his daughter, "Are you getting mouthy with me?"

"No," Quinn put down her fork, "I'm just saying-"

Russell raised his open hand and landed it across Quinn's face, silencing the girl. The room stayed motionless as Quinn's eyes watered and her cheek began to ache.

"Don't get mouthy with me," Russell's voice sliced through the silence, "This is my home and I demand respect. Now go to your room. I don't want to see your face for the rest of the evening. Fucking waste of space."

Quinn yanked herself from the table and ran up to her room. She laid flat on her bed and wiped any tears that had fallen.

She felt her phone buzz and again it was Santana. Quinn considered not answering, but pressed the green button anyways, "What?"

"Where did you go today? People were worried and shit."

"I don't know."

"Did you see something on Finn's phone or something?"

"No," Quinn scooted under her covers while keeping the phone securely to her ear, "Maybe. Yeah. A picture. His home screen. It was Rachel."

"That dick. Do you want me to beat his ass or publicly humiliate him?"

Quinn pulled the cover under her chin, "Neither, San."

"There's no neither, it's one or the other."

Quinn let out a little laugh, but stopped in case Russell decided to come upstairs for something, "You don't have to."

"I know, but you're like," she paused, "one of my best friends."

"You're sweet but," Quinn touched her cheek and hissed at the sting lingering on it, "I'll sleep on it, okay?"

"I'm not sweet."

"Yeah, yeah. You're a tough bitch."

Santana laughed on the other line, making Quinn smile, "Okay, Q. Night."

"Night, Santana," she said before hanging up. She tossed the phone away from her and felt her eyes droop from exhaustion. Quinn felt herself get a bit excited at the idea of her maybe getting some sleep.

Quinn sat at her desk in the middle of her second period, trying to stay awake. She had gotten something close to sleep, but that included a nightmare. The nightmare was based at the school but she was there by herself all alone because everyone had left her. She had woke up on the verge of tears.

But in real life school, it was different. People wanted to be around her, even if one of those people included that Jewish boy who kept asking her if she knew about the secret affair Finn and Rachel were having for his website. She denied it, though she knew there was something going on. She just hoped no one would catch up with Finn's idea of her lackluster of worthiness.

Speaking of Finn, here he was coming, jogging over with an apologetic grin on his face.

"Can I talk to you?" He asked before leading them to a less crowded part of the hallway, "I need to apologize to you."

"This is true," Quinn nodded, too tired to beat around the bush, "Apologize then."

"I'm sorry," Finn rubbed the the top of her arm, "but Rachel's my friend and I can't just stop being friends with her just cause you say so."

"I can't share, Finn," Quinn yanked her shoulder away, "It's either me or her and that's it."

Finn looked down, "I choose her. She's my friend and she needs me-"

Quinn put up her hand to stop him. She felt like she was going to be sick and didn't know whether she should slap him or beat him, but managed to walk away instead. Her emotions were bubbling over and she was having a hard time keeping everything in.

By the end of the day, and the end of a practice that Sue had dismissed herself, Quinn was exhausted. She sat in the locker room as the girls shuffled out one by one. She looked at the cut on her knee that she developed during practice and wondered why it didn't even hurt.

"You're still here," Santana observed as she sat next to blonde. She looked down at the cut on Quinn's knee, "You're always bleeding after practice."

Quinn shrugged, so Santana dug into her bag and pulled out a small first aid kit. As she opened it, Quinn gave her a look, "Britt's always bleeding after practice, too."

Quinn nodded her head before letting the other girl clean up her wound. It was quiet in the locker room, except for the light echo that came from the school outside of the room and the plastic that crumbled in Santana's hands as she opened up a bandaid.

"What happened to your face, Q?" Santana asked as she put the first aid away, "Did you get slapped or something?"

Quinn hadn't thought that anyone had noticed, her father had left her cheek pretty swollen this time. She let out a nervous laugh and set out to change the subject, "Did Brittany stop sleeping with you?"

"What?"

"You're only this observant when Brittany stops sleeping with you."

"You can say that," Santana kicked her bag away from her, "Now about your face-"

"I don't want to talk about it. Let's not talk about it," Quinn pleaded.

Quinn watched as a slew of emotions passed over the girl's face before she nodded, "I guess, Quinn."

"Thanks, San," Quinn leaned her head against the lockers.

"But it bothers me that someone could touch your face and you won't let me snatch them," Santana folded her arms.

"Let it go," Quinn warned and Santana rolled her eyes.

They sat in silence again. Quinn smiled, the company comforting her.

The next day was better, except for the random notes she kept finding everywhere. In her locker, in her books, all from Finn. It confused her, since all had words of "Sorry" and "Let's not fight anymore" like Finn hadn't chose Rachel over her the day before.

Quinn never actually saw Finn until glee practice later that day, when he sang a song in her honor in a way to get her to forgive him. She folded her arms and rolled her eyes. Quinn was still hurt and a romantic 80s song wasn't going to make her feel better.

Finn finished and walked over to Quinn with a smile, "Forgiven?"

Quinn sighed and looked away, "No."

"Really?" Finn scratched the back of his head, "Rachel had told me that-"

"Do you not understand why I'm pissed at you?"

"I just thought-"

"You thought wrong, Finn!" Quinn turned away to calm herself, "Just sit down. I don't want to talk to you."

Finn sighed, shrugged at Rachel and sat in a seat away from Quinn.

Quinn decided to stay late after practice again, this time outside on the track. She sat, legs folded, on the tracks and stared at the sun. She tried to lose her anger with sun setting in the sky, but it wasn't working so she pulled her legs into her chest and breathed.

"Do you ever go home?" Quinn looked over to Santana, who walked over to her with her bag over her shoulder.

Quinn shook her head, "I just haven't felt like it."

"Same," Santana sat next to her and threw her bag by her feet, "How are you, Q?"

"Why do you care?"

"I don't know. Maybe it's cause I'm like your friend or something. So, how are you?"

Quinn bit her lip, "Stressed."

"How come?" Santana leaned back by her hands.

"I'm just," Quinn danced her finger on the turf ground, "Stressed."

Santana made a noise of agreement, "Want to know how I take care of stress?"

"No thanks, Santana. I don't go that way."

Santana laughed, "You don't even know what I was going to say."

"You were going to say something about sex."

"Was not."

"Fine," Quinn patted her knees in a tattoo, "How do you relieve your stress, Santana?"

The girl smirked, "Sex."

Quinn sighed, "Thanks for telling me. I don't know how that helps me, but thanks."

"Well it was also a suggestion," Santana continued once Quinn gave her a confused look, "Look, your stressed out. Sex relieves stress. I happen to be good at that department."

"Are you offering me sex?" Quinn's eyes went wide.

"Yes?" Santana tried.

"San, that's nice of you," Quinn looked back up the sky, the sun almost about gone and the air getting chilly, "But not only am I straight but I literally just got out of a relationship and I'm not-"

"It's just sex, Fabray. It's not going to hurt you. Actually, it's suppose to make you feel better."

"I'm flattered but-"

"I'll prove it."

Quinn turned back to her and squinted her eyes, "Like how?"

"Are you in?"

"I'm just curious on how you're going to prove it."

Santana thought for a moment, "I don't know."

Quinn watched as Santana eyed the sky, letting her eyes outline the base of her jaw and stopping at the smooth skin of her neck.

Santana looked back towards the blonde, catching Quinn staring. She smirked before laying down to look up at the sky, "I was just kidding, Q"

Quinn didn't respond as she let her eyes travel down her friend's body, allowing whatever she had been feeling for Santana to take over. Her eyes traced the letters on her Cheerios' top, stopping at the white outlined H before scoping her eyes down to the bottom of the top where brown skin barely showed. Quinn traced the ground with her finger, imagining that the cold, soft floor was the Latina's warm, silky skin.

Her eyes flicked her eyes back to brown ones once the girl started to shift under her gaze. She shared a look with Santana, a look that said that they were both desperate and needed this. If what they were thinking was actually going to happen.

So Quinn leaned down and kissed her, keeping herself balanced with one hand and using the other to cup Santana's face. It wasn't the first kiss for either of them, but it could have been by the sheer force of it.

Their lips stayed together, in synchronized movement, even as Santana moved Quinn to lay on the ground with her on top of her.

They only separated once Santana pulled away, Quinn's hands still latched to her shoulders and pulling her down.

"Quinn, why are we kissing?" Santana asked, stopping a few inches in front of Quinn's face to look her in the eye.

"Why are you asking questions?" Quinn pulled at her, trying to pull her back to her. She must have been mistaken, but she thought that Santana needed this too.

"Quinn I can't," Santana looked away, "I didn't know what I was thinking. I..."

Santana opened and closed her mouth, forming words before changing her mind and staying silent. Quinn watched her, her fingers gripped tight against Santana's shoulder blades, worried that the girl was going to change her mind.

"My dad hits me," Quinn blurted out. Santana turned her face to her, eyes as wide as the moon above and Quinn repeated almost to herself, "My dad hits me."

Quinn released her grasp and sunk into the floor. Saying it aloud made everything feel a lot different.

"Are you serious?" Santana asked but didn't wait for an answer before wrapping Quinn in her arms. She held Quinn tight and whispered in her ears, "I'm so sorry, Quinn. I'm so sorry."

Quinn slipped her arms around Santana's waist, feeling comfort by the fresh tears that coated the other girl's face. She gasped at the feeling of a pair of full lips on her cheek, then on her jaw, then stopped at her neck.

Santana stayed there, lips ghosting over Quinn's skin, before giving an open mouthed kiss on Quinn's pulse point making the blonde grasp at her back and cast her eyes to the sky.

Tongue on her neck and eyes to the sky made the contrast between the cool air and the heat on Quinn's skin almost unbearable.

Santana carefully reached between them to open Quinn's legs to make room for her knee. She pushed it against Quinn and went for a kiss as Quinn let out a slight moan. Not a word was said between them as Santana let her head slide down Quinn's torso and lower under Quinn's skirt and deeper until Quinn bucked her hips and moaned into her mouth.

The next part happened quicker, and Quinn's body felt separated from her as Santana thrust her fingers against the uneasy rhythm of Quinn's hips. Quinn couldn't feel the words or noises that came out of her mouth, but could feel the hot tears against her shoulder.

Once Quinn began to shake and Santana slowed her hand down, Quinn nuzzled her face into Santana's shoulder. She stayed still and waited for Santana to pull away and leave, but Santana stayed as still as her. She rubbed her arm, whispering in her ear with her fingers still inside of her, "It's going to be okay, Quinn. It's going to be okay."

Quinn returned home later that evening, the first real smile on her face all week. Santana wanted to stay with her all night, but Quinn had to go home. It was bad enough that she doesn't come home at the same time that she usually did.

She leaned forward towards the mirror in her room and smiled at the hickey on her neck. If she was honest with herself, she almost felt like she wasn't even in her body when Santana touched her. Like an outer body experience. She wasn't sure if that was romantic or what.

A knock made her turn her head to her open door, where her father stood. He leaned against the door frame with his arms folded, "You've been coming home late."

