

Kiss Me Alright

As Translated by CleverDevil

Chapter 1 - Once upon a time

The new home was big, grey and high like a tower.

Justin curled a strand of his fair hair around his finger to assess the present length while looking concerned to the upper windows. It would take longer than expected until the strands would reach down the whole tower.

He sighed. Probably until Christmas.

A small smile moved over his slim face at this thought. He liked Christmas. There always were such fun things to eat. Pudding with glittering money treasure in the middle, fried bird without a head or feathers and with mashed chestnuts in its belly.

Hmm, he wondered what feathers would taste like and took a couple of strands of hair into his mouth. Briefly he tested the taste with his tongue, chewed twice and giggled as he recognized his shampoo. The blue one. Nurse Emma had given it to him for his hair.

Sometimes he really was stupid; of course he didn't have any feathers. Otherwise he could fly like a bird and wouldn't have long hair that allowed him to flee out of the tower.

Hmm, he sighed again and hugged his book tightly to his chest, while nervously looking up. The tower really was pretty high.

"Mister Taylor. You coming?" A woman with a grey cardigan and the letters ANNE on a small name tag touched Justin's arm softly. "We don't want to let Dr. Marcus wait, do we? She's really looking forward to meet you."

Justin did not like the fingers on his jacket. It was so pretty and light blue. Now there were ugly finger spots. He didn't like the letters on the nametag either.

Big P's were nice. The word Pudding began with that one.

"Mister Taylor?"

The boy rocked slightly back and forth, while looking up to the sky and mumbling unintelligible to himself. "P. P. Pppp."

She put a hand on his back and rubbed up and down gently to get his attention. "Will you come with me? I'll show you your new room. I'm sure you'll like it." She pointed to the upper windows. "See? It's the most beautiful room in the house. Up on the 5th floor."

Justin giggled. He didn't like the man with the cardigan. He had a thick chest and was a bit stupid.

Of course his room was at the top of the tower. Where else would the princess live?

The prince had a white jacket with red stripes and buttons made of gold. His hair was so beautiful and brown. He also had a flat chest and long legs with black boots. The prince held the princess tightly while dancing on the shiny parquet floor. It almost looked as if they would fly, although Justin couldn't recognize feathers anywhere. Perhaps it was magic?

"Naa." Justin grinned about his own stupidity and shook his head. Of course only the witch could do magic. The witch and the good fairy.

Hmm. His face darkened thoughtfully. There also was a bad fairy who had grey hair, a thick chest and could turn people into mice.

Justin shuddered.

He wouldn't prefer to be a mouse because then all he could eat was bacon. They only had bacon on Tuesdays for breakfast, with eggs and tomatoes. He touched his belly. Then surely the whole rest of the week he would have terrible...

"... hunger."

"Mister Taylor?" Dr. Melanie Marcus folded her hands on the desk. "Please Mister Taylor, close your book."

Justin looked up from the coloured picture book pages. He didn't like the man with the DR MARCUS tag. He talked too loudly and always wanted his book to decide.

"Mister Taylor. Please, close your book now. You can read again later."

Could he? Justin wasn't sure whether the man was right or not. He looked at the coloured pages critically before he reluctantly closed the book and began bobbing up and down restlessly in the chair.

It was dark in the ballroom now. The prince hopefully didn't step on the princess' shoes.

"Mister Taylor," Dr. Marcus seemed content and opened a yellow file on her desk, "I have studied your documents and must say..."

Justin looked at him in anger. It was really unfair that one was allowed to read yellow books but not the one with the prince.

"I'm very satisfied with the course of your therapeutical development. I think we will keep the dose of your medication for the moment. Dr. Bruckner will meet you later. He is your new therapist here at St. James." She looked at her patient and inquired. "Do you have any questions?"

Justin was sure the dance wasn't over yet, and the prince certainly would become very furious if he had to stop dancing only because it was too dark.

He really would prefer to...

"...open the book."

Dr. Marcus stared at the young man for a moment with a rigid look, then breathed deeply. Finally, she pushed the button on her little intercom system on the desk. "Blake. Please take Mister Taylor to his room."

The man with the BLAKE tag had fair hair and smiled friendly. His chest was flat and his hands small. He even carried Justin's bag and didn't talk too much. That was good. Justin didn't like too many words.

"Good book?" Blake slowly walked next to the patient and stopped, waiting patiently if the young man stopped to have a look at something.

Justin smiled. He liked his book.

"Fairytales are cool." Blake unlocked a gateway door, let Justin through and locked again behind him. "I always thought the one with the frog was pretty cool."

Justin smiled more broadly. Page 24 - 29, The Frog Prince. He liked the...

"...shiny gold ball."

"Yes! Awesome thing." Blake laughed. "I wouldn't mind having one of those myself."

Justin beamed, hugged his book tightly and got a nice warm feeling in his belly.

"Hey you know what? I'm quite jealous. Your room is bigger than my apartment." Blake entered a room on the right side at the end of the corridor and Justin stopped.

He was confused.

His door should be on the left. He was sure about that. Justin Taylor's door always was green and on the left, but Blake carried his bag to a room on the right and the door he went through was white.

Hmm. Justin carefully stuck his head through the doorframe and looked around sceptically. It smelled of white, like white and syringe water. He wasn't sure he would like that at all.

"It's ok." Blake put the bag down and smiled at his patient.

The young man whimpered quietly and beat his head rhythmically against the doorframe. Not really hard but clearly disturbed.

"I am always nervous too if I have to move to a new place."

Justin looked at the male nurse and felt his eyes moisten. "...not green."

"Yes, the walls are quite monotonous." Blake held the boy carefully but securely by his arm and led him into the room. "Perhaps we can put a green picture on the wall."

"...green." Justin looked around anxious. White cupboards, white walls, white bed, and everything smelled of syringe water. Certainly needles would lie under the pillow and in all the drawers. He rubbed his arm at where it bent because he was sure it was aching.

Blake took Justin's tense fingers and smiled at him friendly. "Hey, isn't the frog green? The one with the gold ball?"

Justin stopped scratching his arm. Page 25. The frog was rather green - as grass and broccoli.

"There is a creative therapy with Miss Peterson tomorrow. She certainly has the right pens around to paint a frog."

Justin saw right past Blake at one blank spot on the wall, but he smiled slightly. He knew how to paint, with pens and slippery finger paint and a lot of...

"...paper."

"Yes." Blake laughed. "I was in the drawing room only yesterday. They have piles of paper there."

Justin bobbed up and down a bit. His fingers tickled. He wanted to paint the frog and the fountain and the ball and the tower.

Hmm. He contracted his eyebrows thoughtfully. No, the tower was not with the frog. The tower was with the princess. The princess was waiting for the prince there and always sat at the...

"...window."

"Yes, the view is wonderful, see?" Blake led his patient to the only window in the room.

Justin inspected it sceptically. It was a little narrow but not barred like the one at the last tower. The male nurse opened it and fresh air streamed in. It smelled good. Like rain and sun and red flowers. Justin smiled and touched his cheek when he felt the gentle breeze.

Blake also breathed in deeply and then stuck his head outside. "Wow! If I would live in this room I would sit right here the whole day."

Justin had to snicker. Now that was really stupid. The man with the BLAKE tag wasn't a princess. Of course he couldn't sit by the window.

Blake turned around as he heard the boys' laughter and grinned. "Yes, yes, I know. I'm probably the laziest person the world has ever seen. I'm the foul apple nurse of St. James."

The boy still grinned, but absently saw past Blake as he spoke. "At the 2nd February."

"Hmm? What?"

"We had foul grapes." Justin bobbed up and down a bit. "February the second twothousand...twothousandandthree."

Blake smiled. "Uh, I'm sure they tasted really bad, am I right?"

Justin nodded.

"Yes, but you know what I mean is..." the male nurse thought it over, searching for a suitable example. "Ahm, I am lazy just like the two elks in Brother Bear."

Elks? Justin bobbed up and down a little more. He wasn't sure what elks were. Perhaps they looked just like bananas. Eww. He shuddered. He didn't like rotten bananas at all.

"Hmm," Blake saw Justin's facial expression. "You probably don't know those two. Ok, what's with this dwarf. The one who's always lazy and wants to sleep all the time. You know? He lives at Snow Whites house."

Justin griped his book a little higher in front of his chest and tipped his head to the side. "Sleepy."

Blake snapped his fingers. "Yeah this one. You see? I am exactly like Sleepy. If I could I would sleep the whole day."

The boy wrinkled his forehead and looked over to the white bed. He didn't know whether it was permitted or not for the man with the BLAKE tag, but perhaps he could...

"...use Justin's bed for a while."

Because Justin himself wouldn't need it right now anyway. Justin should only sleep in the evening at 8:05 pm and after the good night greeting on channel 4. Surely not earlier.

"Oh no!" Blake laughed and closed the window again. "Believe me if I'd crawl into your bed right now the next time I'd wake up would be sometime next April."

"Hh!" Justin was shocked. Next April? Surely this was longer than 8:05pm.

"It's ok." Blake got closer and smiled friendly. "I have a bed of my own at my apartment. I'll bring a photo tomorrow and then you can see it."

Justin bobbed up and down and hummed the melody that always came with the good night greeting on channel 4. He preferred to be in bed after the good night greeting. He certainly would be very tired by then.

"Hey," the male nurse stuck his hand out. "How about we introduce ourselves? I am not really called Sleepy. Actually my name is Blake." He pointed at his nameplate in addition.

Justin immediately took the hint and tried to concentrate and recognize the name Plake in the single BLAKE letters.

Blake repeated slowly, "Blake."

The boy absently lowered his look and smiled. He liked the great P. P like Pudding and...

"...Plake."

Blake, once again said clearly. "Blake."

"Plake."

"You don't like the B so much, ah?" Blake grinned, shook his head and took his ignored hand and led it to Justin's fingers. He grasped them very loosely and without any pressure. "And Dr. Marcus said your name is Justin."

"Justin Taylor seven five Barton Avenue one seven zero three three Harrisburg Pennsylv-" Justin turned a hair strand around his finger and rocked back and forth softly. "Pennsylvania USA."

Blake squeezed the pale fingers gently now. "Great. See? Now we know each other. Blake and Justin."

Justin rocked a little more, smiling. "Plake and Justin."

"Plake and Justin? Friends Plake and Justin?"

"Plake and Justin." Justin moved his little finger against Plakes hand. He liked Plake.

Blake grinned and pushed the dainty fingers once again briefly before letting go. "Ok, Justin. I'll leave you alone now so you can unpack your bag and everything. Would you like to move your things into the drawers?"

Justin looked over to the white drawers and wanted to paint them green.

"Oh and..." The male nurse fetched a piece of paper from his pocket and wrote a couple of words on it. "See, this is your new address. You have moved. It's not Harrisburg anymore."

Justin took the piece of paper and stared at it. His rocking got stronger. "Harrisburg. Justin Taylor seven five Barton Avenue one seven zero three three Harrisburg Pennsylvania USA."

Blake remained completely calm. "You live here now. I've written it down for you, see? Justin Taylor, 3 Fuller Street, 15219 Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA."

Justin wound the hair around his finger a tiny bit firmer. It was for certain that Justin Taylor lived in Harrisburg. On the other hand, they drove really far away in the car and now he was in a different tower. Perhaps he had really...

"...moved?"

Blake smiled. "Moved. Justin has moved and lives here now. In beautiful Pittsburgh." He knocked Justin lightly on the shoulder. "See you later, yes? I'll bring your dinner at 6 pm."

Justin heard Plake close the door and stood still for a moment. Then he looked to the left. A chair with a grey cushion was in the corner between the cupboard and the window. He went over and sat down slowly and very carefully before lightly bouncing up and down on the cushion. He checked whether the chair was just as comfortable as his chair in Harrisburg or not. He was not convinced, but perhaps one could ...

"...read" in here?

Hmm. He put the book on his lap, looked at it for a while and opened it. Yes, it worked.

Carefully and only with his fingertips he turned the pages over. Page 14, page 15, page 16. He smiled. The prince with the white jacket and the tower with the princess were on page 16.

He looked at it some time, then turned to page 17 and to his favourite drawing. The one where the prince climbed quite courageously on the princess' fair and long hair up the tower and-

Suddenly he stiffened with fright. His heartbeat sped up and his throat got so tight that he could hardly breathe.

He had moved!

Justin Taylor was not in Harrisburg anymore.

Justin Taylor lived in a new tower now.

Oh no! How should the prince ever be able to find him now?

Chapter 2 - Dear Prince

When Blake entered the last room on the right side of the corridor at 6:07pm with a dinner tray, he found his young patient in bed. He was deeply hidden under the white blanket and sobbing loudly.

Blake smiled sadly and put the tray down. He had immediately known that Justin would have difficulties with becoming acclimated. Anybody who lived in the same room for eighteen years and then put into a completely different building in a totally strange town, would feel the same way.

"Hey," He looked around and discovered the still packed bag locked tightly in front of the cupboard. "You still haven't unpacked. Don't you want to put your socks in the drawer?"

Justin cried under the blanket and pushed his nose deeply into the pillow.

"I bet this shelf would be perfect for your alarm clock." Blake opened the bag and began to distribute a couple of things in the room. "I am sure your underwear feels very lucky now that it's out of the dark bag."

The boy whimpered further, but more quietly so he could eventually hear what Blake had to say. "Oh look. Your trousers fit exactly on the upper shelf."

The male nurse took a stack of t-shirts from the bag and put them at the second shelf under the trousers.

Justin sniffled and turned his face half from the pillow to be able to see something, at least with one eye.

"Wow. I'd say you have a rather cool radio here!" Impressed, Blake took a silver radio from the bag. This thing really wasn't bad. "Can I try it?"

He didn't wait for his patient to answer. He pulled a safety guard from one of the sockets and attached the radio's plug. With a couple of twists on the buttons, a radio station from New York could be heard and he smiled at the boys nervous whimpering under the blanket.

Justin turned a thick hair strand around his forefinger and mumbled nervously to himself. "Piii-pliine to Paa ra-diiise." He didn't like the strange voice in the radio. He preferred to hear Pu'ukani. "Your iiiisland muu uuusic co-nnnn-e ct ion!"

Blake grinned at this perfect imitation of a Hawaiian radio announcement. "Pipeline to Paradise? You're a real Kahuna then, hmm?"

Justin stayed in his exceptionally deep, monotonous intonation. "Cowabunga"

The male nurse looked at Justin stupefied and then laughed out loud.

Fifteen minutes later Justin wasn't lying in his bed anymore and even though his blue eyes were red rimmed and welled up a little, his general disposition was much calmer now.

The little radio was adjusted on the right frequency to receive Pipeline2Paradise in best quality and all garments of Justin's had found their place in the cupboard.