"Practice runs over," she turned to face him, "I'm sorry about the other night."

"Yeah, well you got smart with me," Russell breathed through his nose, "I'm sorry, too."

"I forgive you, daddy," Quinn smiled but noticed a look on his face, "Is something wrong?"

He pointed his finger at her, "What's that on your neck?"

Quinn slapped her hand against her neck and turned away. She silently cursed herself then silently cursed Santana for putting it there and then silently cursed herself again because it wasn't like the other girl would have known or anything.

"Lucy!" Russell raised his voice, already enraged, "Don't tell me your fucking around again! You were pregnant once, I won't tolerate again."

"I'm not!" Quinn responded without turning around.

"We'll ask your mother what the fucks on your neck," he whipped her around by the shoulder and grabbed her by the wrist before dragging her out of the room.

Quinn stared at her pencil on her desk, her eyes burning through the lead. Another night went by with barely any sleep. She had been thinking hard and she needed to get Finn back. He didn't want her like he should but if she couldn't keep him then she couldn't keep anyone. If she couldn't keep someone like Finn, then how could she even think about Santana.

By the end of the class, Quinn felt on edge. Her leg shaking and nibbling her bottom lip, she wondered if it was already too late. If Finn wouldn't take her back.

Once the bell rang, she stood up from her desk and started to look for the tall boy. She searched through the crowd of students and walked up the stairs to the second floor. Before she stepped fully onto the floor, a voice called her from behind her.

She turned to see a Rachel Berry coming up the stairs with a determined look on her face, "What you did to Finn was utterly wrong."

Quinn sighed, she didn't have time to talk to Rachel. There was only two minutes before class and she wanted to find Finn before the bell, "Explain."

"You embarrassed him in front of everyone," Rachel crossed her arms and shook her head, "Don't you feel any shame?"

"I know this is really about and frankly you should be thanking me," Quinn said, trying to get to the point.

"What is this-"

"You've wanted Finn ever since you saw him and now that we've broke up you just can't wait to get your scronny little fingers on him," Quinn pointed her finger at the shorter girl, "But let's be square, Sweetie. I'm not letting Finn out of my clutches until I'm done with him and that doesn't seem like it's coming up anytime soon."

Rachel blinked her eyes and took a step closer to Quinn, "Well if we're going to be honest then yes, I am happy that you broke up with him because honestly Finn needs to be around people who positively influence him."

The bell rung and Rachel stopped to watch the students shuffle into classes before talking again, "And if I'm going to be completely honest Finn deserves better than you."

Quinn swallowed and held on to the railing next to her for support, "And what does he deserve? An overbearing, egotistic, selfish, Hobbit girl?"

"Well at least I'm not an emotionless, crazy bitch," Rachel whispered, "I almost feel bad for you, Quinn. He was going to leave you anyways. But you did the hard part for him."

Quinn set her jaw and by the way Rachel smirked, the shorter girl must have took her silence for a win. She turned her back to the blonde and began to walk down the stairs.

Quinn felt her eyes water and her heart thump in her ears. Rachel was going to win Finn. Finn was going to forget about her. Then nobody would want her. Why would Santana want someone that nobody wanted?

Quinn pushed those thoughts aside as she used her weight to push against Rachel's back. The shorter girl lost her footing immediately and failed to hold the railing next to her. Rachel tumbled, her ankle shattering from the amount of weight put on it, making her go head first down. The rest happened faster as she cracked over the sixteen steep stairs until she hit the bottom with an unconscious flop. The girl made no movement other than from her shallow breaths as a trickle of blood ran down her forehead.

Quinn stood at the top of the stairs, hand covering her mouth from shock. She felt her legs give out as she sat on the top stair, wondering if the girl below was still alive. Her hands shook and her eyes darted around her and she couldn't believe that she could have done something like that.

Then Quinn felt herself calm and took a deep breath. She looked around for camera's but the only one close to her cut off by the middle of the staircase. It didn't see a thing. She looked around the hallway, but it was deserted. No one had seen anything.

She looked back at Rachel at the bottom. It all felt like it wasn't real, almost like it never happened. If she wanted to, she could walk away from this. It kind of already felt like she was. But could she do that to Rachel? Could she just leave her?

At the dining room table later that night, Quinn poked at her food in front of her. It looked like meatloaf, but Quinn couldn't be sure. What she did know was that she couldn't let the food touch her mouth, it would make her start feeling reality again.

"This isn't meat," Russell complained before taking a bite and chewing and talking at the same time, "What the hell is this, Judy?"

"It's not pasta," Judy commented and Quinn smirked at her mother's cheekiness.

"It's not even food," Russell took another bite and washed it down before looking at Quinn, "Haven't seen you at this table for a couple of days. What makes tonight different?"

Quinn shrugged, she had skipped practice and drove straight home. The news of Rachel taking a spill down the stairs was spreading like a wildfire through the schools and making her feel as though everyone knew what had really happened. She needed to get away. Even if away meant home, "I missed you guys."

"That's sweet, Honey," Judy smiled and Quinn tried her hardest to smile back.

"I guess," Russell pointed to Quinn's plate, "Still not eating I see."

Quinn shook her head, "I'm not hungry."

"Why?" Russell grumbled, "Is it your mother's cooking?"

"No, she's a great cook. I'm just not hungry."

"Don't you think that's a little rude?" Russell squinted his eyes at Quinn.

"Daddy, I'm just-"

"Not hungry," Russell put his fork down and wiped his face, "No fucking manners."

"It's okay, Quinnie," Judy interjected, "You don't have to eat if you don't want to."

"Of course she has to!" Russell threw his napkin on the table violently, causing Quinn to flinch and tighten her grasp on the fork in her hand, "Now eat your food, Lucy!"

Quinn bit the inside of her cheek. She wondered why she didn't just listen to him, but she never could. She just never could do it, no matter how mad he got, "I'm not hungry, Daddy."

"This is the not the time to me, Lucy Quinn Fabray!" Russell shouted as he slammed his palm into the table making Judy and Quinn jump, "Now eat your dinner or I'll make you eat you it!"

"I'm not hungry!" Quinn shouted back before shoving her fork through his hand.

Quinn sat back, eyes wide and wondering if she really had just done that. She looked up at her father, whose eyes were just as wide, but his eyes were on the fork sticking out of his shaking hand. He turned to his head to Judy and silently asked her how they should react. Quinn looked over to her as well, waiting for the woman to respond.

Judy held tightly to the edge of the table and gave Quinn a tight lipped smile, "Sweetie, do you mind excusing yourself from the table? Your father and I have to talk."

Quinn shuffled quickly out of her chair and stuttered, "Y-yes, mom."

Quinn decided against going to her room and ran out of the house instead. She walked to the only place she could think of.

She rung the doorbell and waited a few moment before Santana leaned against the open door.

Santana folded her arms, "Quinn."

"Hey, San," Quinn smiled and noticed that the other girl looked stand-offish, "I haven't seen you all day."

"More like you've been avoiding me all day," Santana looked away, "You could have just told me that you didn't want anything to do with me."

"San," Quinn put her hand on the girl's shoulder, "I was just scared."

"Scared of what?"

"Scared of," Quinn sighed, "Scared of losing Finn."

Santana scoffed, moving her shoulder away and going to close the door.

Quinn placed her hand on the door and tried to think of anything to stop her, "I pushed Rachel."

Santana stopped and opened the door fully open, "What did you just say?"

"I pushed her," Quinn felt the words come out so effortlessly, "It was no accident. I was there with her when she fell. I pushed her down the stairs."

Santana opened the door wide and Quinn took the chance to walk through the door before continuing to talk, "I barely felt like I did it, but I did. And I left her there."

Santana closed the door softly before turning back to Quinn with her arms folded, "Why are you saying this?"

"Because it happened," Quinn's lip trembled, "I pushed her down the stairs."

Santana looked down, causing a silence between them. Quinn stood still and watched her, waiting for the girl to react in anyway.

"I-" Santana started to say but stopped herself before moving to embrace Quinn. She hugged her tight and said with a small voice, "I can't believe you did that, Quinn."

"I'm sorry," Quinn held her back, "You can't tell anybody, San. You can't."

Santana rubbed the blonde's back and closed her eyes, "I won't tell anyone. I promise."

They stood there for awhile, standing in each other's arms waiting for the other to say anything. Santana was the one who broke them apart, kissing Quinn on the cheek and telling the girl that she could stay the night at her house.

School the next day flowed better after a night where Quinn actually had slept. Waking up in Santana's arms had casted a smile on her face and it had lasted until the end of the day. She even had the smile still on her face when she was put on the prom committee to put up the decorations.

Quinn stood next to the ladder she was using to set up streamers. She cut out a few of the stars she was suppose to glue to the streamers, the heaviness of the weight of the extra large scissors annoying her.

Her concentration was interrupted by shoes squeaking in the deserted gym and Quinn looked up to see a grinning Finn calling out to her.

He approached and attempted to kiss her, but gave her a confused look as she moved her face out of the way, "Don't tell me you're still mad at me?"

"We broke up, Finn," Quinn went back to cutting, "You made it pretty clear and so am I."

"We never officially broke up," Finn stopped her hand from continuing by putting his hand on top of hers, "Now how about we get over this whole thing and stop fighting?"

Quinn snatched her hand away, "I'm already over it."

"Good," Finn looked up at the streamers that Quinn had already put up and shook his head, "I should help you out. That's like a 10 foot drop. Don't want you to get hurt."

"I don't need your help."

Finn laughed and picked up a streamer, "Of course you do. What would you do without me?"

Quinn watched as the boy climbed up the ladder and wondered what she would do without Finn. What would she do without him following her around like a lost puppy? What would she do without someone like him wanting her?

But then she remembered that she didn't need him. That she had someone waiting for her. That he did nothing but add more pain and hopelessness to her life that she could have just got from home. She didn't need him. She didn't need any of him.

Her next movement seemed to shoot out from her in her and she shook the ladder in front of her. She shook it hard until she felt weight shift from it. Then she turned away and flinch as she heard the weight smack against the floor.

Quinn took a deep breath and turned around to a motionless Finn. His eyes still open and his body in a weird position. Quinn looked hard at him, trying to feel anything for what she was seeing. Instead she felt disconnected, almost like he wasn't even real.

Quinn jumped at the sound of foot steps coming to a halt in back of her.

She turned around and held her breath once she saw Santana, standing with tape in one of her hands and her other hand over her mouth.

The Latina walked forward but stopped again before looking at Quinn, "What did you do?"

"I-" Quinn looked around, "I don't know."

Santana uncovered her mouth before walking a little closer to Finn's body, "What happened?"

Quinn swallowed, "He fell."

"How?"

Quinn shook her head and Santana put her hand against her forehead. Santana looked at her and Quinn whimpered at the sheer terror on her face.

"We have to get help," Santana finally said.

"Why?" Quinn held herself.

"Why do you mean why?"

"They'll figure it out, Santana," Quinn felt herself shake, "They'll know what I did."

"Quinn, we can't just leave him!"

"But he's dead!"