"Hey Justin," Blake spoke quietly from the side to get his patients attention. "You feel a bit hungry now? It's time for your dinner."

Justin looked at the watch and began to rock back and forth. "Aah."

It was Thursday. 6:29 pm. This was not good at all. Certainly dinner was always at 6 pm on Thursday. Two slices of bread with hard crust, eggs, peppers and meat paste.

"Justin." Blake sat himself at Justin's little table and began to spread salami on the wholemeal roll. "It's ok. Remember? You're in Pittsburgh now. It's ok to eat a bit later in Pittsburgh."

"6 pm." Justin ran to the door which wasn't green and beat his hand against it. "6 pm. Of course it's 6pm."

Blake watched the boy attentively, but however didn't stop preparing the meal. "Justin? I would like for you to not beat your hand on the door. You'll hurt yourself. Come here and try the salami. You surely like salami, hmm?"

Justin loved salami. Monday was salami day, but today wasn't Monday. Of course today was Thursday. Therefore he would certainly not eat any salami. Today it was eggs and peppers and...

"...meat paste. 6 pm."

"It's meat paste in Harrisburg today?"

Justin rocked back and forth and curled blond hair around his finger. "6 pm. Of course it's meat paste."

"Ok." The male nurse put the roll aside. "I gave you a piece of paper earlier. Where is it now?"

Justin looked up to his bedside table, not stopping his rocking motions.

Blake got up, fetched the small paper and went to his patient. "What does it say? See? What have I written for you Justin?"

"6 pm." Justin was stubborn and didn't want to look at the piece of paper.

Blake grinned. "Justin Taylor. 3 Fuller Street. 15219 Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA. Do you remember? Justin has moved. Not in Harrisburg anymore."

"Moved?" Justin looked blankly past the male nurse and directly at the white wall.

"Yes, exactly. You have moved. Justin lives in Pittsburgh now with Plake."

The rocking stopped slowly and a small smile drew over Justin's lips. "Plake"

"Yes. Plake and Justin are living in Pittsburgh now and can you see this?" Blake drew out a black and white copy of the weekly St. James meal plan. "Here in Pittsburgh its wholemeal rolls, salami, butter, cheese and pickled gherkin on Thursday."

"Meat paste."

"Not here in Pittsburgh."

"6 pm."

Blake sighed, fetched Justin's deep blue alarm clock off the shelf, altered the time to 6 pm and then held the clock in front of his patients face. "6 pm. Will you eat the salami roll now?"

Justin looked astonished at his clock. Then he took it into his hand, shook it and knocked on its plastic structure. It was 6 pm again. That had never happened before.

"Justin? You really don't want to miss dinner time again, do you?"

Justin looked once again at the clock and then went to the little table with the salami.

He kept the magic watch tightly in his hand while eating the whole roll and half of the pickled gherkin. Although pickled gherkins were actually for Sunday evenings only.

Of course.

The last point on Dr. Bruckner's to do list for the day was the welcoming of his newest patient. He knocked at J. Taylor's door shortly after 7 pm.

At St. James it was not usual to ask for permission to enter a room, so he didn't wait for it before opening the door. He knocked on doors only out of courtesy.

"Good evening, I'm Dr. Bruckner." He entered the room with a kind smile and saw a thin boy sitting at a small table. His head hung down, almost touching the table top and his face covered by a thick curtain of bright blond hair. "Mister Taylor? Justin? Do you mind if I sit down with you for a little while?" Dr. Bruckner took the little stool and sat down opposite the boy.

Justin remained still. His right hand clutched an old book of fairy tales tightly against his chest and the other held something. A pen. A blue wax crayon which he kept clasped tightly.

"Justin? Wouldn't you like to tell me hello?"

The tip of Justin's nose touched a little piece of paper which lay on the table. The paper smelled of wax crayon. Like the blue one. Justin breathed in deeply. He liked blue.

"I am your therapist for the next couple of months. What are you doing? Does this become a drawing?"

Justin felt his eyes become damp and once again breathed in deeply. This time through his mouth and a little louder.

Dr. Bruckner tipped his head to the side and gave the boy a closer look before extending his hand to stroke the blond hair. "It takes a while to settle down in a new place. And it's ok to be sad at first. To miss your old place."

Something wet ran down Justin's nose and it tickled.

The professor stroked the soft strands once again before getting up. "The nurses have the number of my pager. Just let me know if you want to talk, ok? I'll stop by every time you want me to."

"One five two one nine Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA. One five two one nine." Justin dropped his forehead against the little paper on the table. "One five two one nine." He knew Justin Taylor's new numbers exactly now.

...only the prince didn't know the numbers.

And without the right numbers certainly the letter would never arrive at the prince's castle.

At 8:30 pm Blake made his last check on station four and smiled gently as he entered the last room on the right side at the end of the corridor. It was dark except for the moonlight and the shine of the streetlights, coming from outside the window.

Justin wasn't in his bed. He still sat at the table with a wax crayon in his hand and his head on a well-worn book of fairytales. Like on a pillow.

He slept and breathed evenly.

A crumpled piece of paper lay beneath his other hand marked by a blue crayon.

Blake pulled it out carefully.

Prince I live now in another tower one five two one nine Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA.

Princess Justin Taylor

PS: My hair is already longer

The handwriting was smeared and reminded him of a preschooler. Blake read the sentence three times before carefully putting the wrinkled paper back on the table. He took the pen from Justin's thin fingers and stroked the boy's head while he softly whispered to him to wake up. He stood beside Justin and held him firmly by the arm to help him up.

The patient hardly opened his eyes as they took the few steps toward the bed and mumbled something unintelligible, but when Blake tried to direct him down on to the mattress, he stopped stubbornly and suddenly seemed wide awake.

"Come on Justin. You're tired. Lay down."

"Channel...channel four."

"Channel four?"

"Channel four."

"You want to watch television? What's on channel four?"

"Channel four. The good night greeting. Eight...eight o'clock on channel four."

Blake looked at the boy attentively. "The good night greeting is on channel four at 8 pm?"

"Channel four."

Blake held his watch to Justin's eye-level. "8:36 pm. Justin the good night greeting is over now. You can watch it tomorrow."

"Watch it tomorrow." Justin couldn't recognize the numbers on Blake's watch in the darkness.

"Tomorrow Justin." The male nurse pulled the blanket back and guided Justin into a sitting position on the mattress.

"Time to sleep now. You're tired."

Was he? Yes. His eyes felt very heavy and he wanted to sleep a little more. So he tucked his legs under the blanket and put his head on the pillow.

"Here. Your book." Blake covered the boy up and shoved the fairytale book under the cushion. "No one can take it now, right?"

A ghost of a smile played over Justin's red lips for a few seconds and three of his fingers followed the precious book protectively under the down filled pillow, before his eyes fell shut.

Blake smiled and stroked soft blond hair from a pale face. "Good night...frog prince."

Chapter 3 - And pudding for Christmas

The man with the box of felt-tip pens said one must call him 'Miss Peterson' but Justin only called him 'Miss Eterson' because he was jealous and angry.

Miss Eterson had long, fair princess hair and it was so much longer than Justin's.

With a furious face the boy painted thick black lines on his paper and grumbled. Miss Eterson wanted him to paint with yellow. Princess-hair-yellow.

"Justin," Miss Peterson came over to Justin's table and leaned over his drawing with a big smile. "Don't you want to use the yellow pen? Your picture would become so much brighter."

Justin grumbled a little more and rubbed a thick black wax layer to the middle of his paper.

The therapist scribbled something in her file, then sat down to the other side of the table and watched as Justin drew. With lots and lots of black wax crayon.

Justin was nervous because of Miss Eterson. He only sat there, staring and he smelled of violet flowers and hand cream. Justin didn't like this smell. He didn't like Miss Eterson's thick chest and red finger claws either.

"Oh, what a beautiful book!" Miss Peterson looked at the book of fairytales which lay on the table next to the boy. "May I look at it?"

Justin shook his head without even looking up. Red finger claws would quite certainly make ugly finger spots on the pages.

Miss Peterson smiled friendly. "My grandmother used to read Cinderella to me."

Justin peeked up a bit under his long hair strands.

"I loved it. I wanted to be a princess too and dance with the prince in his beautiful castle."

Justin blinked and stopped painting. With big eyes he looked up.

Was this the reason for Miss Eterson to have such long princess hair? Because he wanted to dance with Cinderella's prince?

He moved back, squeaking with the chair, and stuck his head under the table to look at Miss Eterson's shoes. They weren't made of glass but were pretty and pink with a glittering bow. Justin wasn't sure whether these could be real princess shoes or not.

Miss Peterson wrinkled her forehead in amusement and bent down too as Justin touched her right shoe under the table. "Justin? You drop something on the floor?"

Justin met her questioning look under the tabletop. Had he? He looked around on the ground looking for something that could've belonged to him, but in the end found nothing. He shook his head.

Miss Peterson laughed and sat up straight again, then groaned sympathetically when her patient bumped his head as he tried to crawl up from under the table.

"Hh!" The boy immediately held on his forehead and looked frightened at Miss Eterson.

"Oh, Justin. Is it very bad?" With warm, soft fingers she stroked Justin's blond hair and smiled gently. "Would you like to put some ice on it?"

He thought about it briefly. His head was aching terribly but he wouldn't want to make things worse by getting cold all over as well. He trembled visibly, shook his head and then quite automatically leaned himself a little more into Miss Eterson's stroking hand.

She looked at him kindly. "You really have wonderful hair Justin. Nice and long."

He did? A mixture of surprise and joy crawled over Justin's innocent features and three of his fingers came up to stroke the blond strands too. Yes, they definitely were longer than yesterday. It probably wouldn't take until Christmas for his hair to grow the right length for the tower. Presumably only till Thanksgiving. He smiled. There was fried bird without feathers or a head then too. Perhaps even Pudding with money treasure. He liked...

"...Pudding."

Miss Peterson grinned. "Yes, it's Friday, isn't it? There's always pudding for dessert on Fridays."

It was? Justin certainly knew that in Harrisburg there was pudding only at Christmas. But he was in Pittsburgh now. Perhaps it was already Christmas in Pittsburgh? He got quite nervous at the thought and hummed the bell song. He liked the tone of bells.

The therapist watched her patient in confusion as he began to hum a melody that sounded a lot like Jingle Bells, but then however decided simply to ignore it. "So Justin, Blake told me you like the colour green. Perhaps you'd like to use a green crayon for your next picture?"

Justin turned a thick blond strand around his finger and showed a happy smile as Miss Peterson handed him a green crayon. Frog Prince green.

On Fridays Blake had the late shift and made his first check on ward number four punctually at 4:30 pm.

With a little medicine cup he entered Justin's room and was clearly disappointed to find the young man with a puffy face once again. He was curled up on the bed with an opened book of fairytales on the pillow.

"Hello Justin. How was your day?" Blake sat with his patient on the edge of the bed. "Miss Peterson told me about the big green frog you drew today at creative therapy."

Justin sniffled.

"Hey," Blake bent down a little and stroked Justin's head. "You're still sad about Harrisburg?"

The boy squeezed his eyes shut as tears flowed again and he sobbed silently.

The male nurse looked at him taken aback. It wasn't usual for people with Justin's diagnosis to show their emotions so openly, but if they did it was basically impossible for them to verbalise their feelings. In return this made it damned hard for him to help. Like now, in the case of his newest patient who seemed more than lost in his own little isolated world at the moment.

Blake looked around and watched at the books open pages. Rapunzel. A big, grey tower was shown and a fair-haired girl looked from the upper window. She glanced down with a hopeful expression, to this beautiful king's son who ready for rescue, jumped of his horse.

Blake touched the page thoughtfully and then looked up at his crying patient.

"It's pretty sad that the princess had to live all alone in the tower for so long, hmm?"

Justin didn't answer. He only covered his face with both hands and sobbed again.

"I would've been rather frightened. I mean if someone would lock me up in there, you know?" He continued to stroke his fingers through Justin's hair. "Fortunately the prince showed up at the end, right?"

The boy said something through his hands. "Ch-hristm-mas ca-ame to ea-earl-ly."

Blake carefully pulled away the fingers and wiped Justin's cheeks with a paper handkerchief. "Christmas came too early?"

Justin looked at Blake miserably and nodded.

"But it's four months till next Christmas. It'll be in December quite on time."

The boy shook his head with tear damp eyes. "But in Pi-ittsbh- hurgh it's ri-ight n-now."

"Yeah?" Blake looked at the patient closely. "Who told you that?"

Justin began to wail loudly and tore himself strongly by the hair. "N-not P-lake!"

Blake raised his eyebrows and tried to solve Justin's tense fingers from the blond strands. "Not Plake?"

Justin pulled more strongly and cried out flustered. And the male nurse had no other choice than to give a little sedative shot into the boy's arm. "It's ok." He stroked the kid's forehead gently.

Justin's movements became dull and his blue eyes were turned towards Blake's face sadly.

Blake smiled. "It's ok. Sleep a bit, frog prince."

Three minutes later Justin breathed evenly in a relaxed sleep and the male nurse left the room to take a look at the work schedule in the ward room.

He read the plan for Friday shook his head and went into the next door, the staff room.

"Hey, Teddy. Did Ethan have the shift at noon today?"

Male nurse Schmidt put down his coffee. "Ah yes. But he left twenty minutes ago."

Blake nodded and smiled. "Okay then. Thanks." He went to the desk of the station leader and sat down at the edge to grab the phone.

It rang and just a few seconds later a sleepy "Gold?" was heard.

"Hey Ethan. Blake here. Sorry to bother you, but Teddy said you had the shift at noon."

"Yes. Why?"

"Mister Taylor at 411 is rather irritated. I had to sedate him."

"Hmm."

"Do you know anything? Was he conspicuous during your shift?"

"No. He was very exited about his lunch, though."

"What was it?"

"I don't know... chicken, vegetables and caramel pudding. The kid possibly thought it was a fucking Christmas dinner."

Blake frowned. "Christmas dinner?"

Ethan laughed. "Yeah, he jabbered something of a money treasure in the pudding and a fried bird without feathers."

"Hmm. What did you tell him?"

"Nothing. I placed the tray in front of him and wished him Merry Christmas. Then I left."

"You wished him Merry Christmas? Why?"

"I don't know why! Hell, it was a joke. What's with all the questions, anyway?"

Frustrated, Blake rubbed his hair. "It's okay. I'm trying to find out what's up with him, that's all. Was he inconspicuous after lunch?"

"I only looked after him once as I cleared the tables. He sat crying in front of the mirror."

"Really? What did he do there?"

"Like I said, he was all crying. Something about his hair. I don't know, if you'd ask me he damn well has a good reason to whine and weep with that hair style. The kid badly needs a decent haircut."