"I know!" Santana looked away for a few moments before turning back, "Don't you think he deserves more than that?"

Quinn felt herself get light headed before snapping, "What about me, Santana? What do I deserve?!"

Santana scrunched up her face and it made Quinn feel on edge.

"Answer me! What do I deserve?" Quinn shouted and Santana began to back away. Quinn noticed the movement and moved towards her, "I didn't mean to yell, San."

Santana put up her hand, "Just stop walking, Quinn. Breathe. Stay calm."

"Why would you say that?" Quinn demanded, "I'm sorry. Please don't leave."

"I'm not leaving, Q," Santana still moved away, Quinn staying in step with her, "Just stop moving. We need to think about what next we're going to do."

"I know what you're going to do," Quinn pointed her finger at her, "You're going to leave me. Cause you'll figure out that I'm not worth it."

"Quinn."

"I'm not worth it!" Quinn shouted, motioning her hands at the girl. However she didn't notice that she still held the large scissors in her hand and had now successfully thrust the tool at Santana, lodging it into her torso. Her eyes looked to Santana's face, eyes now wide in horror, to tell her how to respond.

Santana barley responded with a whine, "Quinn."

The Latina lost her footing and Quinn helped her to the ground, crying her apologies incoherently.

Santana kept her eyes on her now bleeding wound, one hand deciding on whether to touch the scissors and the other wrapped up in Quinn shirt. Once her eyes began to get blurry, she looked back at Quinn, "You stabbed me, Q."

Quinn nodded her head and begun to shake, "I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to."

"I know," Santana laughed and grabbed tighter at the girl as her limbs started to get heavy, "Holy fuck, Q."

"Please don't die," Quinn held her closer and felt tears escape her eyes.

"It's happening to fast, Q," Santana rested her head in the crook of Quinn's elbow and whispered, "I have to tell you that you're wrong."

Quinn didn't say a word so Santana continued, her hand losing its grip, "You're not worthless, Quinn. You don't know how much you mean to me."

Quinn closed her eyes in a way to stop herself from sobbing, "Why would you say that?"

"Sorry," Santana laughed, but it soon died down as her hand lost its grip and fell to the floor.

Quinn sat there with the girl in her arms and sighed to herself, "Thanks for the concern, Santana."

I'm Not Going (2), by TakeMyBreathAwayTwoTimes

Santana couldn't help but feel that going to New York for a party for Rachel Berry's cast mates was not something she wanted to be a part of. Especially not at the expense of missing a day with her baby and a quiet night in with Quinn.

So Santana Lopez had become a bit of a home-body, so what. Have you seen her wife? Who wouldn't? She had always been the 'Party until the sun comes up' girl through her teens but once she got a job and had to pay for everything, she no longer felt the need to get so ridiculously dolled up to meet people and began spending more time focused on music and reading. This is how she met Quinn again.

A back alley bookstore that Santana would have once scrunched her nose at, now became a regular solace for the girl on her way home from her internship and before her shift at the diner. The dust no longer bothered her and she knew all the employees names. She was a new, more grounded Santana Lopez but she'd still cut a bitch. As she searched for a new book from the selection the owner had recommended, she bumped into a body bent down to the lower row. The body landed with an 'oomph' and Santana quickly stepped back and outstretched her hand.

"Oh god, I didn't see you. Sorry." Santana apologised as she looked down at the girl staring up at her in shock.

"It's fine honestly I...Santana?" The girl cut herself off to ask.

"Yes? Sorry do I...Quinn Fabray? Wow." Santana stared back in awe.

"Long time no see." Quinn smiled happily at the girl as she shuffled to get up.

"You could say that!" Santana smiled back. *"Here, let me help you up."*

As the two stood across from each other, they both surveyed over the other. They looked for things that had changed and subtly's that had stayed the same. To Santana, Quinn looked amazing. Her hair was long and wavy again much to Santana's delight, with slight tinges of light pink highlights running through it. Her face no longer had the guarded look to it and her clothes reflected her own style rather than what she was conforming to. To Quinn, Santana looked like she never had. She looked refreshed where once she had been so reserved. Her hair was in light curls with light brown highlights. Her current pencil skirt and blouse made her look as though she could take over the world. They both realised how much they had missed each other but suddenly it felt like more than just as friends.

"I'm sorry I knocked you over, I didn't see you." Santana apologised again to break the tension.

"Santana Lopez apologizing twice? Is the world about to end?" Quinn smirked at the girl in front of her.

"Shut up, Fabray." Santana replied smiling easily. *"What brings you to New York?"*

"I live here actually. For about fourteen months actually. I'm surprised Rachel didn't tell you." Quinn replies confused.

"Oh, I don't live with Rachel anymore. I live a couple of blocks from here, actually." Santana informs her.

"Oh right, Rachel never mentioned that." Quinn says, still curious about the circumstances. *"What are you doing in a bookstore?"*

“What do you mean? Think I'm not smart enough to be here, Fabray?” Santana questions, offended.

“No, it's just that the Santana I know wouldn't be seen dead in a place of learning. Even though she took all AP classes.” Quinn comments with a raised eyebrow.

“Yeah well with all that's going on I prefer to spend my time in quieter surroundings these days.” Santana replies as she notices their hands are still clasped.

Following Santana's line of sight Quinn notices too but before she can do anything Santana drops her hand and looks at her apologetically. The absence of her touch bothered Quinn.

“You're probably busy now but if you're not, would you maybe want to...grab a coffee with me?” Quinn asks nervously as she stares at her shoes.

“Are you asking me out?” Santana asks smiling as she rests her hand on Quinn's jaw to bring her back to eye contact.

“Cocky, aren't you.” Quinn commented getting her confidence back from the shining in Santana's eyes and a raised eyebrow. “Yes, I am asking you out.”

“Well, okay then. Let's go.” Santana smiled as she linked her fingers with Quinn's and lead her to her favourite coffee shop.

From there they had gotten to know each other as if they had never been apart, with a lot of bumps along the way. Now Santana was sitting in the airport in New York waiting for her bags as Quinn went to get them more coffee.

It's not that she didn't love Rach, she did and they had quite the friendship but she just didn't feel like spending time with overdramatic up-and-comers and listen to their tales of making it to the top. She couldn't understand why Quinn was so insistent on them being here. Especially after their delayed plane and baggage.

“Here, baby.” Quinn cooed softly as she handed Santana her coffee and sat beside her.

“Thanks.” Santana muttered as she closed her eyes and rested her head on Quinn's shoulder.

“I know this isn't what you wanted to do this weekend, but could you try to at least have fun?” Quinn asked as she kissed the top of Santana's head.

“Of course I'm going to have fun. Once I have finished this coffee I'll be ready to go!” Santana replied with the fakest smile Quinn had ever seen.

Quinn sighed softly as she got up to get their bags when they came around on the carousel. She knew this was going to be tough but she really did miss Rachel and needed a good catch up. She just hoped that Santana would be better when they got there.

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Santana had spent the whole taxi ride on the phone to Judy and Alexia to check everything was okay. They didn't have time to go to their hotel first because of their long delayed journey so they were going straight to Rachel's. She was now complaining to the nine month old about their

journey as if she had a clue what was going on. The little girl happily gargled to the sound of her Mami's voice and that was clearly good enough for Santana to continue. As they got to the loft, Santana begrudgingly hung up, much to Quinn's amusement. Before they could even reach the door, it was flung open and Rachel threw herself at the women, pulling them into a tight hug. They didn't have time to notice the door shutting quickly behind her.

"Oh Guys! It is so good to see you, I missed you so much!" Rachel gushed as she pulled them even closer.

"Yeah, yeah Berry. It's great. Now get off me." Santana insisted as she pushed Rachel away from her.

"Hey Rach. I missed you too." Quinn told her friend as she slapped Santana's shoulder.

"Quinn, violence is never the answer. I know Santana loves me really!" Rachel chastised while Santana stuck out her tongue at Quinn. "Now if you could please cover Santana's eyes Quinn, I would greatly appreciate it."

"What are you talking about?" Santana questioned slightly panicked. "Quinn, get off me!"

Quinn quickly wrapped one arm around Santana's waist as she covered her wife's eyes. She followed Rachel as she gestured her back into the apartment after she opened the door.

"Is this the part where I'm murdered?" Santana asked to no one in particular.

"Okay Santana, Quinn will remove her hand in three, two, one....*open!*" Rachel shouted from what sounded like across the room.

As she opened her eyes, Santana was stunned at what was in front of her. All the Glee club, people from the diner she used to work at, her friends from L.A and some of her colleagues from the record company. Everyone she had any feelings of friendship towards.

"*Happy birthday, Santana!*" the crowd called to her.

"What the hell are you all doing here? I thought this was a dramatic Smurfette party?" Santana asked, her eyes still scanning over people, wide as saucers. "And my birthday isn't for another three weeks!"

"Well the point of having a surprise party for your best friend is to have it when they least expect it." Was called from the group.

"*Tina!*" Santana shrieked excitedly as she tackled the other girl happily. "Did you do all this for me?"

"Well, someone had to get you out of your boring routine!" Tina commented as she smiled at her excited friend.

"Quinn did you know about this?" Santana turned around to ask her wife who actually looked shocked too.

"Nope, no one told me a thing." Quinn replied as she was pulled into a hug by Puck.

“We decided that Quinn would never be able to keep our secret, so we kept you both in the dark,” Rachel informed Santana.

“Thank you guys. I never expected anything like this.” Santana thanked as her eyes teared up.

Everyone quickly pulled the girl into a group hug before champagne was poured and the night got underway.

It was well past two when Santana and Quinn got out of the Taxi outside their hotel. The night had been full of catching up, laughter, reminiscing and drinks flowing. Kurt had luckily brought the girls bags to their hotel and checked in for them earlier so they could go straight to their room.

The women giggled as they thought of the drunk actions of their friends as Quinn opened the door. Santana walked in and dropped her handbag on a chair before turning to her wife with a huge smile on her face. Quinn quickly shut the door behind her and walked to stand in front of Santana. The two stood still as they stared into each other's eyes and Quinn raised her fingers to brush Santana's cheek. Santana leaned into the touch as she wrapped her hand around Quinn's waist to pull her closer.

The two met in the middle in a gentle, loving kiss that made way for the girls too re-explore each other as if it was their first time. Santana gripped the edge of Quinn's top to pull over her head as she pulled her in for a more heated kiss. Their lips were bruised from their kisses as they let their tongues battle each other amidst the shedding of clothes.

Santana allowed herself to be pushed down on the bed as Quinn moved to straddle her and fist her hair to pull her closer. Santana moaned at the painful tug that made her wetter as she moved her hands to cover Quinn's breasts and knead the palm of her hand on her nipples. Quinn groaned at the contact as she latched onto Santana's neck.

“Q, I need you.” Santana begged as the two rubbed off each other looking for the right kind of friction.

“Not enough San....I need...” Quinn mumbled into her neck as she bit down.

“Together!” Santana insisted as she moaned out against the bite.

Santana let go of one of Quinn's pebbled nipples and grabbed Quinn's hand to slowly bring it down between their bodies. Santana looked up into Quinn's eyes as she outlined her lips. Quinn did the same as she watched the love and need mix in Santana's black eyes. Without any verbal communication needed, both girls entered each other with two fingers in a swift movement. Their movements were in sync as they climbed to their orgasms quickly. Santana moved down to bite at Quinn's breast, knowing she liked pain mixed with her pleasure just as much as Santana. Quinn mewled as she got ever closer to her end. They both skirted their fingers along their walls looking for that one spot that would end it all. Only a second behind each other,

they both found it quickly. With the next push in, they both rubbed at the spot as Santana flicked her thumb over Quinn's clit and Quinn bit down Santana's pulse point.

They came with a mixture of Spanish and expletives as Quinn's arm gave out and she landed on Santana, burying her face into the girl's shoulder. Santana's eyes were shut tightly as she came down from her high, wrapping her free hand around Quinn's back and pulling her close.

Ten minutes later, Quinn pulled her head back to look at a smiling Santana. She pressed her lips to her wife's in a toe curling passionate kiss. Santana moaned as both of them pulled their fingers from the other and linked their fingers. The loss always mourned. Quinn rested her head on Santana's chest as they looked out the window at the rising sun.

"I love you," Santana whispered softly as she looked down at Quinn.

"Love you too Baby." Quinn replied as she looked up at her. "Imagine what your actual birthday will be like!"

Free Day, by team-valkyrie

"Holy..." Santana exhaled out as she drank in the sight before her. Strutting down the hallway was the sexiest thing she had ever seen. Quinn Fabray had ditched her 'holier-than-thou' look and had exchanged it for a punk, badass one. Her usual blonde locks were now a bright pink. Her long summer dresses and flats were traded for a black muscle shirt, black studded mini skirt and Doc Martens. Finally, her nose ring and tattoo of Ryan Seacrest (as well as the tongue piercing Santana could have sworn she saw) completed the look. Overall, Quinn looked hot as hell. And hell has never been hotter.

"Hey Santana," a sensual voice husked snapping Santana out of her lust induced haze. Quinn fuckin' Fabray. Whilst Santana had been gawking at the girl, she had failed to realize the other girl had walked up to her. "Heard about you and Britts breaking up over the summer."

"Ye- yeah, it, uh, wasn't working out," Santana stuttered out, flustered by the overpowering smell that was uniquely Quinn with a hint of cigarette smoke.

"Sorry to hear that," Quinn said even though her eyes said a different story. "If you need, ahem, consoling, come find me later." The pink haired girl winked before strutting off down the hallway.

"...Shit."

It took Santana all of ten minutes before she made up her mind and went on the hunt to find Quinn. She found her fifteen minutes later under the bleachers, where the 'Skanks' hung out.

Quinn was sitting on an old beat up couch smoking what seemed to be a well rolled joint. Just as Santana walked up to her, Quinn smirked and exhaled a series of perfect smoke rings. Despite herself, Santana felt herself gush, making her panties even wetter than before.

"Well, that took longer than I expected. I've been waiting for thirty minutes!" Quinn said as she fake pouted. "You're lucky I didn't start without you."

With that, Santana walked forward and straddled Quinn. "Trust me, it'll be worth the wait." Santana grabbed Quinn's shirt and passionately pressed their lips together. They made out for a few minutes before Quinn's hand raked down Santana's body and landed on her perfectly round ass. Santana moaned into the kiss and thrust her hips forward, trying to find much needed friction. Quinn grabbed her ass tighter and helped her grind their hips together, making them both groan.

Quinn pulled away briefly before discarding her shirt and bra, then proceeding to do the same to Santana's Cheerios shirt.

"No bra Lopez? Why am I not surprised?" Quinn chuckled before cupping the breasts before her. Santana moaned at the feel, loving how Quinn pinched and tugged at her nipples, making them hard. Santana leaned down slightly and started nipping and sucking at Quinn's moaned when Santana found the spot on her neck that made her weak and wet.

Quinn ran her hands down Santana's body and finally reached the pleated mini skirt. She pushed it up and put her spunks to the side. She teased Santana's clit before thrusting two fingers into her. Santana let out a long, throaty moan and grinded her hips down to meet Quinn's thrusts.

Quinn felt Santana's walls tighten and started fucking her harder while rubbing her clit with her thumb.

"Shit Quinn, I'm, I'm comingg..." Santana said before her orgasm washed over her in powerful waves. Quinn helped her come down from her high and Santana collapsed into her arms panting.

"Well shit Fabray, didn't know you had it in you," Santana gasped, still out of breath from her orgasm.

"I've had... practice over the summer," Quinn said sly with a proud smirk on her face. "So... Judy is on a Christian Mingle cruise for a few more days... Wanna come over after school?"

"Why don't we just got now?"

Quinn smiled and nodded at Santana's request. They both stood up and accommodated their clothes before making their way out from under the bleachers. They walked towards Santana's car and subconsciously held hands the whole way. When they got the car, Quinn tugged Santana into her and pulled her in for a long, passionate kiss, leaving the other girl breathless.

"C'mon Lopez, let's go get our mack on," Quinn said with wink before climbing into the car. Santana quickly followed and turned on the car before speeding out of McKinley's parking lot.

Memories, by tehedward

Santana wasn't going to cry, she refused to cry. It was her wedding day and she didn't have to cry if she didn't want to... but damn it, there she was, Quinn Fabray, soon to be Lopez walking down the aisle in a simple but beautiful white wedding gown, beaming as she stared up at Santana.

She would have to thank lady lips... Kurt, today she could say his name and not some kind of nickname, because he had helped Quinn pick the perfect dress. It was simple, no flowery designs, no bells and whistles, and very little lace. It was perfect for Quinn. Quinn was already so beautiful that in a case like this you didn't want to pick out a dress that distracted from her natural beauty. And Kurt and gone above and beyond in helping Quinn find that dress.

Santana hadn't gotten to even see Quinn's dress before now, let alone her in it until this very moment, and Santana could honestly say that she had never in her entire life seen anything as beautiful as Quinn was right now. Quinn was smiling as she made her way over to stand by Santana and for a moment their eyes catch and that fairy princess smile of Quinn's is replaced by a tiny smirk, and it's all Santana can do to not crack up because she knew that Quinn was well aware of the effect she was having on Santana and loving every second of it.

They may be in love but that didn't mean they weren't still both super competitive against each other. Normally Santana would have found a way to retaliate, but today... today Quinn could win. In fact today Santana wanted Quinn to win. This may have been their wedding, but for Santana, today was all about Quinn.

Santana loves that smirk and it brings back the memories of the first day they had met. They were 14 years old and at Sue Sylvester's Jr. Cheerio Camp.

They had been running for what had felt like an eternity. Wind sprints across the field, non-stop, just back and forth. She and this blond chick were currently the only two left standing and it was getting to the point where even Santana had to admit that this girl was good.

Not as good as her, but still pretty good. Sweat poured down both their bodies as the harsh sun beat down on them. Santana looks to her right and glares at the girl, why won't she give up? If she would just quit they could both stop running, they could join the rest of the girls for a rest and she could get back to hanging out with her friend Brittany. But no, Blondie over there didn't show any signs of stopping.

Santana intensifies her glare when the girl turns her head to look at her as they both get into a runners start and wait for Coach Sylvester to blow her whistle. But instead of glaring back the blond girl smirks at her and Santana can honestly say that in her entire life she has never wanted to punch somebody as badly as she did right then.

"You do realize that we've now cemented our places at the top of the pack right?" the girl says conversationally, doing a remarkable job of covering up how exhausted she must be.

"What?" Santana falters, not expecting anything to come out of the girl's mouth other than some kind of smack talk. It's what she would have done had she been in a talking mood.

"You and I, we're the only two left running. Everyone else did just the bare minimum asked or quit soon after. You and I however, kept running, and now coach Sylvester is watching us. She's judging us to see which of the two of us she wants to lead."

"Whatever." Santana scoffs but her eyes drift over to coach Sylvester and Santana can see the curious glint in the older woman's eyes.

"Now all you have to ask yourself is how badly do you want it? We're both wasted and you and I both know that we only have one more pass in the both of us." The blond girl continues to speak as if they are just having a pleasant conversation.

"Speak for yourself." Santana bluffs.

"Impressive, so I guess your lungs don't feel like they're on fire, your limbs don't feel like they each weigh a ton. Your feet aren't begging you, pleading with you to give them a rest. The muscles in your legs aren't so built up with acids that every single movement is a new experience in pain. Perhaps you really aren't dehydrated, your throat isn't dry and cracked, your mouth a barren desert-"

"Shut up, shut up, shut up," Santana snarls, because the other girl was right. She felt like shit and there was nothing in the world she would like to do more right now than go lay down. To give her body a rest and maybe even drain the camp of its reserve of drinkable water. But there was no way she was going to lose to this other girl and there was no way in hell that she was going to let this blond bitch get to her.

"Hey." The blond girl says.

"Don't you ever stop talking?" Santana growls.

"I just wanted to introduce myself, I'm Quinn Fabray, future captain of the Cheerio's-"

Santana scoffs, "Not likely." That was a position reserved for herself.

"Also, your shoes are untied." Santana felt like an idiot the moment she let her concentration slip and she looked down to see her perfectly tied laces. She felt so stupid when she heard Coach Sylvester's whistle blow and out of the corner of her eye she saw the blond girl, Quinn Fabray, take off. And she felt extremely pissed off that she had fallen for such a stupid ploy. But the fact of the matter was she had, and it was just enough to give the other girl the edge she needed and no matter how hard she pushed herself, she couldn't catch up to Quinn.

The blond girl's words echoing in her head. The weight in her limbs, the pain in her feet, the burning of her lungs and the ache in her thighs as she pushed herself to try and catch up to the other girl. But it was all for not, and in a matter of moments they had dashed across the field and back, Quinn beating her out by mere seconds. And then to add insult to injury Quinn got right back into a runners start.

That bitch! The was no way Quinn was going to be able to run another lap because there was no way in hell that Santana was able to and Quinn was not in any better shape than she was. Still not one to be outdone, Santana got into a runners stance right beside the blond girl. She wasn't going to lose, the other girl had to cheat to beat her and even if it killed her she was not going to let that stand.

Unfortunately Coach Sylvester had other ideas and called for a halt, blowing her whistle three times, signaling for all of the girls to line up in front of her.

"Good job Fabray."

"Thank you Coach!" Quinn answers clearly and succinctly, almost like she was in boot camp. And Santana couldn't keep the sneer from crossing her face.

"Lopez!" Coach yells at her.

"Yes Coach!"

"Wipe that look off your face, you could stand to learn a few things from Fabray, you got sloppy at the end."

"Yes Coach, sorry Coach!" She responds while mentally wishing a very slow and painful death upon Quinn Fabray.

"And the rest of you, you aren't even worth bothering to mention! You're lazy, you're sloppy, and you all gave up too easy!"

"Yes Coach, sorry Coach!" The rest of the squad shouts.