"Hmm. Ok, thanks for the information. I appreciate it." Blake hung up the phone and made some notes. He never liked his colleague and was absolutely not in any agreement with Ethan Gold's work ethics or his often irreverent attitude against the patients. But at least now he could visualize what happened earlier to put the little frog prince in his current state of condition.

... speaking of frogs. Armed with a small roll of cellotape the male nurse headed back to Justin's room and searched for the frog drawing from Lindsay Petersons creative therapy.

The boy would be happy about some colour on his empty walls.

As Justin woke up it was early evening. His head hurt a little and somehow he still felt tired, but he also was hungry. Very hungry.

He sat up and looked at his blue alarm clock. It was 5:51pm. Almost dinnertime.

Quickly he rose and washed his hands at the washbasin next to the drawer.

After that he sat down at his small table and stared at the door.

At 5:54pm he heard footsteps and bent his head a little to try to look the two meters distance through the tiny keyhole.

It didn't work, but the door opened and Plake entered the room with a piece of paper in one hand, a tray in the other and a kind smile on his face.

"Hey Justin. How was your nap?"

Justin thought about it and then answered nothing at all because only kittens knew how to take a nap and report afterwards about it and he didn't have any fur. Though it was a real shame, he would've liked to wash his silky black fur with his tongue. He smiled... purred a little, stroked his longish hair.... and wrinkled his nose then in distraction. Hmm. His fur wasn't black. It was lightly yellow. Princess-Hair-Yellow because he was a princess.

The male nurse kept the tray in his hand and gave the paper to the boy. "That's the lunch scheme for Pittsburgh. I thought we'd hang it up next to the frog, so that you always know what you get for lunch."

Justin followed Blake's pointing and his eyes widened immediately.

"Hh!" The picture of a green frog was hanging at the wall, over the bed! He quickly stood up from the table, climbed on the mattress and touched the paper with his fingertips.

Blake grinned while, putting down the tray. "See? You drew it at Miss Petersons, remember? It looks nice on the wall."

Justin rubbed over the smooth surface with fascination. It was so green and smelled like pens and the frog was happy and laughing. Justin laughed too. Loud.

Blake stopped a moment and beamed likewise. Then he took a small roll of cello tape out of his pocket and took two little pieces from it.

"Here. We hang the Pittsburgh lunch plan next to it." With wide stretched arms he stuck the black and white paper next to Justin's frog and smoothed it somewhat. "Perfect!"

"Perfect!" Justin echoed the word in an exact copy of Blake's voice and grinned at the black and white scale.

"Mondaytuesdaywednesdaythursdayfridaysaturdaysunday."

"Right, the whole week." Blake pointed explaining at the scheme. "You see, here is Friday. Breakfast, lunch, supper. What do you read at supper?"

Justin stared at the plan in earnest concentration. "Potato salad."

Blake stifled a grin and tried to keep a mature tone. "Justin. I don't mean your supper in Harrisburg. Read what you get in Pittsburgh."

"Potato salad, potato salad." The boy whispered, while pretending to read from the list.

The male nurse grinned and probed his young patient playfully to the side. "Nooo. No potato salad. It's red beet, dark bread, soft cheese and liverwurst."

"Potato salad." Justin really didn't like red beet.

Blake sighed and shrugged his shoulders with a grimace. "Okay, you're right. Potato salad is definitely better than this grub."

"Potato salad." Justin smiled brightly at Plake.

Blake smiled back. Then he pointed again at the plan. "Here, do you still know what you got for lunch?"

Justin looked at the column Friday-Lunch, read it and immediately turned his head away.

"Justin?" Blake remained calm. "It says you got yams, fried chicken, peas and caramel pudding for dessert."

The boy mimicked a motionless concrete column perfectly as he stared disinterested in the other direction.

"Was it tasty, hmm? Fried chicken and pudding? I'm sure you like pudding."

The patient didn't reply, but started rocking unconsciously.

"When did you get pudding in Harrisburg? Mondays?"

"Christmas, Christmas..." murmured Justin scarcely audible. "Pudding at Christmas."

"You thought that today was Christmas? Because you got pudding?"

Justin rocked a little harder and his fingers wandered to his hair.

Blake grasped his small wrists. "Ethan has brought you your launch at noon, am I right?"

"Not Plake..." The boy tried to release his hands from Blake's grip. "Not Plake."

"No, not Plake. I was at home. Ethan also works here. He brought you your dinner and wished you a 'Merry Christmas'."

"Merry Christmas." echoed Justin weakly. "Merry... merry."

Gently Blake stroked the boys arm. "It was just a joke Justin. Ethan has made a joke. It isn't Christmas here in Pittsburgh."

"Merry, merry..."

"Just a joke, Justin."

"Joke, Justin."

"Yeah exactly. Just a joke. It isn't Christmas."

"Not Christmas."

Blake reached for Justin's chin and turned it around to create eye contact. He looked at Justin and shook his head. "Absolutely not Christmas. In Pittsburgh you get pudding and chicken on Fridays. Not at Christmas."

The boy looked silently at Blake who tried to use this attention.

"Don't you like Christmas?"

Justin blinked.

"Hmm, Justin? You don't like Christmas? Why were you sad?"

"Hair isn't long enough. Certainly not long enough." Justin's gaze turned blank and he reached for his hair, touching lightly the end of the strands.

Blake let him.

"Not long enough."

Blake tried to make sense of what the boy was saying. "Your hair must be long for Christmas?"

"Certainly too short."

"Why? Why do you want long hair for Christmas?"

Justin's gaze still was blank but he began to smile and climbed off the bed. Excited he took the fairy tale book from under the pillow, turned the pages and finally opened it to page 17. As if that alone would explain everything. He looked at Blake, smiling brightly. "I get the same."

Blake frowned and looked at the drawing of Rapunzel, the tower and the prince. "The same?"

Justin nodded and accurately followed the length of Rapunzel's long fair hair with his finger. "Down to the bottom."

"Hmm." Blake smiled. "She certainly has damn long hair. You want the same?"

Justin didn't take his eyes off of the picture as he reached for his own blond wisps or hair and wrapped some of them around his finger.

"It doesn't grow that fast Justin. You have to wait."

He didn't use his natural voice for speaking these words, so Blake assumed, Justin imitated someone else who told him things like that.

"You must be patient for your hair to grow long? You have to wait? Until Christmas?"

Justin nodded and again rubbed with one finger along Rapunzel's hair length. This time with a sad gaze. "Christmas comes too early in Pittsburgh."

"Nope." Blake smiled and touched his hand to Justin's cheek. "Remember? Ethan has only made a joke. It isn't Christmas in Pittsburgh yet. We always eat pudding."

"Not Christmas in Pittsburgh."

"No." Blake prodded Justin's nose with his finger and the boy giggled because it was funny. "Hey listen. Do you want to eat your supper now?"

The corner of Justin's lip curled into a cheeky grin. "Potato salad."

Blake sighed. "Uh, boy you're killing me ..."

Chapter 4 - A Room With A View

Justin lay on his back, the blanket drawn up to the tip of his nose and his hands lay meticulously to the left and right beside his body. His blue alarm clock ticked along quietly on the shelf and sometimes white beams of light pulled over the dark walls when a car drove past.

Justin blinked. He couldn't sleep and it already was 9:07pm. It was definitely bedtime, but his eyes wouldn't shut.

Plake had left the window open and now noises came through from the outside while the dark gray curtain moved a little. Justin didn't like it. It made him nervous and he already had called for Plake. Nobody came.

Again the shine of headlights pulled over the walls and stopped above Justin's bed before disappearing completely. Shortly after a car door was thrown shut a second later. Right after that a loud 'Beep-Beep' clanked over the otherwise calm road.

Justin grew stiff. He didn't recognize that noise. Maybe it was a big...

"...bird?"

He moved his head in the direction of the window. Dull steps could be heard before they softened and stopped completely.

Oh oh. Of course big birds could also fly.

Justin made a worried face and wailed quietly as he stared at the open window. He really would have preferred if Plake would come to close it.

Anxiously, he pulled the blanket higher and alternated his look from the closed door to the window and back. Plake didn't come and he couldn't very well get up because it was bedtime, but the gap in the window was really big. A spiky birds beak could easily fit through it.

"Hh!" His eyes widened in terror at that vision and he hastily crawled out from under his blanket.

The floor was cold under his naked feet and he looked guilty at the alarm clock because he wasn't supposed to walk around at this time.

The way towards the window wasn't far but Justin's heart was pounding like mad when he reached it. A cool gust of wind caused the curtain to drift again and Justin squeaked and quickly shut his eyes.

Blind he stretched his hands out to feel for the pane and fumbled a small step closer as he felt the handle under his fingers. With held breath he pushed against it, then pulled and wailed helplessly in the end as nothing happened. In panic he opened his eyes, rattled at the window handle and a moment later froze completely, as he could hear footsteps again from outside.

Without really moving his eyes he pried down to the dark road and recognized a tall figure walking out there. Not a bird. It was a man. The man went to a car, stretched an arm out and the 'Beep-Beep' noise came again.

Justin jerked frightened, but stared with wide eyes down the window. It wasn't a bird's sound. The car had made the noise and now it had lights on. The man opened a door, got in and some loud drone came.

Justin moved his head a little as he watched the car drive away. It was black and fast and sounded totally exciting. He wondered if one could drove with it to Harrisburg.

Cool air made Justin's blonde hair flutter gently and he touched his cheek where the wind tickled, his gaze went straight ahead only to be caught in shock a moment later by the big building that stood softly illuminated but incredibly huge on the other side of the road.

The boy nervously rubbed his right ear, rocked a little and finally grew closer to the pane until he almost touched it with his nose. It was the...

"...castle."

Exactly in front of the tower.

"The castle, of course." He nodded and laid his fingers at the cool window glass.

It looked exactly like the one in his book with pointy round roofs and small towers in which a princess never could fit in.

Justin hummed quietly and twisted a blonde strand around his finger. He was nervous and his belly became all hot and tight. He hadn't known that the prince was living here with Plake and Justin in Pittsburgh. Maybe that was the reason why he had to move to another tower. So that the prince could finally come to rescue him?

Hmm. He thought about it a little, scratched his ear again and then smiled wide and happy. No wonder Plake left the window open. How else should the prince be able to enter the room?

"Ha!" Justin bounced a little and felt as if it would tickle everywhere. The castle was so big and beautiful! He wanted to go there right now. He wanted to see the prince and his horse and the frog. Hmm...

He frowned, clicked his tongue and then knocked his hand flat against his forehead like the man on TV did. Of course the frog wasn't living in the castle, he had to sit at the well and catch the gold ball.

"Hh..." Justin sighed and shook his head. Sometimes he really was stupid.

As Blake entered room 411 the next morning with a breakfast tray and a medicine cup, he almost couldn't believe his eyes. Patient Justin Taylor slept peacefully, but not in his bed.

No, he was sitting oblique on the small ledge in front of the window, both of his hands pressed flat on the pane and his cheek leaning tight against the glass.

It looked horrible uncomfortable, however the boy seemed absolutely relaxed. His breathing was calm and even.

Blake smiled. What the hell was the boy doing in the middle of the night at the window? Watching the moon? Counting stars? Looking for aliens?! Whatever it was, it had to be exhausting if he fell asleep right there.

"Hh." The male nurse shook his head, placed the meal and medicine, and decided to let his young patient rest for a few more minutes. He seemed to need it.

Justin woke up a while later and was a little confused. At first he didn't know where he was and felt a pang at his back. But before he could worry about that, his sleepy gaze fell on the most beautiful thing he had ever seen right here in front of his tower window. It was made of heavy stone, with dark red round roofs, big arch windows and tiny towers proudly gleaming in the morning sun.

Dazed Justin smiled through the pane. He never would've thought a castle could be so beautiful.

"Ah, you're up." Blake entered Justin's room again, after taking care of the rest of the patients in ward 4. "You didn't sleep in your bed, hmm? Wasn't it terribly uncomfortable there at the window?"

The boy ignored the male nurse completely.

Instead he tried to stick his head out of window, through the narrow slit. He really wanted to know what the castle smelt like. Certainly after silver swords and thick red velvet pillows and horse hay.

"Hey! Woohoho!" Blake made three quick steps to Justin's side and held him from his head and shoulders. "What are you doing?"

Justin squeaked as he felt strong hands on his neck, but then he saw Plake beside him and smiled. He liked Plake.

"Listen," the male nurse stroked through Justin's hair and then played with the window handle to secure the pane was closed completely. "If you wanna get some fresh air, you could simply go for a walk. We have a pretty garden behind the house."

"...behind the house." echoed Justin in Plake's voice, but again looked totally spellbound out the window. He didn't like that it was closed now and pressed his nose and palms flat against it until the glass fogged from his near breath. There was a meadow with stubby grass in front of the castle and four small trees. A low stonewall went all around it and in every window were pretty curtains.

"Ooh." Justin marveled and breathed a little harder against the glass pane. It got soggy and warm under his mouth and nose. The tip of his tongue came out to feel the glass.

Blake smiled amused and followed Justin's mesmerized gaze. "That is a pretty house, isn't it? It's quite old."

Justin blinked and his eyelashes streaked the pane. He wasn't sure if a castle could be old, but he wondered if behind it maybe stood a carriage. Had the prince a carriage? Certainly. What else should he use to...

"...drive to Harrisburg."

"You want to drive to Harrisburg?"

Justin pushed his lips against the soggy glass and then giggled. Plake made jokes with him. Of course he didn't want to drive to Harrisburg. Because of the prince he has only just...

"...moved."

Smiling, the male nurse watched the boy and tousled his blonde hair a moment. "Well then, what about a great breakfast here in Pittsburgh. Eggs, bacon and baked beans."

"Ha!" The patient took his face away from the window and beamed at Blake. "Bacon!"

Blake was a little overtaken by all this enthusiasm about the new food arrangement. "You like bacon?"

"Bacon!" Justin said the word loud with a smile and gripped Plake's face. It was warm and soft and he rubbed over Plake's cheeks.

"Okay then." The male nurse caught Justin's fingers, took them in his and guided the boy to the sink. "Go ahead, before everything gets cold."

"Go ahead." Echoed Justin and squeezed way to much soap on his palms. He really liked bacon.

At 3 pm Justin had already spent five hours at the window to admire the house at the other side of the road. Even for that one hour in which he was forced to attend Miss Etersons creative therapy, he hadn't thought of anything else and drew the castle big and colorful over a whole paper.

He had shown it to Miss Eterson proudly but she only had patted his shoulder and said, "Great Justin. Is this the White House in Washington?"

Justin had growled at her and then pulled the picture out of her red finger claws. He didn't like Miss Eterson.