"You all make me sick just looking at you, get out of my sight." Coach Sylvester sneers and the squad of girls all break apart, grateful to be dismissed for lunch.

As the rest of the girls leave to go to the cafeteria Santana stays behind waiting for them to be alone so that she can confront the blond cheater. Santana gives her, her fiercest glare but all it does is cause the blond girl to arch her brow in a challenging manner.

"You cheated!" Santana snarls, "You knew you couldn't beat me fairly so you cheated!"

"Of course I cheated." Quinn laughs, admitting to it as if it was the most obvious thing in the world and it throws Santana for a loop. She had been expecting the girl to put up some kind of fight, to deny the accusation, not just readily admit to it.

"What...?"

"Look, I was exhausted and the fact was you are the only person who has kept up with me this entire time. Physically you and I are completely equal but socially you have the edge over me. You know most of these girls and they either like, fear, or respect you, or some combination of the three. Me, I'm the new girl and I have nothing to work with except for what I can earn here. Physically today's race could have gone either way and I guess we'll never know how things would have turned out, but I did have one advantage over you and so I used it."

"What, that you're a liar and a cheat!? Some advantage." Santana scoffs.

"No, I wanted it more than you and I didn't care what it would take to win. You wanted to just out perform me, but me, I wanted to beat you. And now you have a choice to make."

"Yeah, whether I break your nose or your legs first."

"No, although you're welcome to try." Quinn challenges, her arms crossed in front of her in a cocky manner and that damnable eyebrow arched. "Your choice is, how do you want to handle things from here on out. You can either sulk and whine and plot your "revenge" or..."

"Or what?"

"Or you can join me for lunch and realize that by teaming up with me, you and I will literally own that squad. That between the two of us there is nobody who could challenge our position at the top of the food chain in the most powerful group in school. Together we could make our high school lives a walk in the park." At this point Quinn holds her hand out to Santana and she has to admit she likes the girl's style. It was smart, it was calculating, and it had a certain flare to it that Santana could admire. Two sophomore girl's running the Cheerios... it definitely had some possibilities.

After a moment of considering it she makes her decision and reaches out and takes Quinn's hand and shakes it. "Quinn Fabray, I'm Santana Lopez." Here Santana smirks. "I'll take you up on your offer, but just realize one thing I'm going to get you back for this."

Quinn returns the look. "Good, I'd hate to think you would give up after just one loss. And just know that every time you try to beat me, I'll win. I've got your number Lopez."

"Bitch."

"I believe that's my line." And with that the two girl's make their way to the cafeteria.

It had been the start of a very weird, sometimes volatile, and most definitely, the greatest friendship that Santana had ever had. Sure they had had their ups and downs but when it came to the big stuff, the important things, they were loyal to each other.

Santana's smile widens when she sees Quinn's smirk soften into a real smile, and not her fake real smile, the one that she used when they were out with friends or in public, but her real one. The one that she used when it was just the two of them, the smile that was for Santana only. She can remember the first time that she had seen that smile.

"What do I do Quinn!? I can't... how can... I don't want this!" Santana cries, they are currently in Quinn's room, both of her parents are out right now so it was just the two of them. Santana was currently pacing the room while Quinn sat on her bed.

"Calm down San, it's going to be okay."

"No it's not!" Santana screams at her, "I'm gay, I'm a freak! There is something wrong with me!"

Quinn's eyes harden and she jumps up from her seat on her bed and goes over to Santana and forcefully grabs her by the arms and holds her still while she looks Santana right in the eyes.

"There is nothing wrong with you." Quinn says firmly.

"But I-"

"No buts, there is nothing wrong with you, you are not a freak do you hear me? You are Santana Lopez the most amazing, beautiful, pain in my ass, best friend that I have ever had."

"Best friend?" Santana questions, it seemed silly to question it really. I mean she was just realizing that she was gay and the first thing she had done was seek out Quinn, whenever something big was happening in their lives they always turned to each other. They could talk to each other about anything and if it was truly important they could trust each other. But they had never really defined their relationship before.

"Yes you doof, best friend. And as for you being gay well, so what? That's a part of who you are, you were born that way and while the hicks in this town may look down on it, you and I both know that there is nothing wrong with you."

"But what about my parents and my abuela and... and the church and... and... school?"

"Look your parents are cool, they're certainly not like my parents, I think that no matter what they're going to love you. And as for your abuela... who knows, she might just surprise you."

"And what about church and school?" Santana asks meekly.

"As far as God and church go, that's for you to decide. Your relationship with God is just that, yours. Only you can decide how you think he feels about it. Church is just a place where we can go to surround ourselves with people who hold similar beliefs and to help reaffirm our faith, but ultimately your relationship with God is between you and him, not you to the church and then to him. And I can tell you right now, he loves you."

"How can you be so sure?" Santana says, as she starts to cry softly. Quinn wraps her arms around Santana in a hug, they were never all that touchy feely with each other but right now Quinn's hug was the only thing holding her together.

"Because I love you and his love is supposed to be infinitely greater than ours, more than we can possibly understand, so of course he loves you. Besides, you're a very a lovable person... when you're not being a bitch." Quinn teases her gently and it has the desired effect of drawing out a small laugh.

"And school?" Santana asks, and she can feel Quinn's shoulders sag. "Unfortunately in this town, I think that's where your problems are going to come from. You're just going to have to decide if you're ready to come out or not."

"I can't... not yet... I... I..."

"Shhh, it's okay, I understand and so will Brittany." Quinn says soothingly as she strokes Santana's hair as she continues to hold Santana.

"Who said anything about Brittany?" Santana asks nervously.

"She's who you're crushing on right?" Quinn asks confused, "or did I miss something, I thought you liked her?"

"I... I... do but how did you know? Am I that obvious?" Santana asks, eyes wide with fear. She had thought she had been careful, thought she had hidden her feelings really well but if Quinn knew about her crush then who else did?

"No you're not obvious, I just know you really well. You... you're... I don't know, different I guess, around her. At least to me you are, I guess I could just tell, but I wouldn't worry." Quinn reassures her.

"Maybe..."

"What I would worry about is what are you going to say to Brittany, I mean you guys have been friends for a long time? Does she feel the same way, have you asked her out, are you going to ask her out?"

"Yeah... she... she does, like me that is. That's kind of what freaked me out today. Just looking and not really doing anything about it was fine... but then she pulled me aside today and said that she liked me and then she asked if I wanted to kiss and I..."

"Did you guys kiss?"

"No I... I kind of freaked out and ran straight here... Oh God, what if I ruined it, what if I-"

"Hey it's going to be fine, really. Why don't you give her a call and ask her to meet with you? You guys can talk it out and decided on what you want to do, if anything" Quinn suggests.

"Yeah... I guess. But..." Santana looks up at Quinn her eyes wide and scared, she had never been this vulnerable before, she had never been in love before and she had no idea what to do. "Quinn, what do I do, what do I say?"

Quinn smiles at her and while Santana had obviously seen her friend smile before something about this one was different. It was softer, more tender and caring than the one that she usually had. Over the years Santana would come to recognize it as Quinn's real smile. The one she had when she wanted you to know that she cared about you and that you were important to her. That she felt safe around you and that she was letting her guard down.

Brittany had been her first crush and she had even been in love with the other girl, but the timing hadn't been right and they had both wanted different things out of their relationship. Their break-up had been loud and angry and it had all but ended their friendship.

It was only just recently that either of them had made overtures to try and repair the damage that had been done. But now was not the time to be thinking about Brittany, right now she should be thinking about the goddess who had just taken her place across from Santana.

Santana reaches over and takes Quinn's hands gently in her own. "You look beautiful."

"Almost as pretty as you."

Quinn and Santana lean forward to kiss but are interrupted by a polite cough.

"Ahem." The preacher interrupts, an amused smile on his face, "I believe that part comes after the vows." This causes a light laughter to pass through the assembled guests and both Santana and Quinn duck their heads in embarrassment with large sheepish grins on their pink tinged faces. Santana's eyes lift up and land on Quinn's lips as she bites her lower lip in that adorable way of hers.

She is mesmerized by the way Quinn's teeth nibble at her plump lower lip. She thinks about the way it felt against her own when they kissed, the ways she tasted. The tiny little moan that Quinn did when Santana kissed her and as she's thinking of Quinn's lips her mind wanders to the memory of their first kiss.

"Hey San, I thought we agreed no more hospitals?" Quinn asks softly as she enters Santana's hospital room.

"I believe the agreement was no more hospital visits for you. Me well..." Santana says, referencing a conversation they had had after Quinn's car accident. She shrugs her shoulders weakly but winces in pain before

pushing through it so she can smile up at Quinn. "I'm sorry about our date tomorrow, I was really looking forward to it." Santana's weakened voice floats through the air.

"You're not getting out of our date that easy, we'll just reschedule, it's no big deal." Quinn says as she takes a seat on the edge of Santana's bed and gently moves Santana's bangs to the side, her face marred with a worried frown. "What happened?" She asks, her eyes glossing over with tears.

"Oh it's completely stupid and my fault, I got reckless. I should have waited for my partner but... I don't know I thought I had him but I didn't see the gun in time. It's just my shoulder and side though. It's nothing too serious." Santana tries to comfort her best friend... possible girlfriend?

"You were shot twice, I call that pretty serious."

"Meh, it's a hazard of the job." Santana tries to shrug it off like it's no big deal. But the truth was she was scared. Being a cop in New York City was definitely not the safest of occupations and this wasn't the first time she had been shot at but it was the definitely the first time she had been hit.

"Don't-" Quinn stops herself and closes her eyes tightly and the tears begin to fall. "Don't play this off as no big deal. It is a big deal. You were hurt, you were shot... a person shot you and... and... I... when I got that call I have never been so scared in my entire life."

Quinn was Santana's main emergency contact here in New York followed by Rachel and Kurt who both also lived in the city. She and Quinn had always had a connection but as time had progressed, and especially this last year when they got an apartment together as roommates, that connection had begun to blossom and grow into something more. It was currently Friday night and tomorrow was supposed to be their very first official date. It didn't look like that was going to happen now though.

"You're right... I remember how scared I was when I heard about your accident and I know I wouldn't have appreciated you joking about it, but I promise you I'm going to be fine, really. No permanent damage and I'll have two cool scars from it, chicks dig scars right?" Santana asks smiling up at Quinn as she grasps one of Quinn's hands in her own and squeezes it gently.

"Chicks dig their girlfriends coming home safely every night."

"Girlfriend huh? We haven't even gone out on our first date yet." Santana questions her, but she definitely isn't opposed to the idea.

"Shut up." Quinn says rolling her eyes, before she leans down and kisses Santana. And Santana can say without a shadow of a doubt that it was the greatest kiss she had ever had. It was soft and tender with an undercurrent of desire that if Santana wasn't currently lying in a hospital bed would have probably lead to more than just kissing on her end.

It was like fireworks. She hadn't thought it was possible for a kiss to be that amazing. She had kissed... she wouldn't say a whole bunch of people before, but definitely her fair share and while a lot of them had been nice, none of them had ever been like this. Not even Brittany, who had been her most serious relationship to date, had ever gotten this kind of reaction out of her from just a kiss. But eventually all good things must come to an end and a small moan escaped Santana as Quinn pulled away from the kiss.