"Hello Justin." Ethan had the order from Professor Bruckner to go for a walk with the patient from 411. That wasn't one of his favorite things to do here at the sanatorium, but it was much better than helping Misses Falkenheimer with the shower. "Where is your jacket, we're going out for a little while."

Justin crouched at the window ledge in a kneeling position and watched mesmerized as a big man with an angularly bag on his back and a cozy feather handle in hand went happy whistling down the castle entrance before disappearing a moment later behind the entrance door.

Hmm. Of course this wasn't the prince. He looked totally different. But maybe this was the chef or the servant. Prince's needed a lot of servants.

Ethan sighed. He absolutely hated it if he was ignored. He rolled his eyes, gripped the hood of Justin's jacket and held it out to him.

"Come on Goldilocks. You can spy the neighbors again later."

Justin's face darkened, but he didn't move a millimeter. He wasn't Goldilocks and he didn't want anybody to touch his jacket.

"Not Plake." He grumbled angrily and shifted away from the man with the hair in his face.

"Oh great..." Ethan was pissed. He wasn't in the mood for playing games or getting rebuked by the Professor if he noticed that the ordered stroll got cancelled. So he grabbed for Justin's arm and forced him impatiently into the jacket sleeve.

The boy squeaked confused, retracted his neck and stiffed. Nonetheless male nurse Gold won the fight and grasped Justin's shoulder into an iron grip to guide him out of the room, away from the ward and towards the exit. After all he was the one who made the rules.

Unwillingly Justin walked beside the male nurse. He was cold and nobody told him where he had to go. He didn't know the way. The small stones underneath his shoes made funny noises and he really didn't want to leave his room without his...

"... book."

"You don't need a book now. We're going for a walk." Ethan guided the young man to the left and shoved him forward over the pretty border of St. James Park.

"Definitely not under the pillow." Justin stumbled a little and nervously began to twist his hair around his finger. "Definitely not under the pillow." Somebody could take it. Of course it must be under the pillow."

"Yeah, yeah the pillow." Ethan rummaged in his jacket pocket, as a quiet buzz was heard. He revealed his vibrating cell phone and pushed a button. "Hey man. Nope, still at work. Tonight or what?"

Justin rocked back and forth. The male nurse gripped him by the fabric of his sweat jacket, but he didn't want to stand here. He also didn't know with whom the man spoke and wanted it to be Plake.

"P.L.A.K.E." he spelled loud. "Plaaaaake."

"Ah shit." Ethan let go of Justin and turned away a little from the burbling patient. "Yeah, what? No, only a patient. Yeah... but listen, if she doesn't want to, we just go to Olsen's and get it there."

"Pppp. Plake." Justin rocked slightly. Wind blew and he felt it in his hair. He tipped his head to the side at the feeling, not sure if he liked it. Then he blinked as the wind hardened and took a couple of steps away. The sound of the tiny stones really was terrible. He tried not to step on them very hard to make it quieter. He smiled when it seemed to work... then he smiled a little more and stretched his head up. Music.

Music was in the air. Very quietly.

Justin swayed and caressed his neck. He liked how his hair felt there.

The music got louder; Justin went a few steps ahead, always along the bright stone way.

A straight part, a crooked part, another crooked part, again straight and the music was still there. Then the way ended.

Justin rocked irresolutely. It didn't go any further. There were rods and sticks and he looked up, rubbed his forehead and didn't feel so good anymore. He got shaky on his legs and his stomach tickled. With huge eyes he stared straight forward. There was the road. Black road, white stripes and on the other side was the castle standing. So very, very big.

But it wasn't the right side. It was from the back. Justin couldn't look at the big entrance door and not at the small towers. But he did see red flower bushes and the largest well he could ever imagine. An angularly well with a ladder and blue water.

"Blueeee." Justin rocked nervously and pulled a little at one long strand behind his ear.

He wanted to cross the road, visit the princes' castle and search for the frog in the well.

But the way didn't go further.

Then suddenly the music stopped and as it began anew a few moments later it was a totally different song. Much faster and somehow funny.

Justin giggled and, "Hh!"

He was petrified as a mirroring glass door at the castle opened and a man stepped out. Not the prince, but the one with the feather handle. He wore a shirt which was too tight and he sang and wiggled all the time. Justin laughed.

Did the servant make the music?

The servant-man moved in a circle, then pulled a pair of trousers out of a basket. He hung them on a long string, next he hung four socks and a sweater with many buttons. Then he wiggled again and sang even louder.

Justin squeaked and bounced.

The servant looked up, searching around and after a moment his eyes fell straight over to the other side of the road. To Justin.

Justin was totally excited, but he couldn't move. He even didn't rock. He only twisted one tiny hair strand around his finger and smiled a little. He couldn't remember what stood in his book about the servant but he didn't think that he was evil or could perform magic.

Emmett squeezed his eyes together and held his hand as sun protector to his forehead.

On the other side of the street stood a small boy behind a hip high fence with a smile.

He was cute, so Emmett smiled back and decided to greet.

"Well hello there, neighbor!" he shouted and waved.

Well, technically he more likely was Brian's neighbor but Brian wasn't there, and after all somebody had to represent the Kinney household properly. "Everything alright, Babydoll?"

He waved again, gave the foreign teenager his best heart-breaker-eye-wiggle and then laughed as the blonde looked a little shocked. "Ah, the innocence of the youth." He sighed, took his laundry basket and disappeared back in the house to quickly wash over Brian's windows.

Justin blinked, stretched his hand out and began to wail. He tried to walk against the fence, pushed against it and then tried to lift his foot over it. He wanted to go to the servant and also in the castle. He wanted to see the prince and wanted to know why the water in the big well was so blue and not colorless like that in his sink.

"Hey!" Ethan grabbed the patient roughly from behind. "What the hell are you doing you freak?"

The boy fast retracted his neck, made himself small and tried to move the pang from his shoulder, but it didn't work.

"Ahhau, au, au, au!"

"Oh, shut up! What do you think Miss Marcus will do to me if you just run off? You little asshole! Shit, damn it!" The male nurse clutched Justin in a firm grip by the arm and neck and tugged him away. "Excursion finished Goldilocks."

In the evening, Justin turned the blue alarm clock backwards so it wouldn't be bedtime and the good night greeting at Channel 4 wouldn't begin.

Darkness came nevertheless, but that didn't matter. The castle looked just as beautiful without light. Big and mighty and with secured walls.

"Hhh." Justin leaned his forehead against the cold glass and wished the prince would come right now to rescue him with a fast running horse and a drawn silver sword.

He reached for his hair and twisted one of his longish strands around his index finger.

If only Christmas would come already.

"... merry... merry."

Sometime in the middle of the night the patient in room 411 was pulled out of his sleep from a door smacking and the 'Beep-Beep.' Justin blinked heavily against his tiredness.

With a fogged gaze he looked out of his window and his heart almost stopped beating.

There he stood just like that, under a street lamp, next to a black car with big tires.

The prince.

His prince.

The prince from his book. Like somebody had drawn him out of his book and into the darkness.

Justin's eyes got a little damp and he whimpered and pressed his nose tight against the pane.

He was so beautiful! With chestnut hair and long legs, dressed all in black and white.

He didn't had a crown and a horse also was nowhere to be seen, but he went with firm steps to his castle and had the proper key for the door. Then he disappeared through.

Justin wanted to laugh, even though thick tears ran down his cheeks. His heart raced, though his throat was too tight to breath. And even though he could hardly sit straight because of his tiredness, he didn't allow himself to pull his eyes away from the other side of the road the whole rest of the night.

Chapter 5 - Justin in Wonderland

"Jesus fucking Christ!"

With a heavy dish box in his hands, Michael took a big step back in front of the entrance so he could view the house in full size. "Shit, Brian, who did you buy this place from? Count Dracula?"

"No," Brian, loaded with an extraordinary Italian designer lamp, stomped past his friend into the house. "Hugh Hefner." And that wasn't a joke. Presumably he was forced to spray everything with antiseptic spray for the next couple of weeks to eliminate all residuals of female body fluids.

"What?" Michael hurried to follow Brian through the door. "Hugh Hefner? Playboy Hugh Hefner? You mean this ..." He wrinkled his nose as he looked around in the entrance hall and quickly took his hand off of a small adornment commode. "This is the famous Playboy Mansion?!"

Sighing Brian sat his lamp down. "No, this is the famous Brighton mansion, Mister Hefner's holiday home." He put on a fake smile and then tapped Michael on the shoulder. "Named after Miss September 1982. Connie Brighton."

"Wow." Mikey looked impressed. "Who would have thought that you of all people would live in a house that is named after a centerfold girl? And all the wild parties that must have taken place here. I mean hey - I'm sure this old house has seen more bare women than the backroom at Babylon on Dyke Night."

"Yeah." Brian's face changed color from pale-rose to an obvious unhealthy shade of green. "Fascinating. Now, if you'll excuse me," He gestured in the direction of the mirror glass doors. "I need to change the pool water."

Blake wasn't surprised at all to find the young patient from room 410 in front of the window for the fifth day in row.

"Hey frog, sleep well?" He put the breakfast tray and medicine cup down before he began to collect some cloths from the floor.

"Don't you want to change? You're still wearing your pajamas."

Justin had definitely heard Plake, but ignored him completely. He was in a bad mood and really angry. Everyday he sat at the window and watched how the beautiful prince went in and out of the castle with boxes and bags in his hand or only with a key for his fast car-vehicle.

Justin had smiled and called for him behind the window pane and combed his blond hair extra nice, but the prince had never looked up or said 'Neighbor' like the servant-man. Justin also knew that it's wasn't Christmas yet and that his hair still didn't reach the ground, but he was sure that it was polite to get to know each other. Professor Pruckner had told him so. Miss Eterson and Plake had also told him. You had to say hello and the name. Then you knew each other. So why wouldn't the prince say hello to him?

"Never, never. Of course never."

He grumbled and wrote a fat 'was not looking' note under Friday, September 2nd in his notebook after the prince simply ran into the castle without looking up to Justin's tower again. Justin had smeared extra color on his mouth just like Miss Eterson did to look pretty.

"Justin. Come here and wash your hands, okay? You have fruit yogurt for breakfast. You like fruits, right?"

"Peaaar." Justin said and pressed his green marked lips against the pane. He wondered if the prince ate yogurt on Friday mornings too. "Of course." After all he also lived in Pittsburgh.

"Justin." Blake stepped to his patient and touched his arm gently. "Hey you, won't you have your yogurt? Otherwise I'll eat it."

The boy turned his face from the window and looked at Blake with large eyes.

The male nurse was shocked and blinked for a moment speechless, trying really hard to hold back his laughter. "Justin? Oh my god, what did you do to your mouth?! You are totally green."

Justin tipped his head to the side, smiled and batted his long eyelashes like Miss Eterson did all the time. Maybe he should color his eyes too? Maybe then the prince would finally look up to him.

"Why did you do that?" Blake guided the boy to the sink and began to wash his face with warm water and mild soap. "You really must like green."

Justin again batted his eyelashes two times, then pressed his lips tight together so that he wouldn't eat soap. Yes, he liked green. Grass was green and the frog and...

"...broccoli."

"Yes, broccoli and Justin. Now you two have the same coloring."

On Friday's it was yams, chicken, peas, and caramel pudding for lunch. Justin ate it all while humming Jingle Bells and promising the frog on the wall that it definitely wasn't Christmas.

After that male nurse Schmidt came and guided him two floors down to the St. James fun afternoon.

"Today we play Hang-Man." Male nurse Schmidt explained with encouragement and smiled at the young patient. "And all the patients are there. You will have a lot of fun."

Justin carried his fairy tale book casually with both hands behind his back and roamed leisurely just like the man with the black hat on TV did. "Not Pla-ake..." He sing-songed and pretended not to understand one thing. He really didn't like the fun afternoon.

The patients sat at seven long tables in the community room while Dr. Cameron suggested that they had to find the missing letters to guess the words from his spot in front of the chalkboard.

Justin sat next to a small man with a lot of dark hair. DAPHNE was written on his sticker, but he said his name was Alice.

"...in Wonderland." Justin had assured him and then ringed the bell, because it was clearly obvious that P _ _ _ i _ _ _ _ _ c meant nothing else than Physiognomic.

"Wow." Alice looked with jealousy at Justin's card. "You really know all words."

"With P." The boy explained as he counted the little lines that Dr. Cameron had drawn on the chalkboard at the same time. "All with P."

"Yes? Why only P?"

"Perspiration, perspiration." Mumbled Justin as he concentrated and pushed the bell before the man at the chalkboard could do much more then write the first and last letter down. "Pudding begins with P. And the prince."

Alice watched the incredulous expression on the doctor's face and turned again to her neighbor. "I don't like pudding. It has disgusting skin." She chewed for a moment on her pen. "Who's the prince?"

"L...i...pppgloss." Justin recognized the next word without any problems. "My prince in the castle."

"Cool." Alice lazily put her head on the table. "Does he visit you?"

Justin hit the bell with his hand and Dr. Cameron sighed deeply.

"Not before Christmas. He never looks up to the window."

"Yeah, men are always the same. You have to go to him, otherwise nothing will ever happen."

"Nothing ever?" Justin looked surprised at Alice and wondered where the rabbit was.

Alice shook the head. "Never."

"Ahhh yeah. That was...great." Brian smiled satisfied and tugged his trousers up. He patted the pool boy's head. Well, the guy really proved great talent and the pool was certainly free from any harmful female substances now. Wonderful. That way one could really experience a completely new sense of being in his homey garden.

Brian looked around and located a few very unnecessary plants that surely he would have removed in the next few days by Santos the gardener. Yeah, he was definitely gifted with the handling of wood and other... solid things.

Hmm. So, the first thing removed would definitely be the disgusting lesbian rose bushes and the smelling violets. Oh... and that scrawny tree over there.

Brian stepped close to the trunk and looked up to the branches, searching for clues of which species this scrub could belong to. Well, there were yellow-brown leaves and a single pear.

"Pfft... pathetic." The garden owner snorted in disgust before marching back into the house to call Santos. The sooner this weed would disappear, the sooner there would be room to widen out the lawn.

Male nurse Schmidt had said that they had to get back to their rooms, but Justin wanted to go to the way with the small stones.

"Never happen, never happen."

With quick steps and his book tight in his arms he went straight, then crooked, another crooked and listened if he could hear music. But it was silent and a little bit cold.

Hmm.

A little more forward and then the way would end. Black road, white stripes and many rods and sticks.

Justin pushed against the fence, checking with his legs as he twisted a hair strand around his finger and looked at the other side of the road.

"Hello there, neighbor." He echoed in an exact copy of Emmett's voice and looked for a couple of minutes with an emotionless face at the big castle and the blue water well behind it.

"My ball..." He then said in a soft voice and lifted one leg a little awkward over the fence.

"... golden ball... has fallen into the well."

With clumsy steps he went to the curb and was totally self-engrossed by a passing car, before he went along over the black asphalt and the thick white stripes. He went until he reached the other side.

"Don't you cry, dearest princess." he spoke in a deeper voice and scrambled without any problems over the 2 foot high border wall on the Kinney property. "I will bring you back your...", He looked around on the big lawn briefly, before he went on, "...your beloved toy."

The boy walked carelessly over a bed of violets, pressed his book tighter to his chest and looked up, stunned by the branches of a tree.

"Yogurt with fruits. Of course a pear." He really liked pears.

Behind the mirrored terrace door of his homestead, Brian Kinney meanwhile looked up casually from his computer screen, rolled his uptight shoulders a little and blinked then two times. His gaze accidentally discovered somebody in his garden who definitely did not look like his Latin gardener Santos.

"Well, well...looks like I got mail."

Justin was totally mesmerized. The well water was so blue and didn't smell like bottled water at all. That was definitely the frog's fault.

He held his nose a little bit closer over the water surface and breathed in deeply.

"Frog smell."

Brian was standing behind the door and watched through the glass as the young man bent forward over the swimming pool. It almost seemed as if he would sniff at the water.

Then he went to the edge of the pool and spoke... apparently with himself. He pointed with his finger, laughed about nothing noticeable and shook his head.

Brian frowned. The boy was cute, in his own naïve way, but it seemed as if he had laid too long in the sun during the last summer, or...he was one of the 'occupants' from the other side of the street. It wouldn't be the first time since he moved here that he made an involuntary acquaintance with one of them. Though, so far none of them had gone astray on his property.

Justin smiled. It was so beautiful here. The grass was so soft, like a pillow. He bounced a little on the balls of his feet and laughed. Certainly the prince could make great jumps here and wanted for hours to ...

"... roll on the ground."

Justin bent down in a squatted position. He wanted to roll over the lawn too, like the hedgehogs at the croquet-game of the Queen of Hearts.

"Cut their heads off!" he said in a deep voice as he held his book with one arm, while with his other hand and his forehead tried to support himself to perform a somersault.

"Thh." Brian couldn't believe it and shook his head with a snort as the blonde visitor began to make acrobatic stunts in front of his fey hydrangeas.

Maybe the boy wasn't an absconder institution resident, but was released from a passing traveling circus. Hh. Well, that wouldn't be surprising. Blondie here surely seemed very untalented in floor exercises.

Whatever. On his desk waited the Lindman account and the Novotny-Bruckners had invited him to 'Dinner'. Therefore he had, as sad as it was, absolutely no time to enjoy this show further.

With a rough jerk he pulled the terrace door open.

"Hey!" He stomped straight to his small private artist. "Hey you! Boy!"

Justin lifted his head from the lawn because he heard a loud voice. He looked up in shock. He grew stiff and knelt on the ground. There came the prince! With black trousers and bare feet, without crown and sword, but with chestnut hair and a white flutter shirt.

"Like wings..." Justin made big eyes. The prince was so huge!

Brian took large steps closer and saw a pale face with slightly pink cheeks that looked totally paralyzed up at him. "You know that this is private property, don't you?"

Justin pressed his book close to his chest, without blinking once. The prince was very loud too.

Brian arched a brow, waiting. "What? Do you have a reason for making a picnic on my deluxe lawn, or have you been lost in the big dark forest?!"

The boy rapidly shook his head. Getting lost only happens to...

"... little red riding hood."

And he hadn't even a basket with him. He briefly looked for a wine bottle. No, he also had...

"...no cake."

Mister Kinney frowned and tilted his head as the boy began to search for his lunchbox. "Lost your contact lenses?"

"course way too big eyes..." Remembered Justin and he shook his head. He really didn't like the big bad wolf.

Brian sighed.

"Okay, end of the show Pepino." He clapped his hands. "It was really nice chatting with you, but it's late and a stack of work is laying on my desk."

"Late, of course, very late." Justin stood up from the ground, hugged his book and looked up in the sky while rocking back and forth. "Of course very very late."

"Yeah..." Brian looked suspicious at the blonde, grabbed him gently by his shoulders and tried to guide him in the direction of his garden door. "Almost 6 o'clock and I'm sure you-"

"Oh oh!" Justin stood still abruptly and turned around. "Of course there is supper at 6 o'clock in Pittsburgh."

"Yeah, whatever." Brian stroked his hair out of stress. He really wasn't in the mood for this shit. "Then it's better you quickly scamper back in your basket to all the other well-behaving puppies." Again he tried to guide the boy to the exit, but this time with some more emphasis. But Justin escaped his grip and rocked nervously.

"6 o'clock. Of course always 6 o'clock. Red beet and liverwurst."

"Hey, hey this way." Brian gripped the younger one at the hem of his shirt. "Come on."

Justin immediately pulled at his hair and started to scream. "Aaaahau au au au!"

"What? What is it?! Shit." Brian, out of shock, took his fingers back and looked around hastily. He could already see the headline 'Brian Kinney abuses a twelve year old in Hugh Hefner's vacation home'. "Fuck, alright, alright!" He tried to calm the boy by stroking his back. "Hey, could you stop screaming? Everything's okay, see?" He held his hands up and tried to present a half hearted smile.

"Aah of course! Of course supper at six." Justin squeezed his eyes together because his head really hurt. It pricked and pricked.

"Hss." A blonde hair tuft fell on the grass and Brian gently reached for Justin's cramped fingers to try and release them from the long strands. "Come on ... don't do that, okay?"

"6 o'clock. Supper at six." The boy whined and retracted his neck. It still pricked.

"At six?" Carefully Brian released his fingers and swore mentally. This wasn't exactly his idea for evening entertainment. "You want to eat?"

"At six." Whined Justin. "Red beet."

"Red beet? You eat red beet?"

"No potato salad."

"No?" Brian released both hands and took some of the blonde strands of hair away that the boy had yanked out. "If you ask me potato salad is way better then red beet."

"Of course supper at six." Justin rocked und looked for his...

"... book?"

Brian bent down. "Fairy tales, huh?" he turned the first few pages and Justin began to hum while his emotionless gaze fell past Brian.

"Six, certainly six o'clock."

The older one closed the book and held it out for the boy. "You want to eat? At six o'clock?"

Justin nodded and held the book tightly at his chest. "Six o'clock. Certainly red beet."

Brian sighed loud, rubbed a hand through his hair again and couldn't believe that he was doing this. "I haven't any fucking red beet."

"Certainly liverwurst."

"Pff, yeah sure." Mister Kinney snorted with contempt and turned to go back into the house. "Do you have any notion of how much fat is in three grams of liverwurst?"

Justin rocked a little and followed with clumsy steps. "Pittsburgh. Of course red beet and liverwurst."

Brian shook his head and tugged the terrace door a little more open before he disappeared in the direction of his kitchen to search for the low-calories parfait which he had seen earlier in the back of the cupboard.

Chapter 6

Justin beamed.

The castle was amazing.

The floor was smooth, the walls were really high and he had washed his hands with real castle water and prince-soap. Now his fingers smelled like oranges and almond cake. He couldn't stop rubbing his nose on them.

He gently swayed back and forth as he stood in Brian's kitchen. One of his arms was tightly looped around his book, the other hand under his nose and his gaze at the prince. He was totally mesmerized.

Brian rummaged in his kitchen cabinet. Red beet, red beet- hell, the only pickled vegetables on his property were sweet and sour soy bean sprouts.

With a scowl he looked over his shoulder, throwing a chastising gaze at his guest.

The boy was rather irritating. He talked to himself, ran through every room as if he were seeing a damn house for the first time and he had this totally blinding sunshine smile with perfect lips and white teeth that stretched from ear to ear every time Brian looked in his direction.

Oh yeah...he was more than irritating.

"You always invite yourself to dinner?! You know, that's fucking rude!"

"Supper. Of course at 6 o'clock. Liverwurst and red be-"

"Yeah, yeah all right. I know your slogan." Annoyed the man took the can of soy bean sprouts out of the cupboard and held it up. "What's about this? Would this be to your liking - your royal highness?"

"Ooh." Justin stretched out his hand to the can. It was out of pure silver and somebody had drawn pictures and words on it. He held it to his ear and shook. "Ha!" he laughed. There was water in it!

Brian frowned and took the can opener out of the drawer. "Come on, hand it over."

Justin stepped on his tiptoes and stretched his neck to look past the prince. The can was moving in a circle, made a funny sound and then - "Soup!" Fully in awe he stuck his finger in the opened can and in the slippery soy sprouts.

Brian took the finger out and dried it on a towel. "These are soy bean sprouts. Not soup." He fished one of the white germinations out of the liquid and held it out to Justin. "Tastes yummy."

The boy didn't even try to grab for the offered food. Instead, he opened his mouth in order to catch the small thing with his tongue, while his blue eyes looked up with an innocent expression.

Brian watched with a sense of fascination as the blonde bent forward and opened his mouth as if he were a baby bird trying to eat a worm with its beak.

A small pink tongue poked out and touched his fingertips, all warm and wet. "Ahem." He cleared his throat and took his hand away quickly.

The boy chewed carefully. No, it really was not soup. It tasted cold and a little bit sour. Hmm. Almost like red beet. Just without the red.

"Good?" Brian arched a brow.

Justin beamed happily. The white beet was really tasty.

Brian raised his eyebrow a bit higher. "You want to eat them now or what?"

Did he? Justin looked at the opened can and held his hand out to it wistfully. He really wanted to eat them, but today was...

"... of course Friday. Red beet and liverwurst."

Brian was unimpressed by the argument over this. He was after all the best ad man in town and when he wanted to sell a product he would find a way to do so.

"Well, I don't know who's writing your lunch schedule," he said, poured half of the contents of the can in a small bowl and sharply put it on the kitchen bar, "but all the babies and cute little kittens are starving in Africa and I have absolutely no intention to put that crap in my fridge only to become moldy, so-" he held up a fork for Justin and smiled artificially, "sit down and eat. I've got work to do."

Justin blinked at the prince with big eyes. "Red beet?"

Brian cocked his brow warningly and pointed to one of the high chairs in front of the bar. "Soy bean sprouts. Sit down and eat."

The boy looked hesitantly at the huge chair, then again at Brian's rigid face and finally plodded with small steps in the ordered direction.

A little clumsy, he climbed on the unfamiliar sitting accommodation and peered one more time at the prince before timidly gripping the shiny fork. Shyly he began to eat.

"Hh." Brian, with a stern face, watched his small achievement for a moment, before putting down a glass of orange juice beside the boy's bowl and then disappeared to his desk to finish his presentation for Lindman.

Pfft. One should say again that he wasn't a good host...

45 minutes later Brian shut down his notebook, combed a hand through his hair, looked in the direction of the kitchen and smiled. The boy still sat unaltered at the bar.

It seemed that he had some difficulties spearing the slippery sprouts on the fork and therefore used his fingers for help. In absolute concentration, he fished around in the bowl, placed each soy germination on his fork and balanced it to his mouth.

Brian walked over to him and grabbed a beer out of the fridge. "You aren't among the fastest when it comes to eating, huh?" He opened the bottle noisily and drank a big gulp before sitting down at the bar in front of the boy.

Justin lost a sprout from his fork and pressed his lips together while he focused and started a second time with 'white beet' number 82.

Brian watched his guest in silence, while drinking his beer, before his gaze fell on the old book lying close beside Justin.

"You really read this crap?" He grabbed it and began flipping through the pages. "What's it about?"

Sprout number 82 slipped from the fork and Justin collected it patiently. "You."

The older man looked up. "It's about me?"

The fork disappeared between Justin's lips and he nodded. "Of course. Of course about you."

"Really? Where?" Brian turned the pages again.

The boy laid the fork on the bar, reached across the table and turned the pages exactly to the story of Rapunzel. "Of course. Page 16 to 19."

Brian arched a brow, looked at the pages of the old book and frowned. "That's Rapunzel." He didn't know if he should've been amused or pissed. They called him a lot of things, but 'blonde long hair lesbian in a fucking tower' was a new one. Even to him.

White beet number 84 was really slippery and the tip of Justin's tongue poked out in high concentration. "Of course the prince. Page 16."

Ahh. Mister Kinney studied the drawing on page 16 and had to admit the guy with the crown wasn't that bad... for a lousy drawn fairy tale figure that is. "I'm the prince?" Yeah, that was definitely better, even though the ugly tights were really queeny.

Justin snickered a little. The prince made jokes with him. Of course he was...

"... the prince."

"Hm." Brian threw one last gaze at the drawing before closing the book. He devoted himself to the rest of the beer in his bottle. "So...why would you think that?"

The boy looked up in all graveness and seemed almost insulted. "I know it."

"You know it?"

"Yes."

"I'm the fucking prince?"

"Yes. My prince."

Ahem. Brian cleared his throat with unease as the boy looked at him with dreamy eyes. He stood up quickly to dispose his bottle. "My name is Brian."

"Hh!" Justin was shocked and then got all excited. The prince wanted to ...

"...introduce each other!"

"Th." A surprised little laughter escaped the man at the trash can and he turned around to look at the boy with amusement. "Yeah exactly. And who would you be? Cinderella, Bambi... the sixth of the seven dwarves?!"

Justin straightened his back and grew a bit puzzled. He didn't know who Bambi was. Cinderella of course had glass shoes and surely he didn't prefer to be Sleepy. He stayed...

"... in bed until April."

He twisted a blonde hair strand around his finger a bit uneasy as he looked at the prince with a hint of helplessness.

The amused smile disappeared from Brian's face. The big blue eyes which looked at him in a childish and innocent way showed him that the boy didn't have a clue what he had talked about before. In some way, Brian found this much unspoken honesty should be rewarded a little more. He sighed deeply, combed through his hair again and walked over to his young guest.

"Brian Kinney." He said and held his hand out to Justin.

The boy made big eyes and sat there stiffly. Prian. With a P like prince and pudding.

"Well?" Brian moved his fingers forward. "Say hello."

Justin looked frightened almost as if he had to step in front of the big bad giant himself. He held his hand reverently out and said a shy, "Hello."

Brian decided on a polite handshake in average strength. "And?" he arched a brow waiting. "Do you have a name too?"

"Justin." The boy told him a little absently and crooked his head as he tried to discover his own fingers in the prince's huge hand. He liked how tight and warm the strong fingers felt around his own and wondered if the prince's hand also smelled like castle water.

Brian frowned as the blonde bent forward, pressed his nose on the back of his hand and inhaled deeply.

Justin whimpered a little.

"Prian."

Prian really smelled like almond cake, but also like something else. Like... prince.