Santana's eyes flutter open. "Wow." She gasps softly.

"Damn right wow." Quinn teases before switching to a more serious attitude. "And if you ever want to experience "wow" again you had better be more careful in the future. I know how much you love your job and while I wish you would love a job that is less dangerous, I would never ask you to give it up. So this is me asking you to be careful, this is me asking you to remember that kiss every time you are about to do something needlessly reckless, like say... chasing down a bad guy down a dark alley without your partner nearby? I want you to remember that kiss, and I want you to remember that you won't get any more if you're not careful."

Santana had made a quick and full recovery and had been back to work in no time. She had even made detective since then, and even though she had to take risks since then, she was never as reckless as she had been that day. She had a girlfriend to go home to, one whom she loved more than anything else in the world and who worried about her constantly. And after today it wouldn't be a girlfriend to go home to, it would be a wife. And that thought brings an even bigger smile to her face, if that were even physically possible.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today--"

My Heart Beats Only For You, by wonderlandwaitforme

(Bless Your Soul)

"Ok, guys!" Mr. Shue says enthusiastically, even though he's late, *again*. "As you all know, you had free reign on this week's assignment, so you could sing about anything from love, hate to what you did last week. So who's up first today?" Quinn looked up and found only one hand had been raised, *Santana*. She watched as her friend, best friend, girlfriend, she doesn't know what they are at the moment, walked up to the centre of the choir room. To everyone else she just looked cold and disinterested, but Quinn could see the hurt in her eyes. The hurt *she* put there. She looked on as Santana cleared her throat and nodded to the band to start.

*I can't buy your love, don't even wanna try.
Sometimes the truth won't make you happy, so I'm not gonna lie.
But don't ever question if my heart beats only for you, it beats only for you.*

Santana looked to the ground as she sung, scared the Gleeks could pick up on the emotion she felt. Quinn sat in her seat, willing Santana to look up.

*I know I'm far from perfect, nothin' like your entourage
I can't grant you any wishes, I won't promise you the stars.
But don't ever question if my heart beats only for you, it beats only for you.*

*Cause when you've given up.
When no matter what you do it's never good enough.
When you never thought that it could ever get this tough,
That's when you feel my kind of love.*

*And when you're crying out.
When you fall and then can't pick, you're heavy on the ground
When the friends you thought you had haven't stuck around.
That's when you feel my kind of love.*

Santana's voice wavered slightly and a wave of guilt coursed through Quinn, *why did I ever doubt her?* Brittany looked at Santana, and then at Quinn, she was sad that her friends were sad pandas. The rest of the Glee club looked on confused; some impressed, some feeling sympathetic, having been privy to the uncommon knowledge of Quinn and Santana's relationship, and their latest fight.

*You won't see me at the parties, I guess I'm just no fun.
I won't be turning up the radio singing, "Baby You're The One".
But don't ever question if my heart beats only for you, it beats only for you.*

*I know sometimes I get angry, and I say what I don't mean.
I know I keep my heart protected, far away from my sleeve.
But don't ever question if my heart beats only for you, it beats only for you.*

Finally, Santana looked up, making direct eye contact with Quinn, trying to get her point across. She watched as Quinn wiped a tear from her eye, she wanted to stop right there and wipe the tear away herself, but she had to do this, Quinn needed to hear this. She won't let the blonde doubt her love for her anymore. So, she willed herself to finish the song.

*Cause when you've given up.
When no matter what you do it's never good enough.
When you never thought that it could ever get this tough,
That's when you feel my kind of love.*

*And when you're crying out.
When you fall and then can't pick, you're heavy on the ground
When the friends you thought you had haven't stuck around.
That's when you feel my kind of love.*

*Cause when you've given up.
When no matter what you do it's never good enough.
When you never thought that it could ever get this tough,
That's when you feel my kind of love.*

Santana finished the song and saw the stunned looks of some of the Glee clubbers who hadn't witnessed the power behind her voice before. After a moment's silence, there was a roar of applause, but Santana's expression remained stoic, and void of emotion. Feeling uncomfortable under the scrutiny and inquisitiveness behind some of the Gleek's eyes she hurried back to her seat just as Mr. Shuester stood and walked to the centre of the room.

"Wow, Santana that was amazing. That performance is a definite contender for Regional's. So who would like to go next?" Quinn raised her hand and spoke in a timid voice.

"I would Mr. Shue."

"The floor's yours Quinn." He said with a sweeping motion. Quinn stood from her seat and slowly walked towards the piano, ignoring the curious glances being thrown her way. She sat at the bench and closed her eyes, taking a deep breath to compose herself. She gently rested her fingers on the keys and began to play.

*I am timid
And I am oversensitive
I am a lioness
I am tired and defensive
You take me in your arms
And I fold into you*

*I have insecurities
You show me I am beautiful*

Everyone except Santana, Brittany, and Mercedes gaped at her, having not known about the blonde's talent. Mercedes looked on proud thinking to herself, *that's my girl*. When Quinn looked up and made eye contact with her she gave her an encouraging smile, to which Quinn nodded gratefully. Brittany smiled, happy that Quinn was finally expressing herself and showing her awesomeness to the rest of the club. Santana sat shocked, knowing how much Quinn used to hate playing the piano because her father would force her to play at social gatherings for the snobbish people of Lima.

*Love me or leave me just take it or leave it
It's not that I'm needy just need you to see me
Take me, free me, see through to the core of me
Take me, free me, there will be no more pretending*

Quinn sang this staring at Santana, the intensity of her stare sending a shiver through Santana.

*I am temperamental
And I have imperfections
And I am emotional
I am unpredictable
I am naked
I am vulnerable
I am a woman
I am opening up to you*

Santana saw the pleading look in Quinn's eyes, as if she was asking for acceptance, something the Latina knew Quinn sought from whomever. A small fault that had been engrained in to her after years of being told she wasn't good enough from her parents.

*Love me or leave me, just take it or leave it
It's not that I'm needy, just need you to see me
Take me, free me, see through to the core of me
Take me, free me, there will be no more pretending*

*Now I stand before you with my heart in my hands
I'm asking you to take me just the way that I am*

This was Quinn's way of saying sorry, of asking for forgiveness. By laying her imperfections bare for everyone to see.

*Please lay down your arms
Do you know me?
Make me feel safe from harm*

*Oh just take me, free me, see through to the core of me
Take me, free me, there will be no more pretending*

*I am temperamental
And I have imperfections*

*And I am emotional
There'll be no more pretending*

Quinn's voice trailed off, a tear rolling off her cheek. Not bothering to wipe it she stood and walked as calmly as she could out of the room. Leaving a wide eyed and gaping Glee club in her wake. She giggled quietly to herself when she heard Kurt say '*Where did that come from?*'

She heard footsteps behind her but didn't bother to turn around, not up for any confrontation. She felt a soft hand wrap around her wrist, spinning her around to come face to face with Santana. Her resolve broke, like a dam; she crumpled in to Santana's willing arms.

"I'm sorry. I don't know why I said everything I did, none of it was true. I'm so sorry, please forgive me. I don't know what I'd do without you. I never should've doubted me, or you or us." Santana just tightened her grip around Quinn, letting a few tears fall.

"It's ok Quinn; you need to calm down okay?" Quinn nodded, taking a deep breath in an attempt to calm her tears. When Santana thought she'd calmed enough she spoke again. "You shouldn't have doubted me Q. My love for you is as real as Britt and Mike's ability to dance, or Rachel and Mercedes' singing talent, or Finn's ability to be a blubbering fool." Quinn laughed at the last part, making Santana smile. "I love you Quinn, with all of my heart, don't ever forget that."

"I won't, I love you too." They shared a sweet kiss before walking out of the building holding hands.

All I'm Asking (Be My Escape), by WordsHaveMelodies

The days are too long and the nights are too short.

'You should be happy that you're alive' you've often heard them say, and you were, you are but sometimes it gets to be too much and you wished that you could just...

The silence is too loud and the laughter is too soft.

'You should smile more' you've often heard them say, and you did, you do but sometimes the jokes aren't that funny or someone makes an insensitive one. It's gets to be too much and you wished that you could just...

Your family is too distant and your friends are too close.

'You shouldn't care about them we're here for you'; 'Those friends of yours don't know what's good for you' you've often heard them say, and you listened, you listen but sometimes it gets to be too much and you just...

Needed someone to be your escape.

She became that for you as soon as you met her. You didn't even have to outright ask her to be or tell her that's what you needed from her, she just knew.

Her dark hair, naturally tan skinned and eyes so brown and open that you would often lose yourself in them.

Her bright smile that she would reserve just for you and her hand that fit so perfectly in yours whenever you would wordlessly ask her to hold it.

Her shoulder that was always there for you to lean on without protest.

Her arms that would hold you together to keep you from falling apart.

Her patience, her love, her presence.

You'd tell her in secret when she had you wrapped up in her arms about the things that they would say, about the voices in your head and she would ache for you as your pain would become hers. You knew it did, you could see it in her eyes. You knew it did, you would hear it in her sighs.

She would tell you that they were all idiots but they had a point about you being alive, because if you ever died she would.

She would tell you that they were all idiots but they were right about you taking time to smile, because your smile was beautiful and if you ever stopped she would.

She wouldn't tell you that your family were idiots or say the same thing about your friends, but she did say that she'd never be stupid enough to hurt you like them.

She never did.

You'd tell her in secret when you were running your fingers through her hair about the things that you would feel, about the things that you felt and she would take your hand in hers and place a kiss to your palm in thanks for sharing with her those hidden pieces of yourself.

She would then run her fingers through your hair and tell you all about the things that she felt herself. Show you all of her hidden pieces as well. You were her safe place. She was your safe place.

She was just as broken as you were and you loved her for it.

They didn't understand it when you told them. They said that you were indeed crazy and out of your mind. They said that you were hopeless and you almost believed them, but with her hand in yours, you wouldn't be denied.

That day she let you cry on her shoulder and that night you let her cry too, because her 'they' felt the same way about her now that your 'they' had always felt about you.

You were lost but you wouldn't be for long.

"I won't let you break again."

Her words spoken in earnest like a vow.

"I'll never let you down."

You were both all that each other had now.

She was just as sad as you were and you loved her for it.

It was hard.

There were moments where you needed an escape from her too, but she never wavered.

She kept all of her promises to you. Every single one.

It took a while for you to see the rainbow after the rain and it took a while for you to feel the joy after the pain, but she never gave up hope on you.

She helped you through it day by day.

Up until the song came to march you out to your grave.

You were just as strong as she was and she loved you for it.

Quinntana Playlist, by WriteForYou

Quinn walks into the apartment, sighing at how silent and empty it feels. Santana has been on tour for about 3 months and Quinn is desperately missing her girlfriend. The fact that today is their 5 year anniversary only hurts more without having Santana by her.

Walking to the kitchen counter, Quinn drops the mail she picked up and kicks off her heels. She rifles through the mail and pulls out a large manila envelope which appears to have a rectangular object inside.

The envelope has no return address on it, but Quinn still eagerly opens it. She pulls out an Ipod with a sticky note that read '*Play me.*' Curious, Quinn walks into their bedroom and puts the Ipod in the dock. She presses play.

"Hey, babe." Quinn's heart tightens at the sound of Santana's voice. "I know it's been almost a week since I've called and I'm sorry. I miss you so much, Q. You're in my dreams every night, baby." Quinn sits at the foot of the bed and closes her eyes.

"I'm going crazy, Quinn. I mean, this tour is everything I dreamt of." Quinn hears the sad sigh in her girlfriend's voice and can't help but wish she was with her to hold her tight. "But without hearing your voice, touching you, without seeing those perfect hazel eyes...I'm going crazy.

"I'm really pissed that I won't be able to be with you on our 5 year anniversary. Like super pissed that I lashed out at everyone..." Quinn sighs. She knows how bad Santana's temper can get, but can she blame her? Quinn was equally pissed when she found out. Santana was supposed to come home a week earlier but because of her manager, she was booked for an extra week for more promotion.

"So to make up for not being home with you, I made you a playlist with songs that are important to me. To us. So that every time you're missing me, you will play this and think of me just like how I'm thinking of you every second." Quinn rolls her eyes at the cheesiness of her girlfriend but it doesn't dissuade the warm feeling swelling in her heart. "Hey, I know it's cheesy but just listen to it okay?"

"You can even play it while you're in the shower and think of me at the same time." Quinn notices the suggestive tone in Santana's voice and can just imagine her girlfriend wiggling her eyebrows.

But since Quinn did have a tiring and grueling day of work, she actually does decide to take a hot shower while listening to Santana's playlist that she created on the Ipod.

Quinn plays the only playlist on the iPod called "Quinntana" as Santana instructed her to do so. Did she seriously combine our names? Quinn smiles and shakes her head.

She turns the shuffle off and presses play to the first song as she stepped into the bathroom and the hot shower.

"Yes, I combined our names together...you can tease me later."

Quinn laughs under the hot water. "Now, this song is an important song to me. It was the first song that was playing when everything changed for me—for us. This song opened my eyes and gave me something wonderful."

Quinn scrubs the apple scented shampoo in her hair as she listens in anticipation for the song that Santana was talking about.

A melodic tune plays and Quinn pauses with a nostalgic smile forming.

*"I know it's late,
I know you're weary
I know your plans,
Don't include me*

The sound of Bob Seger's 'We've Got Tonight' plays through the speakers and Quinn stands in the steaming shower with her eyes closed, listening to the song that played during their first dance together. The song that led them upstairs to the hotel room. The song that brought them closer and where they are today.

*Still here we are,
both of us lonely, Both of us lonely,*

Quinn sings along to the lyrics as she washes her body and as she sings, she imagines Santana in the shower with her arms around Quinn. She imagines Santana singing along with her as their naked bodies press against each other under the water.

*Turn out the light,
Come take my hand now,
We've got tonight babe,
Why don't you stay?"*

The song ends and Quinn pulls the shower curtain away as she steps out and wraps a towel around her soaking body. She's humming to the tune waiting for the next song to play.

"This next song you weren't there with me, but it's significant. It was the song that I was listening to on loop when I was on my way to New Haven to tell you how I felt. I was scared shitless that day, Q. I remember spending an hour wandering around your campus, afraid to go up to your room and tell you all the things that has been building inside me for the past 5 months since the night at Mr. Schue's wedding. This is the song that gave me the courage to go to you, babe."

The fast pace of the song contrasts from the first song and she recognizes the artist Ed Sheeran singing his song 'One Night'. She can just imagine Santana sitting on the train, eyes closed, tapping her foot while listening to the song.

*"Lying in a bedroom
Lighting up a Benson*

*Face hair is growing
So I cut with a vengeance
Hey, did I mention
As she makes an entrance
Said I had a tendency
To finish off a sentence*

*Oh well, she's a local girl
No make-up
Cos she knows me well
Hair tied up in elastic band
With a kiss on the cheek
For her one-night man"*

Quinn remembers the night like yesterday.

She was in her dorm studying for an exam for her Woman Gender Studies class when a soft knock pulled her up from the textbook.

Her roommate, Sara, went to the door and opened it.

Santana had her eyes on the ground as she started rambling. "I know this is a surprise." Quinn turns from her desk immediately to see Santana in her doorway, staring at the ground. "But I can't stop thinking about you. I can't stop thinking about that night 5 months ago." Santana runs her hand through her hair. "I tried to shut off these...these feelings by sleeping with other girls. But none of them felt right. None of them pull me the way you do." Quinn sits, frozen in her seat, as each word that rolls off Santana's tongue has her heart swelling with warmth and the tears falling with joy. "I tried, so hard, to push you away and keep myself from running to you. I know I said I wouldn't show up with a U-Haul...and I'm not. I think. I just...I just want you to know how I feel. I want you to know that, if you're willing, that I want to give us a try. I know you felt something. It can't be just an experiment to you, it just can't be." At that moment Santana finally looks up, expecting to see hazel eyes, but instead she sees dark brown.

"Who the hell are you?" Quinn's roommate crosses her arm.

Santana sputters and backs away with a flushed face. "Shit. I'm sorry, I thought...I thought...oh God, this is embarrassing." She backs away about to leave. "I'm just going to-"

"Santana, wait." Quinn stands up from her desk and walks in Santana's line of vision.

"Q" Santana walks into the room towards Quinn.

Sara looks at Santana and Quinn for a second and then understood what was happening. "I'm gonna go get some coffee and a midnight snack..." She walks out of the room while gently closing the door behind her.

They both stand there in silence, Santana waiting for Quinn's response and Quinn trying to find the words.

"So..." Santana drawls.

"Do you mean it?"

"Mean what?"

"What you said earlier?"

"Every word of it. That night was more than a one night stand." Santana looks away shyly. "I want to give us a shot, Q I mean if you're willing to-"

"Yes." Quinn grins when Santana whips her head towards her with wide eyes.

"Yes?"

"Yes." Quinn steps closer to Santana. "You were right. That night meant so much more. It was no experiment. I haven't stopped thinking about you since." Santana beams.

Santana pulls Quinn close to her and Quinn sighs in contentment. "I want to be with you, Quinn. I can't get you off my mind. It's annoying.." Quinn chuckles.

"I can't get you off my mind either." Quinn kisses Santana's nose.

—

After that night, Quinn and Santana decided to go on dates despite the distance. They would take turns riding the train to each other, and even though it was a pain, they both agreed that it was worth it. The long train ride was worth it because they knew, without a doubt, that when the train stops they will always be waiting for each other with open arms.

*"Tell her that I love her
Tell her that I need her
That she's more
Than a one-night stand
Tell her that she turns my cheeks
The colour of my hair
All I wanna do is be near
Tell her that I want her
Tell her that I need her
Tell her that she's more
Than a one-night stand
Tell her that I love her
More than anyone else
If you don't, I'll tell her myself"*

Quinn dries her hair with her towel and throws on a pair of panties and Santana's t-shirt. She sits in the middle of their bed waiting for the next song.

"Remember our first date?" Quinn chuckles as her mind reels back to their first official date in New York.

"It was a horrible first date."

"It was a horrible first date."

Quinn states at the exact moment Santana does.

Santana planned to take Quinn to a fancy Italian restaurant in New York. But when they got there, it turned out that the restaurant was closed due to remodeling. Not really knowing what to do next, they decided to walk into the city and see where the night took them. They were both catching up when small drops started to fall on their faces. Within seconds the rain started to pour down heavily and the wind picked up dramatically.

Seeking shelter from the rainstorm, they both ran into the first place that was close to them.

*I'm gonna pop some tags
Only got twenty dollars in my pocket
I - I - I'm hunting, looking for a come-up
This is fucking awesome*

Quinn openly laughs with tears in her eyes.

Macklemore and Ryan Lewis "Thrift Shop" plays loudly and Quinn is on her back laughing at the memory of Santana and her walking into a gay club. The song was playing when they entered and they were welcomed with open arms.

"Santana." Quinn hisses with a flustered face.

Santana shrugs. "It was the closest place to go into to get away from the rain." She grabs Quinn's hand. "We'll stay until the rain lightens up, unless you really want to go back to that weather and try to get a cab?" Quinn peers out the door and shakes her head. "Exactly. Come on, at least we got drinks right?"

"Fine. But just so you know, this isn't what I had in mind for our first date." They both walk through the dancing crowd and towards the bar.

"I know...I'm sorry." Quinn softens when Santana's face drops. She intertwines her fingers with Santana's.

"Don't worry about it. I don't care where it is we go as long as you take me with you." Santana leans close and presses her lips softly to Quinn's.

"Hey ladies!" A flamboyant man walks up to the two. "Why don't you come dance with the rest of us!" The man waves his hand toward the dance floor.

Quinn laughs. "Should we?"

Santana moves from the stool and pulls Quinn with her. "Why not? It will help time pass by and give me an excuse to put my hands all over you right now." Santana winks at Quinn.

When the rain stopped, they said goodbye to the new friends they made at the club and headed back to the apartment where Kurt and Rachel were still up to interrogate them. Santana shoved them away as she and Quinn cuddled into her so called bed. Yea, the date wasn't the best

Quinn has had. But that night she got to sleep in Santana's arms and it was the best feeling in the world.

"We were never the perfect couple, Q. We both know that. We had fights...big fights that had me storming away from you. But in the end, I knew I would always go back to you. You're my everything, Q. You changed the broken Lima Heights girl. You made me see that...being with someone and being in love was worth it. That you were worth the risk."

*"And I've always lived like this
Keeping a comfortable distance.
And up until now I have sworn to myself
That I'm content with loneliness.
Because none of it was ever worth the risk."*

Quinn closes her eyes and let the words of the song sink in. Santana was always someone who ran when things got hard. She confessed to Quinn in high school during a sleepover that she was scared of being in love. It wasn't until about six months into their relationship that she told Quinn she wasn't scared anymore.

Santana and Quinn were in Quinn's dorm, enjoying the privacy and intimacy of just the two of them. Quinn moved closer into Santana's arms and rested her head on Santana's shoulder. Santana pulls the blanket over their naked bodies and kisses Quinn on the top of her head.

Santana pulls Quinn closer and Quinn hums in the sweet feeling of being wrapped in her girlfriend's arms. "Quinn, do you remember how I told you I was scared of being in love? Even when I was still with Brittany?" Quinn nods, despite not really liking the fact that Santana's first love is brought up right after they had sex.

"I'm not scared anymore."

Quinn pulls away to meet Santana's perfect brown eyes. "What?" Santana softly laughs at the confused look on Quinn's face. Santana's heart is beating fast and her palms are getting slightly sweaty.

"I'm not scared of being in love anymore, Q. Being in love with you is the best feeling...I'm falling Q, and I'm not scared."

Quinn's beating heart quickens and tears fall. "You...you're in love me?"