His skin had a beautiful color and tiny hairs which tickled when he touched them with his mouth.

Brian's grip around Justin's small fingers grew a little tighter as he heard the boy mew while feeling soft lips at the back of his hand. Christ, the boy really knew how to perform some friendly greeting. He probably would've given him his other hand too in supporting this ritual if the ringing of his phone hadn't disturbed the moment.

"Shit." He released himself and walked to his desk. "Yes."

"Brian? Where are you?! The ratatouille is getting cold."

"Uh." Stressed out Brian rubbed his neck. "Yeah, something came up."

"Came up? Did Santos show up to cut the hedge already?"

Justin hadn't wanted to let go of Prian's hand and looked after him with a craving gaze, but the prince only talked and wasn't paying any attention. So Justin decided to eat some more of the white beet.

He looked into his bowl. "Eighty-five, eighty-six, eighty-seven." He counted and searched for the eighty-eighth one, but found nothing. Maybe there was more white beet in the cupboard?

Hmm. He slipped off his chair with great effort, leaving his book behind at the bar and plodded with small steps along the fitted kitchen.

The cupboard door the prince had opened before was quite high, but he stepped on his tiptoes and smiled as he reached the handle.

"Ooh." He was stunned. There were so many silver cans. Big ones, small ones, transparent ones and even colored boxes.

"Ha!" He pushed himself a little higher on his toes to grab the cans. They were heavy and he shook one after another beside his ear. Hmm. Presumably there was water in both of them, or soup...or white beet?

He wailed a little because he didn't know exactly what was in them and knocked on the hard material. Then he stepped again on his tiptoes and fished for a big blue box. It was lighter and rustled from his shaking.

Justin was exited. Maybe there were...

"...way stones in it?"

With his fingers, he poked on the cardboard material, plucked a little and after a few minutes he ripped a hole in it that was big enough to look through.

"Hh!" He got frightened. The whole box was full of...

"...yellow caterpillars!"

Horried, he threw the package away and breathed hectically for a moment. Then he rubbed his forehead and ducked his head a little and glanced over to test the box. No, there weren't any caterpillars. Caterpillars were small and plump and munched holes in salad. After that they went to sleep and when they woke up again they were...

"... butterflies!"

He quickly slipped closer again to the box and bent down to look in it. "Yes! Many yellow ones with wings!" He laughed and began to shake the package so that the butterflies would come out.

Brian heard noises from the kitchen and stretched his neck. Justin didn't sit at the bar anymore.

"Justin?" Quickly he stepped closer. "Fuck!" He found his blonde house guest kneeling on the kitchen floor between some tomato paste cans and dozens of noodles.

"Brian? What's that clicking noise?"

Brian rubbed his hand through his hair. "Justin's shacking out my farfalle noodles."

"What? Who's Justin?"

Mister Kinney sighed and closed his eyes a moment over all this unplanned chaos. "Listen Mikey, I'll be there at half past seven, okay? Have the whiskey ready." He put the phone down without waiting for a response and threw it next to the coffeemaker. "What the fuck are you doing?!"

Shocked Justin let the package fall down as he turned around. He beamed with his whole face when he saw the prince. "Butterflies!"

Brian presented a fake smile. "That's nice." His face then darkened as he put the noodle box furiously back into the cupboard. "Come on, get up. I have to go and you can buzz off home."

"Home?" Justin knit his eyebrows. He stood up awkwardly and took his fairy tale book, cuddling it tight in his arms.

"Home." Brian ran around hectically and collected a few things like his wallet and cell phone, before slipping on his shoes. "You live somewhere, don't you?"

When he didn't get an answer to that, he looked up from his shoe laces. "Where are you living?"

Justin rocked a little, looking interested at the white roof. "Of course. Justin Taylor. One five two one nine Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA."

Brian stared perplexed at the boy for a moment and then huffed a short laugh. "Thank you very much, but it would be helpful if you also could tell me the street Justin Taylor."

"Street." Justin liked the color of the roof. White like paper to draw with. He could draw the prince and his hands and the silver sword.

"Great. Just great..." Brian sighed and shook his head. One thing was for sure - Rapunzel here was definitely his first and very last guest for dinner in this house! "Okay... come on, we're going in the car." He grabbed his key and marched in the direction of the front door.

"In the ca-ar." Echoed Justin and followed Brian with small steps outside.

There he saw a big black car with giant tires and immediately recognized it. "Beep-Beep." He smiled brightly and touched the lacquer with cautious fingers.

Brian ignored it. He had enough strange behavior for one evening.

Quickly he sat down behind the steering wheel and opened the passenger door for Justin. "So listen. We'll drive around and you say stop if you recognize your house."

"The tower." The boy climbed on all fours on the seat.

"Whatever." Frustrated, Brian secured Justin's safety belt - totally ignoring the boy's enjoyable smell in their close proximities. Finally, he started the machine.

Justin giggled because it hummed funny in his belly as the car started to drive.

Brian guided through the gateway. "So, you say stop when you see your house, got it?"

"Got it. The tower." Justin imitated Brian's voice and looked to the right. "Stop."

Brian sighed. "What did I just say? Only when you see your house."

"Of course the tower." Justin looked through the car window up to his tower. "Stop."

"Here?" Slowly braking, Brian followed the kid's gaze. "You really live here?"

"Of course. One five two one nine Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA."

Okay, Brian had somehow assumed that the boy could maybe come from the St. James institute, but now he wasn't sure if he liked the idea that much anymore.

A little hesitant he opened Justin's seat belt. "That was a short drive."

Justin smiled but looked at the glove compartment. "Yeah, short."

"But hey, we are neighbors." Brian also smiled slightly and really didn't know why.

The blonde looked through the window up to the sky, while shouting a happy, "Hello neighbor!"

Brian frowned. "Wow, you almost sound like... Emmett." He mumbled the last word inarticulately and reached over Justin's legs to open the passenger door.

Justin remained unmoving.

"See you then?"

Justin blinked and hugged his book tighter.

Brian smirked. "Come on Rapunzel, I have to go."

Justin didn't want to go back in the tower. The prince was so nice and beautiful.

"Certainly everyone is already searching for you. Don't you have to go to bed?"

"Of course. After the good night greeting on channel 4. 8:05 pm."

"Really?" Brian looked at the boy in disbelief. He really went to bed at 8:05 pm? "Well, then you better hurry up."

"Yeah." Justin climbed from the seat and stayed on the sidewalk. He was sad. He really didn't want to go back to the tower.

Brian shut the door behind him and started the engine again, with a last glimpse out of his side window.

The boy stood there with a sad face, rocked a little back and forth and smelled on his fingers.

Brian didn't like what he saw.

"Hey." He bent over the passenger seat and let the window down. "Justin?"

"Yeah?" Justin curled a hair strand around his finger and absently looked up to the sky.

"Later when the good night greeting is over and you go to bed..."

"Yeah?"

"Dream of me, okay?"

The boy still gazed up to the sky but now he smiled. "Okay."

"You'll dream of me?"

"Yeah. Dream of Prian."

"Brian."

"Prian."

Brian sighed.

Justin smiled.

"Now go in already."

"Yeah." The boy turned around and walked with clumsy steps in the direction of the entrance.

Brian shook his head and drove away.

"Justin!" Blake immediately saw his blonde patient traipse through the garden. "Where have you been? I was looking for you everywhere."

Justin rocked back and forth and smelled on his hand. Mmh... prince-almond cake.

"Hfft!" Blake felt a big rock of relief fall from his heart as he guided the boy back to the ward. "Next time you have to tell a nurse when you want to go for a walk, okay?"

"O-kay." Answered Justin, but decided that he surely wouldn't talk to a nurse who wasn't Plake.

"Good." Blake was glad.

"Perfect!" Justin too.

After his dinner at the Novotny-Bruckner's, he went on a short visit to the local baths. Not really sober, but absolutely satisfied, Brian Kinney entered the main door of his mansion a little after midnight.

He was tired and swayed as he made his way through the dark rooms, stripped his shoes, threw his jacket away, decided to treat himself with a little good night beer and swore when he stepped on something edgy.

"Fuck!" He rubbed his foot, took a closer look at the floor and found dozens of small yellow noodles.

Hmm. He took a big sip from his beer and bent down.

"Damned boy." It wasn't the nicest of words, but he said them calm and softly and then collected 52 butterfly-noodles, while he asked himself if Justin really would dream of him.

Chapter 7 - It's okay

Justin was concentrating very hard as he drew the eighty-third white beet with great diligence on his paper. He smiled. He liked white beet. It was prince food.

"Oh Justin, how beautiful." Miss Peterson walked over to Justin's table and looked on his picture with a kind expression. "Maybe you would like to color the little fishes, too?" With encouragement, she shuffled the basket with the color crayons closer to his place. "Orange sure would be the right color for-"

A quiet ringing sound could be heard and she said a polite excuse me before disappearing to her desk in search for the cell phone between all the patient documents.

Justin looked after her with anger, gave the crayon basket a little push and leaned protectively over his picture. Miss Eterson was a little dumb. Of course one wouldn't need any colored crayons to draw white beet.

"Hey, how you are doing? Any problems with Gus?" The therapist tried to hold her voice quiet and neutral while she watched from a distance over her patients. "Of course. But don't give him too much of it. Okay. Have fun you two. See you later. Bye." She smiled at her cell phone, put it away and walked back to Justin's place where dozens of crayons were lying dispersed on and under the table. "Oh, what a pity." She bent down to fish for the bright blue pen, lying under another patient's chair. "But look, we just put them all back and then I'll help you to color your pretty fishes."

Justin growled. He really didn't like Miss Eterson.

"What's Mommy saying? What's she saying?" Gus bounced up and down beside his father, while Brian put the phone back on the station.

"She said quit jumping like a basketball. That's bad for your legs."

The boy beamed at his father. "You're just making fun of me! Mommy says jumping is good to build muscles!" He demonstrated another 20-centimeter jump out of a standing position. "Like a kangaroo!"

Brian stopped his son by grabbing him on the shoulders. "But it's bad for my freshly laid Milan hardwood floor. So stop it." Christ, he really wasn't made to baby-sit a four year old. "And now come on. Your mom said you are allowed to try the chili."

"Yes! I want two plates of it! Big ones!" Gus bounced away in the direction of the kitchen and quickly climbed on one of the high chairs at the bar, while his father put the left-overs of the Mexican food into the microwave.

"Gus, first go wash your hands."

The boy grumbled, but climbed from the chair again before bouncing away to the bathroom.

"And no jumping anymore!"

The microwave ringed. Brian put the plate on the kitchen bar and placed a half glass of water beside it with three napkins and a small spoon.

Gus came running back and again climbed to his place.

"Clean!" He held up his small hands for inspection and after that grabbed for the cutlery.

"Eat slowly and if it's too spicy, just stop eating."

Gus chewed with full cheeks. "It's not spicy."

"Okay." Brian threw a few things in the sink, wiped over the desk and then sat down opposite his son.

Gus scooped the meal hungrily into his mouth and drank a big sip of water with red smeared lips.

"Hot?"

The boy shook his head.

Brian nodded with just a hint of fatherly pride. That definitely was the Irish genes coming through. "So, what do you want to do until your mom comes to pick you up?"

"Hmm." Gus looked up to the roof as he thought, all the while chewing along. "Handicraft work."

Brian cocked his 'Please come again' eyebrow. "Handicraft work?"

No such word existed in his vocabulary.

Gus nodded seriously and looked at his father with big puppy dog eyes.

"What about TV?" Brian suggested as awful pictures of liters of glue, cute Styrofoam balls and colored paper-stripes appeared in front of his inner eye. He never was one for handicraft work, not even in preschool.

"No, I prefer handicraft work." Gus licked his lips and smeared the red equally. "A necklace for mom."

"Necklace." Mister Kinney stared blank at the kid. That definitely was the lesbian genes coming through.

"Yeah and also one for mama and Auntie Emmett."

"Emmett isn't your aunt. He's my..." Brian searched for a butch term to describe his house cleaner, but all he could come up with was...

"...my maid."

The boy nodded understanding and spooned his meal along. "Okay."

"Hmm." Brian watched his son for a moment. "And which items do you plan on using to build all these necklaces?"

"Noodles." The son answered as if it were obvious. "In kindergarten we always make handicraft work necklaces with noodles. I'm an expert with noodles."

"An expert with noodles."

"And the very best, too!" Confirmed Gus.

"But I don't have any noodles."

Gus smiled brightly. "Daddy! You're making fun again."

"Right. Daddy isn't in the mood to stick noodles on a string. Let's watch TV."

"Daddy!" Gus giggled. "You don't need glue for noodle necklaces! You have to knot the noodles! With cord!"

"With cord." Brian looked suspicious at the boy. "No glue?"

Gus shook his head.

Hmm. Brian's gaze wandered to a small bowl of collected farfalle-pasta. Well, as long as it wouldn't make any mess on his sinfully expensive coffee table, could give it a chance.

Shortly after 5:00 pm, the door rang and Brian opened with much more enthusiasm than usual. "You're late."

"Only five minutes." Lindsay stepped in and gave the man an indulgently kiss on his cheek. "Was he strenuous?"

"Not after the second joint." Brian joked and without asking, took a crumpled piece of paper out of her hand. "You let your class draw colored sperm?"

"Brian!" She laughed and clapped him scolding on his arm. "That isn't sperm. These are fishes. One of my new patients has painted it."

Brian turned the paper around and frowned. "Fishes?"

"Yeah. He's a lovely boy, though he's a little stubborn. I tried to help him color the fishes orange and afterwards he didn't want the picture anymore."

"Hmm." Brian shrugged again. "He probably just knows that sperm isn't orange."

Lindsay rolled her eyes and entered the living room to greet her son. "Hey sweetie. Did you have fun with daddy?"

"Yes!" Gus came running with a long butterfly noodle necklace in his hand. "We did handicrafts."

"Really?" She threw an amused gaze to the man in the doorframe. "Who would have thought that."

"We didn't do handicrafts." Brian stalked off and walked over to the fridge for a small beer to calm him down because he really felt uncomfortable. "We knotted noodles on a fucking cord. That's all."

"And how beautiful you've made that!" she smiled and laid the yellow pasta jewelry carefully around her neck, before bending down to give Gus a kiss. "Just wonderful my little lamb."

Brian rolled his eyes and took a big sip of his beer. He then began to plan to register his son as soon as possible in the next extremely butch soccer club. There definitely was a masculine influence missing.

Justin had eaten his supper, showered in foamy soap and put on his bright, dark blue checkered pajama suit. He had fallen asleep right after the good night greeting on Channel 4 and a last longing gaze out the window at 8:17 pm with the blanket tugged up to the tip of his nose and the book secure under his pillow. Exactly like the last evenings.