"I'm completely in love with you." Quinn gazes into Santana's expressive eyes and her heart melts.

"I'm in love with you too, Santana." Quinn rasps and they kiss deeply.

*"Well you are the only exception.
You are the only exception.
You are the only exception.
You are the only exception."*

She listens, with a smile on her lips, at the last chorus of the song with her cheeks tinged pink.

"Remember that night in California on the beach?" Santana's voice echoes. "I was reluctant to go to Mercedes beach party in celebration of her debut album. You gave me an ultimatum that night: Either go with you to the beach party or spend a weekend alone with me and my hand. That was a pretty harsh thing to do, Q" Quinn laughs. "But I really didn't have a choice anyway, huh? Because either way, I knew I would follow you anywhere you go. I'm glad I did go."

At the event, there was a reasonable size amount of people who were close to Mercedes. Quinn and Santana recognized only those who were from Glee club while others were nameless faces. The beach was setup with a stage where bands and DJ's stood as they played music for the crowd. There was also a small bar and grill. The beach was illuminated by not only the moonlight, but by luminescent lanterns.

Quinn and Santana were seated at the far corner of the bar and grill.

"I don't want to." Santana sipped on her cocktail.

"Please, S. It's romantic." Quinn was trying to convince Santana to go on a romantic walk on the beach.

"It's so cliché though." Santana twirls her straw. "Walking under the moonlight on the beach, swinging hands and blah blah blah." She crosses her arms on the counter.

Quinn pouts at Santana. "But I really want to, baby." She traces her finger up and down Santana's arm with puppy eyes.

Santana bites her lips and tries not to look. "Don't do the face, Q."

Quinn tilts her head, pretending that she doesn't understand what Santana means. "What face?"

"That face..." Quinn inches closer and places her hand on Santana's thigh. "Okay! Fine! We'll go on the stupid walk." Quinn beams and pulls Santana with her onto the beach.

They start to walk away from the event, but not too far as they can still hear the music. They both took off their heels and were lovingly swinging their joined hands as they walked.

"This is so romantic." Quinn giggles.

Santana shakes her head but doesn't say anything because she loves it when her girl is happy. From the distance a song starts to play.

*"Have I told you lately that I love you
Have I told you there's no one else above you
Fill my heart with gladness
take away all my sadness
ease my troubles that's what you do*

Santana stops suddenly and lightly pulls away from Quinn.

Quinn turns to her in surprise. "San?"

Santana drops her heels onto the sand and takes Quinn's heels and does the same.

"May I have this dance?" Santana holds her hand out to Quinn.

Quinn blushes with a shy smile. She bites her lips and nods as Santana pulls her close.

For the morning sun in all its glory
greeted the day with hope and comfort too
You fill my life with laughter
and somehow you make it better
ease my troubles that's what you do
There's a love that's divine
and it's yours and it's mine like the sun
And at the end of the day
we should give thanks and pray
to the one, to the one"

Quinn softly rests her head on Santana's shoulder as they swayed to the music. Santana holds Quinn close while singing the words to the song in her ear, every word with all of her love for Quinn.

*"And have I told you lately that I love you
Have I told you there's no one else above you
You fill my heart with gladness
take away my sadness
ease my troubles that's what you do
Take away all my sadness
fill my life with gladness
ease my troubles that's what you do
Take away all my sadness
fill my life with gladness
ease my troubles that's what you do"*

Quinn rolls on her back, remembering the romantic dance on the beach that year. When the song ends, she waits for Santana's voice to introduce the next song and its meaning.

Quinn hears the shaky breath that passes Santana's lips. "Remember when Brittany came to visit me in New York and I forgot to tell you...you were really mad and jealous that night. You scared and turned me on at the same time."

Quinn cringes at the memory. She hated how she acted that night...but she has always been an insecure person. Plus, Brittany was Santana's first. It scared Quinn.

"Remember the song I sang outside your dorm window?" Quinn warms at the memory. "Practically everyone at Yale knows who I am."

"Stupid, Santana." Quinn wipes her eyes for the hundredth time. About an hour or so ago, she found out through a phone call with Rachel that Brittany was over. Quinn called Rachel to talk about how she was thinking about transferring to New York University so she could be closer to Santana. When Quinn heard the sound of Brittany and Santana laughing in the background, her heart dropped and her blood boiled. She told Rachel to put Santana on the phone and all hell went down from there.

Quinn loves Brittany, she really does. But she was Santana's first love and always had a special place in Santana's life. So Quinn was always scared that Santana would go running back to Brittany. The fact that Santana didn't even mention to Quinn that Brittany was in New York only intensified this fear.

Her cellphone starts to ring and she sees Santana's name. Quinn immediately pushes the off button. Everything hurts and Quinn doesn't have the energy to fight anymore.

Soft strums of an acoustic guitar is heard outside of her window. 'Stupid guitar players.' Quinn groans thinking it was another aspiring musician playing his guitar late at night. She thinks it's great that they have so much passion...but it's late and all she wants to do is cry herself to sleep.

"Heart beats fast
Colors and promises
How to be brave?"

Quinn's body stiffens when she hears the sound of the guitarist singing. How can she ever forget such a beautiful sound.

"How can I love when I'm afraid to fall?
But watching you stand alone,
All of my doubt suddenly goes away somehow."

Quinn throws her legs off the bed and stands up.

"One step closer"

She steps closer to the window, unlocks it, and opens it to see Santana sitting on the concrete in front of her dorm window. Santana is sitting on cold snow with only a couple of layers on and Quinn's scarf. Santana stares up and looks Quinn with watery eyes as she sings.

"I have died every day waiting for you
Darling, don't be afraid I have loved you
For a thousand years
I'll love you for a thousand more"

Other students in the dorm and opened the window to listen to Santana serenading to Quinn. Quinn full of tears, grabs her coat and runs down to Santana. Quinn runs faster and faster as the sound of Santana gets closer.

"Time stands still
Beauty in all she is
I will be brave
I will not let anything take away
What's standing in front of me

Every breath
Every hour has come to this
One step closer"

Stepping out onto the cold snow, Quinn stops and stares at Santana who is still singing with her eyes on Quinn.

"I have died everyday waiting for you
Darling don't be afraid I have loved you
For a thousand years
I love you for a thousand more

And all along I believed I would find you
Time has brought your heart to me
I have loved you for a thousand years
I love you for a thousand more"

Santana notices Quinn running towards her and stands. Expecting to be slapped and yelled at, Santana is taken by surprise when Quinn tackles her with a hug onto the snow.

Santana sits up with Quinn squeezing onto her tightly. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." Santana cries into Quinn's shoulder. "I didn't mean anything I said on the phone. I was just mad that-"

Quinn shushes Santana with a kiss. There's a couple of whistles from students who were watching their public display of affection from their dorm windows.

Quinn breaks the kiss and wipes the tears on Santana's face. "I'm the one who overreacted. I'm sorry." Quinn breathes. "I just...I thought you didn't tell me because you were in love with Brittany still and that you were going to leave and-"

"I love you, Quinn." Santana cuts Quinn's rambling. "I forgot to tell you because B just showed up out of nowhere." Santana explains. Santana caresses Quinn's cheek. "Me and B, we're over Quinn. I will always love Brittany but I will always be in love with you Quinn. You're the one I want to spend the rest of my life with." Santana catches Quinn's falling tears with her lips. "You're the one I want to wake up next to. The one I want to kiss and love until my last breath." Quinn wraps her arms around Santana and kisses her deeply.

After that night, the insecurities Quinn harbored disappeared slowly. Their relationship strengthen and it solidified Quinn's decision to transfer to NYU. Instead of staying at the dorms, Quinn and Santana decided to move into an apartment together.

The last chorus of the song ends and Quinn wipes her eyes. She grabs the pillow Santana sleeps on and holds it close to her chest, taking in the calming effect of the soft scent of her girlfriend's shampoo.

"Quinn, about a year ago we went to Rachel and Finn's wedding. I know I say I hate the hobbit and Frankenteen...but you know I love them. Don't tell them. But it was a year ago when I realized that at their wedding...that I want to marry you, Quinn." Quinn heart stops. Santana

never told her this. "I know we never talked about getting married or having kids...but all I know is that I want to be with you Quinn. I want to give you the perfect wedding that you wanted when we were young."

The wedding version of 'Never Stop' by Safety Suit starts playing with the sound of Santana's singing voice.

*"I'll never stop trying
I'll never stop watching as you leave
I'll never stop losing my breath
Every time I see you looking back at me
I'll never stop holding your hand
I'll never stop opening your door
I'll never stop choosing you babe
I'll never get used to you"*

*"And with this love song to you
It's not a momentary phase
You are my life, I don't deserve you
But you love me just the same
And as the mirror says we're older
I will not look the other way
You are my life, my love, my only
And that's the one thing that won't change"*

"Santana..." Quinn chokes on tears.

"Babe, I love you so much. From the beginning to my last breath and even after that. I want to put a ring on your hand and call you my wife."

A knock on the door interrupts them.

Quinn tries to ignore it but the knocking keeps getting more insistent, disrupting the sound of Santana's voice. Quinn curses. She swings the door open with the intent on yelling at the person who is interrupting her. Instead, her entire body freezes with her heart beating loudly against her chest.

There, kneeling on one knee, was Santana with a ring in her hand.

In the background as the song continues to play, Santana's voice is heard through the speakers.

"Quinn Fabray, will you marry me?" The tears fall down Quinn's eyes as she stares, speechless, at her girlfriend.

"What do you say, Q? Let's tie the knot?" Quinn, with tears streaming down her face, nods her head frantically.

Santana exhales the breath she's been holding. She places the ring on Quinn's finger and stands up to kiss her girlfriend.

When they pull away, Quinn continues to cry. "I thought you were in Paris..."

Santana kisses Quinn's ring finger. "I was actually back in the states a week ago." Quinn looks up at Santana shocked. "I needed a little more time to arrange things. I also needed to stop by old Lima, Ohio."

"What? Why?" Quinn asks in confusion.

Santana blushes. "To get blessing from your mom..."

"Santana..." Quinn gasps softly. She pulls Santana into another sweet kiss.

"Your mom happily gave us her blessing and is even demanding to be part of the planning." Santana chuckles.

Quinn shakes her head and pulls Santana inside their apartment.

"I love you."

"I love you too, Quinn." Santana kisses her on her nose. "Can we celebrate now?" Santana wiggles her eyebrows. Quinn bites her lip and hooks her finger around Santana's pants and pulls her into a hungry and passionate kiss.

For seven days, fans across the world celebrated Quinn Fabray and Santana Lopez. Through stories, art and music, their relationship was explored in a variety of ways. In this collection, you can find all stories written during this week, according to seven themes. An astounding 585190 words, 1300 pages-book full of fan fiction, just for Quinntana Week 2014.

Quinntana Week 2014

April 28 - May 5

Day 1 - Quinntana Begins

Day 2 - Comfort/Fluff

Day 3 - Meet the Family

Day 4 - Future Quinntana

Day 5 - AU

Day 6 - Holiday Season

Day 7 - Free Day