But then something unfamiliar happened. In the middle of the night his eyes suddenly opened and he didn't felt tired anymore. But it was only 2:31 am on his alarm clock and still dark outside.

Hmm. Justin pushed a few blonde strands out of his face as he began thinking. Maybe his eyes were broken? He blinked three times testing. No, they still worked. Was he hungry? He felt his belly. No he didn't think so.

After a moment he looked over to his nightstand and detected the red plastic cup. Plake had put it there. Then he remembered. He was thirsty!

"Hh!" He sighed and clapped himself on his forehead. Sometimes he really was stupid.

He sat up under his blanket, grabbed the cup and tried to drink, but nothing ran into his mouth. Hmm. Surprised he looked in it.

"Hh!" He was horrified. It was empty. There was...

"... no water inside."

Oh oh. Nervous he looked to the door. It was dark and closed; he knew Plake wouldn't come no matter how long he would shout out for him. He tried it anyway. Two times.

"Plake." He said loud and then followed it with a fast a reproving, "Shh!" He went back to whispering the name quietly another time. It still was bedtime and he didn't want to wake the whole world.

He waited for a few minutes on his knees in bed with his gaze on the door, but the male nurse didn't appear.

"No, no never." Justin was sure. He shook his head and then grabbed his book from under the pillow.

"Such big teeth."

He spoke in a deep voice while turning the pages. He stopped at the story of Little Red Riding Hood. He whined a little as he looked at the grey pictures illuminated only by the lumpish street light before finally rubbing his finger over the picture of a small basket. A little bottle lay inside. Now it looked almost black, but Justin knew that it would be green again after the sun rose. He liked the green bottle and wanted the same. He was really...

"...thirsty."

He sat there a little while with his book, before turning his head to the window. It bubbled from the pane and Justin knew why. Plake already had showed him after the good night greeting.

"Rain."

The boy crawled off the mattress and walked over to the window. It was only opened a slit, but Justin knew how to open it completely.

"Pull, pull."

He said and pulled at the handle exactly like Plake did. In an instant the cold air and the whole night was in his tower room.

"Like clouds."

He sniffed outside and blinked as a thick droplet hit his face. He liked rain. It was so cold and wet and always tasted different.

He bent further outside, tilted his head and tried to catch a drop with his tongue. It was very difficult, but he laughed proudly and bounced a little when his lips got wet. He licked them with pleasure. Mmh. Today it was...

"... puddle-taste."

He opened his mouth to get more of it. He was really...

"... thirsty."

Two minutes later his face was wet but he still was thirsty. So he walked back to his bed and got his red cup, which he had left there. It still was empty, so he carried it to the open window and held it out side. It sounded funny as the drumming drops hit the cup and Justin giggled.

"Puddle water."

Sometimes he really was clever.

After a few minutes though, his arm got heavy and he whined quietly because the cup took too long to get full.

"Long, long."

He moved his wrist up and down, stretched his cold fingers around the wet cup and-

"Oh oh!"

He looked down into the darkness where his red cup immediately disappeared into dark nothing.

For a moment he only stood there and looked down. There was nothing to hear or see. The cup was gone.

"Of course on the ground."

Without even thinking he turned away from the open window and plodded barefoot to the door.

"Of course down on the ground."

He went out to the hallway, blinked a little against the brightness there and walked with small steps past the ward room.

"Not Pla-ake." He whispered as he saw sleeping male nurse Schmidt in his observation position and marched along unchecked.

He was really thirsty and wanted his cup back with all the...

"... puddle-water."

The stairs were cold under his bare feet and he was even a little anxious now. Everything was so quiet and he was the only man in the tower. He really wanted to hurry.

"Fast, fast." He said, but walked along in the same speed. Right to the exit.

The big door was heavy and made a load noise when he opened it, but Justin managed it and padded down the stone stairs to the outside.

It still rained and he looked fascinated up to the black sky. He really wondered where the rain came from at night because he couldn't see clouds.

The drops were wet and cold on his face and he opened his mouth wide and put his tongue out so he could drink more. But then his neck began to hurt and he wasn't in the mood anymore.

He preferred to have his...

"...cup."

With splashing steps on the wet asphalt he walked down to the gateway, his gaze always on the ground. Past the big iron gate, over totally different stones with slits and some stairs down on the black road with the thick white stripes. He would have called for the cup, but he didn't know its name.

Brian wasn't in his best mood.

The night at Babylon wasn't nearly as satisfying as planned. Mikey had whined about some unimportant 'relationship-problems' and the second hand trick he finally took home as a generous substitute had turned out to be a true chatterbox, wherefore he was one step away from throwing his bugging passenger out of the car.

"And then he wanted me to go with him, even though I've told him a thousand times how much I hate this fucking potter-class!" The nameless man in his passenger seat said in disgust, gesticulating wildly and finally thudding hard with his forehead against the front window as Brian tried with squeaking wheels to stop his Jeep in time.

"Shit!" Brian heard the impact clear and obvious, even if he had lost all his focus.

"Fuck!" His passenger held his hurting head for a moment. "Fucking idiot!" He didn't even need 20 seconds to push the car door open before he was totally out of his mind and jumping out of the car. "What the hell is your problem, asshole?! Do you want to kill us? Fuck!"

Justin tried to stand up. The ground was hard and wet and all the bright lights hurt his eyes. But his legs were all squashy and he felt dizzy. Something had bitten him on his belly and now it hurt everywhere and his head buzzed and was heavy. He really would've preferred to have his...

"...book."

Brian needed a moment to collect himself. He'd hit the wheel hard, and now touched his aching forehead, but it didn't seem to bleed.

In front of the car stood his trick. He was shouting like a raving loony at somebody who Brian couldn't see.

He shut his eyes and swore. Shit, this was in fact the perfect end to a perfect night. He was a little clumsy as he pushed his door open and stepped outside. Cold rain drummed on him and it calmed his sore face.

Slowly he walked around the car and recognized the huddled figure on the asphalt in front of his bumper. Thin, blonde and obviously a little confused, in search for a book, while the nameless trick tried to pull him roughly on his feet.

"What's up with you, are you dumb or something?! Clear the road before I call the police!"

Justin made himself stiff and began to whine. The evil man was loud, his book wasn't there, and everything ached, bit, and burned.

"Christ." Brian blinked against the rain, cuddled his jacket around his body tighter and pushed his screaming passenger aside. "Shit, fucking idiot! He's probably hurt!"

"Who cares? The sick fuck is too dumb to cross the street, fucking shit! He could have killed us all!"

Brian bent down and carefully touched the boy on his shoulder. "Hey, everything okay? Does something hurt?"

Did it? Justin pulled his head up from the wet street pavement and looked to his hand. It was red and glibbery and his fingers throbbed so loudly that it was hard to handle. That didn't happen before and it was scary and his eyes got watery.

"It's okay, it's only a scratch." Brian took Justin's thin wrist and looked at the graze which was across his small fingers. It wasn't deep but it needed to be cleaned.

Slowly he touched along the boy's body, but didn't find apparent wounds. He looked at the thin face in the headlights. White skin, red lips, wet blonde hair and big blue eyes that looked at him helplessly. He showed a small smile. "Do you remember me?"

The boy cried quietly. He really would've preferred to go to...

"...Plake."

"No. Brian. Can you stand up?"

Justin licked his lips. They tasted like puddle-water. He was really...

"...thirsty."

"Your name's Justin, right?" Brian surprised himself with that statement. Normally he didn't memorize names as a matter of principle.

Justin blinked and looked up at the face above him. It was the prince. Without crown and sword but with beautiful eyes and rain on his nose. "Prian."

Brian frowned. "Brian."

Justin smiled thinly. "Dream of Prian."

He was then scared terribly as he saw the huge black vehicle directly in front of him. It was so close that he could smell its huge wheels. "Hh!"

Brian laid an arm behind Justin's back and tugged him up carefully. "Come on, you can't stay here."

The boy clung himself to the prince's jacket and whined. His legs were itching, his head felt so heavy and he wanted to ...

"... drink much water."

"You're thirsty?" Brian heaved Justin who was toddling and totally wet from head to toe. He guided him to the sidewalk. "Stay here. I'll drive the car off the street."

Justin stayed put and rocked back and forth. He felt cold and everything ached and he didn't know where his cup was.

"Great!" The nameless trick gestured furious around as Brian drove the jeep to the side, stepped out and immediately went back to Justin. "What about me? I thought we had plans!"

Brian stopped and ran a frustrated hand through his hair. "Do you have a cell phone?"

"Yeah." The trick hesitated and then fished his mobile phone out of his pocket, ready to exchange numbers. "Sure."

"Great. Call yourself a cab." At this point Mister Kinney was beyond exchanging anything nice or polite.

It wasn't enough that he had never experienced a more unsatisfying night at Babylon. No, he also has to struggle with the idea of a report of negligent bodily injury now. If the cops found out about his intensive conversation with a certain Anita an hour ago, he would be really fucked. Great. Fucking wonderful. Shit. If only he would have stayed in bed.

"Come on. I'll take you in." He tugged the wet boy in his pajama-shirt a little roughly, but Justin escaped and plodded away with bare feet.

"Of course down. On the ground. Down."

He walked about three feet and bent down on the street. "Ha!" It was the cup. Red and plastic, but empty.

"Hey!" Shit. Brian swore and jogged behind the blonde. It nearly stopped raining, but it was cold and he was wet to the skin. He really wasn't in the mood for all this crap. "Would you fucking stop!"

Justin put his finger in the cup. "Of course on the ground. All the puddle-water."

"Come on. Justin." Brian grabbed the boy on his shoulders and gesticulated to the entrance of the institute. "I've just hit you with my car. The people in there have to check you, okay?" Again he tried to guide him away, but Justin wouldn't go.

He was thirsty, the cup was empty and it stopped raining. He tilted his head and his neck as he looked up for proof. "The rain is gone."

"Yeah. But you are wet to the bones. Come on. Let's get in, okay?"

"No." Justin escaped Brian's hand and walked along the sidewalk with his cup.

"No?"

"No. Of course all the water on the street. Everything's gone."

"Hff." Brian sighed and thought of knocking the kid out cold. That would clear the problem fast and efficiently. "What the hell? What are you talking about? What fucking water?"

"Puddle-water." Justin made a sway to the left as he recognized the castle-garden in the darkness. Maybe he could drink a little blue...

"... well-water."

Brian reached the boy and grabbed him by the arm. "Stop it! We're going back!"

Oh oh! Justin tugged his neck and shut his eyes. The prince was too loud and he didn't like the aching in his arm. "Aaahau au au."

"Argh!" The older man let go, and turned away frustrated. God, this had to be a bad joke! What on earth had made him move in to this gruesome area anyway!

After five seconds of collecting himself and three deep breaths for self-control, he finally turned around.

The boy whined and rocked nervously back and forth.

"Okay, okay. It's okay." He put up his hands, capitulating. "Okay. Okay? I'm totally calm. No more screaming."

Justin said nothing but rocked along.

"Good. You want water? Which water?"

"Water."

"Water to drink?" Brian tiredly ran a hand through his wet hair. Christ what would he give for a good glass of whiskey. "You want to drink? Drink water?"

Justin still rocked gently and blankly looked up in the darkness. "Yeah."

"Yeah? You're thirsty?"

"Yeah."

"Well then, come on. I'm sure you have water. Right? In your room. Let's go."

But just before Brian could lay even a half of one finger on Justin's arm, the boy escaped immediately.

"Ah. Aah."

"Hey. Hey. It's all right, okay? Remember? No more screaming."

"Yeah."

"Good. Where's the water that you want?"

Justin looked in his empty cup. "Puddle-water, of course on the road."

"Th!" Brian shook his head, his hands on his hips and huffed a laugh. This was exactly the reason why he didn't like conversations! It was always so fucking frustrating!

"Plake doesn't come."

As he looked up again the boy still stood there, in the middle of the street, with wet hair, barefoot and in his pajamas. With outstretched arms he held a plastic cup in his direction and looked at him with the biggest fucking innocent blue eyes Brian had ever seen.

Brian took the cup, looked inside, shook his head again and held his other hand out for Justin's fingers.

"One drink. Then I'll bring you back."

Justin grabbed for the prince's big hand with some hesitation. It still was ...

"...all wet."

Brian gripped Justin's fingers a little tighter and guided him off the street and in the direction of his gateway. "Yeah. Do you always take a walk in the middle of the night when it's raining?"

The boy plodded with splashing steps close behind the prince. He was really thirsty.

"Puddle-water."

"Yeah, but trust me, you should try Evian."

Chapter 8 - Surrender

The castle was cosy and warm at night with beautiful lamps shining everywhere. Even in the well.

"Ooh." Standing in the living room, Justin pressed his nose flat against the terrace door.

With wet pyjamas, tousled hair and a scratched hand he looked totally mesmerized at the outside towards the darkness and the illuminated pool area.

"Is this okay?" Brian had thoroughly rinsed off the dirty red plastic cup three times before putting it on his hallowed Mies van der Rohe coffee table with a coaster. It was freshly filled with cooled French mineral water. "Justin. Come here. You wanted a drink, right?"

"Yes." As the boy turned around he seemed almost a little shy. Clumsily he wiped a couple of damp strands from his forehead with the back of his hand, smiling softly with slightly red cheeks.

Brian took the cup and held it out to his guest and to his surprise Justin actually said a small, albeit wrongly emphatic thank you.

"You're welcome." Cool fingers touched Brian's hand and he quickly looked somewhere else - anywhere but at this blond young man who sniffed at his water with unnatural curiosity before dipping the tip of his tongue in it for a test. He then drank with large gulps and licked the brim of the cup pleasurably before giving the empty vessel back with big pleading eyes but without a word.

Brian looked at him with scrutiny. "More?"

Justin uninterestedly looked aside. "Yeah."

"Hmm. Come into the kitchen then." Brian walked away and Justin followed after a moment with naked feet that made splashing noises on the smooth wooden floor.

"Sit down." The older man pointed at one of the high chairs at the bar and fetched the Evian bottle from the refrigerator.

Justin awkwardly climbed onto his seat and watched fascinated as the water ran from the bottle into the red cup. It looked pretty and splashed so nicely, but he didn't dare to drink from it. With big eyes he looked up to Brian.

Brian smiled. "Go on. Drink"

"Thank you!" The boy said enthusiastically to his cup and gripped it with both hands before he drank up the water with large sips. He really was terribly thirsty.

With a satisfied sigh, he put the cup back onto the bar. Brian was already waiting with a cloth and disinfecting spray. "Give me your Hand."

Justin looked at Brian sceptically and did nothing at all.

"Your hand." The man grabbed for it himself and held the thin fingers up carefully for inspection. "See? It's not deep but the wound should be cleaned."

Justin bent his head a bit to get a better look. His hand was red and throbbed.

He was very certain that this had never happened before. And as Brian began to wipe with the cold, wet rag over it, it began to sting horribly.

"Hh!" Panic stricken he looked at the prince, but Brian remained calm and concentrated on his task.

"It's okay, it burns only for a moment."

Justin trembled hard and tried to pull his hand away. Away from the evil wet rag. "Bite, bite."

But Brian held his fingers securely in place and carefully wiped over the wound one last time.

"So. Is it aching?" He looked up at his patient questioning and got a wretched puppy dog look from two moist blue eyes as an answer. It was crowned with quiet whimpering.

"That bad, huh?" He raised his eyebrow in amusement, reached for a big ointment tube and began to put the cream on the wound generously.

It was cold, smelled funny and Justin trembled even more while he was watching Brian anxiously. But then, the throbbing slowly stopped and the red disappeared because everything was painted in white.

"Like Paper."

Fascinated he touched the shiny cream with his other hand.

"Ah, ah, ah." Brian stopped his fingers immediately. "No touching!"

The boy looked up with big eyes.

"Stay here." The older man demanded and put the disinfecting spray away. "You want more water?"

Justin said nothing.

Brian nevertheless filled the cup again. "Drink and stay put. I'll be back in a minute."

The boy drank with large gulps and watched over the brim of his cup as the prince left the room. Where he'd gone Justin didn't know. Perhaps to the horse or to the well?

Hmm. Justin put the cup down when it was empty and climbed clumsily from his high seat.

He wanted to go to the well too and...

"...drink lots of blue frog water."

With awkward steps he passed by the sofa and then stopped a little undecidedly in front of the high terrace door. He didn't know how one should be able to walk through it. There was no handle for the big window.

Justin whined a little, bobbed up and down nervously and finally pressed his palms tightly against the glass. He pushed against it but the plate didn't move.

He made a sad face and looked longing out where it was dark and the blue well water shone so beautifully.

"Shiny gold ball...dear frog." He spoke and leaned his nose, forehead and lips against the glass narrowly. He then tasted the damp plate with his tongue before his look fell curiously on his whitely painted hand. It looked like yoghurt.

"Of course without fruits."

He carefully licked with the tip of his tongue over the ointment while his look searched over the darkness in front of the plate, where he had seen the tree.

"Of course a pear."

He couldn't find the tree but his tongue began to sting and he took his mouth away fast and looked at his hand irritated.

When Brian got back in the kitchen with dry clothes on, Justin had disappeared. He sighed tiredly and looked around. "Justin?"

The brat was at the terrace door again, talking quietly to himself and staring out into the dark. And obviously he was suppressing a human need judging from the way he was squeezing his legs tightly together and bobbing up and down restlessly.

"Justin!"

No reaction.

Brian stepped closer and spoke louder. "Justin, do you need to go to the toilet?"

The boy turned around and smiled as he saw the prince. With a white smeared mouth.

Brian sighed, went once again into the kitchen to fetch a napkin and wiped Justin's face roughly with it, when he came back. "Go to the toilet and then I'll bring you home."

The napkin was soft and warm and Justin poked his tongue against it to get rid of the yucky yoghurt taste.

"Ok?" Brian threw the crumpled paper cloth on his coffee table and then pushed the boy in the direction of the men's guest toilet. "Come back out when you're done. I'll put my shoes on in the meantime."

"Yeah." With one hand between his legs, Justin stiffly entered the little room.

Brian turned the light on for him and closed the door.

Justin looked up to the ceiling. It was not white but certainly one could paint pictures on it. He couldn't think of anything he should paint though and then he got all nervous when he noticed that his belly tickled. He held one hand between his legs again. His pyjama trousers were cold and wet and his feet froze on the smooth grey stone floor. He turned around and looked at the locked door. He really would've preferred to go on the toilet now.

Brian waited for fourteen minutes, jingled with his keys impatiently and began slowly to sweat in his jacket. Shit. What the fuck was the damned boy doing in there?!

"Hey!" On the fifteenth minute he knocked against the closed door. "Hey you! Quit washing your damned hands for like five hours and come out already! It's almost fucking four in the morning!"

He waited for a moment carefully listening and didn't receive even the slightest reaction.

"Justin?"

He knocked a little harder.

"Hey, Justin!" He shouted before he opened the door. He had never been one of the most patient people. "I've told you to finally quit-"

Brian looked briefly around in the little room and forgot instantly the rest of his sentence. He didn't find the boy at the basin as expected with mountains of nice smelling foam on his hands, but instead gently rocking beside the newly installed luxury urinal with his face to the wall and barefoot standing in a small yellow puddle.

"Fuck! My floor! This is imported Italian marble!"

"Certainly into the Toilet." Justin worked a finger tightly into his hair. "White toilet lid."

"Shit!" Brian stepped two steps closer and stared bewildered at the wet spot below Justin's naked feet. "Why on earth didn't you use the toilet?"

"Of course a white lid." Justin didn't like it here. It was bright and cold and the prince was far too loud. He really would have preferred to have his...

"...book."

"Fuck your stupid book!" Brian grabbed the boy by the neck to guide his look down to the floor. "You've pissed on my \$6000 Grigio Carnico floor!"

"Aahhau au au!" Justin made himself stiff and squeezed his eyes shut. His neck stung and also his head and it did not stop. And Plake was not here!

"Aaaaah!" With a heavy blow he rammed his forehead against the cold tile wall, and before Brian could do anything about it, he did it a second and third time.

"Aah, ahh!"

"Hey!" Brian quickly took his hands off the boy and tried to move him away from the tiled wall. "Hey!" He grabbed him by the shoulders and turned him around. The kid's forehead was red and began to swell a little. "Fuck" Brian stroked a couple of blonde strands out of the way with one hand and was able to look at the bump more closely while trying with his other hand to keep the disturbed young man in a firm grip.

Justin rocked back and forth nervously, stiffly drew his shoulders up and kept his hands tense in front of his body. His moist eyes looked at the prince wide awake and very scared.

After a moment Brian looked back. Tired and beaten. "Is this your brilliant plan? First you ruin the floor and then you trash my walls, too?"

Justin whimpered indistinctly and with intimidation, looked in Brian's brown eyes. He liked the cool fingers at his forehead.

Brian rubbed carefully with his thumb over the small red swelling at Justin's hairline. "Is this any manner to thank me for the best water of your life, huh?"

The boy blinked once without taking his gaze from Brian's face and licked his lips. The prince water was so good.

Brian watched the tip of a pink tongue on softly curved lips and smiled briefly. "You drank a lot of damned water, hmm?"

Justin's eyes wandered uninterestedly aside. "Yeah."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. Much Prince water."

"Evian."

"Prince water."

Brian sighed, combed through fair hair a last time and then held a hand out towards the boy invitingly. "You always have to have the last word, right?"

Justin grabbed for the prince's big fingers without any hesitation. "Yes."

Brian led his guest from the little room, turned off the lights and went with him in the direction of the stairs. Emmett could take care of the little water problem in the guest toilet tomorrow. "Yes indeed. And you're also one condemned drama queen"

"Yes." Justin plodded close behind with moist naked feet, wet pyjamas and big eyes. So many beautiful pictures were put on the castle walls. The prince could paint really well, even giant men without trousers and hair.

"Yes. And you have no idea what I'm talking about." Brian climbed up the last steps with the boy, walked along the corridor and then switched on the light in the bathroom. "This is my bathroom."

"Yes." Justin went in, but only looked to the shiny ceiling.

"The floor here is even more expensive than the one downstairs, so try to hold your bladder under control."

"Yes."

"Hff." Brian sighed, took off his jacket and turned on the water in the shower. "Good. Strip out of your clothes, put them here on the corner and then clean yourself. I'll go and look if I can find some fresh clothes for you, okay?"

Justin turned a fair-haired strand around his finger. Warm fog arose up to the ceiling and everything burbled like rain.

"Justin. Listen to me." Brian put a hand to the boy's cheek to provide visual contact and attention. "Are you listening?"

"Yeah."

"Your pajamas are wet and dirty, right?"

"Yeah."

"Take them off. Then get into the shower." Brian pointed at the open shower stall. "You know how to take a shower?"

"Yes." Justin looked at the burbling water. He liked taking a shower. With much...

"...foam soap."

Brian took a deep blue bottle from the shelf and unscrewed the lid. "Try this one."

"Ooh." Justin reached for the pretty bottle and stroked it reverently. Golden letters were written on it. Real prince foam soap.

"Hmm." The older man laid a couple of towels out and put the expensive soap into the shower. "Hurry up. I'll be outside looking for clothes."

Justin looked for a moment to the door through which the prince had disappeared and then began bobbing up and down a bit. It was warm in here.

"Mirror, mirror on the wall." He said as his look fell to the big mirror wall over Prian's marble washstand. The glass area began to fog up due to the muggy air.

Justin padded closer to touch the mirror with his hand. "A thousand times fairer than you." Completely fascinated he made an imprint of his five fingers and then licked the cool condensed water from his hand. "Beyond the seven-seven mountains."

It knocked loudly and the prince said something behind the door. "Justin! Have you undressed already?"

Did he? He looked down on himself and shook his head. He began to push the deep blue plastic buttons from the buttonholes. It was complicated but he managed it with all five. "Of course the pants."

He took his shirt off, let it fall to the ground and then drew the rubber waist band of his pajama trousers out long.

For a moment he looked from above into his pants and shot an extremely disapproving look at the yellow spot on his underwear. "Of course a white toilet lid."

He then climbed awkwardly out his trousers, his left leg first and then his right foot out.

The white shorts stuck wet and coldly to Justin's bottom and he didn't like the feeling as he shuffled them off. His skin itched and he really wanted a lot of the...

"...foam soap."

With small steps he plodded over to the shower cabin, peeked mistrustfully in and sniffed. The water smelled warm and clean. Not like frog, and it was not blue either.

He held two fingers under the spray and instantly jerked back frightened because it tingled and pricked on his skin.

"Ah!" Worried he looked in the brawling water and held himself between his legs where he played with his foreskin nervously. The water was loud and pointy like...

"...needles!"

"Justin!" It knocked loudly on the door again. "Are you done?! I'm waiting!"

Justin looked in the direction from where the prince's voice came, then back to the roaring water and began to wail. The beautiful foam soap stood in the middle of the needle water.

"Justin?" Brian knocked once again and listened carefully. "Hey! I have new clothes for you here! Have you dried yourself?" He didn't get any answer and apart from the steady noise of the water there was nothing to be heard.

He sighed deeply, rubbed tiredly over his face and knocked once again briefly while putting his other hand to the door handle. "Justin, I'm coming in." He squinted his eyes as a thick fog wall hit him. "Shit. He looked around orientating himself for a moment.

Deep blue pajamas and crumpled boxer shorts lay scattered on the noble stone floor and Justin, standing naked at the open shower stall, rocked softly back and forth and mumbled something while rather casually fondling the generous equipment between his pale legs.

Brian stopped perplexed at this unexpected sight. The boy was by all means one of the cute kind, this could be noticed clearly even with all of his clothes on. But who would've thought what a hot, tight triple A body was hidden under this innocent facade?

"Ahem." Totally knocked out of concept he cleared his throat, licked his lips and nervously rubbed his neck. Meanwhile uninvited thoughts of hot twinkie shower sex shot through his brain automatically.

"Like needles."

Brian blinked in the damp air and cleared his throat once again when five out stretched fingers and a helpless puppy look brought him back to reality.

Justin went a step closer toward the prince and illustrating held his hand more highly in front of Prian's face.

"What?" Brian did his best to hold his eyes above Justin's waistline and stepped from one foot to the other, trying to correct the skin tight fit of his jeans. "Why you're not in-" He gesticulated in the direction of the shower. "I told you to clean yourself!"

Two big blue eyes looked at him with a clear lack of understanding.

Brian sighed deeply and put a hand on Justin's peach like shoulder to shove him in the direction of the water. "Come on already, it's late."

Justin made himself stiff and squeezed his eyes shut when Brian manoeuvred him a little roughly into the big shower stall.

"Ah!" It was hot and stung and stung. Wheezing hectically he drew his head between his shoulders and clawed with all ten fingers panic stricken at Prian's forearm.

Brian on the other hand remained completely cool. "I knew it. A big drama queen." With fast movements he adjusted the temperature and the strength of the spray.

The boy blinked as the water got softer and his skin no longer burned so terribly. It was better now. Suspiciously he ventured to look up, licked the water off his lips and then opened his mouth as far as possible because the shower water really tasted very good.

"Hhf" Brian was irritated. His T-shirt was wet, half of the bathroom was under water, the damned night was nearly over and the blonde boy in his shower had nothing better to do than playing the thirsty puppy.

Petulantly, he gripped a fresh wash cloth from the shelf, made it wet and soaped it. He then rubbed strongly twice over Justin's pale chest with it, ignoring the small pink nipple which hardened under his touch, and brought a hand to the boy's cheek to create visual contact. "Justin! Quit drinking the water!"

Justin blinked and smiled brightly as the warm water droplets drummed on his face. With a scrunched up nose and thick wet hair strands in his forehead he grinned at the prince. "Puddle water!"

"Surely not. The pipes are newly installed." Brian pushed the foamy rag into the kid's hand. "Clean yourself."

Justin looked at the wash cloth, sniffed at it and then with fascination, began to rub it over his belly. The foam was so soft and smelled like deep red and prince skin.

"More soap?" The older man held the shower gel bottle up and Justin stretched the flannel gratefully out. He wanted very much of the beautiful foam.

Eagerly he started to run the rag over his body, every now and then checked on the composition of the slippery foam on his skin and mumbled a couple of affirming words, before starting to soap another area of his body.

Brian watched the whole procedure contentedly and from a secure distance, until the boy, quite naturally, looked down at himself, pulled at the foreskin of his penis and then started to spread the foamy soap there too.

"Okay!" Brian coughed briefly and quickly turned around to attend himself to the towel shelf.

After two minutes he came back with a big red towel and grabbed through the spray to turn off the water.

Justin looked up in confusion and held his hand out.

"Come on." Brian unfolded the towel. "Dry up, dress yourself and back home with you."

"Of course. Back home with you." The boy got out of the shower on wobbly legs and looked then stunned from the left to the right when the prince wrapped soft, red fabric around his shoulders. He sniffed at it and laughed. "Ha!" It smelled of Prian!

Brian took a smaller towel and began to dry the boy's blonde hair with it.

Justin peered up and crinkled his nose.

Brian rubbed some more and smiled. "Shit, your hair is really long, you know?"

Justin smiled shyly but however full of pride and nestled his head in Prian's big hand when the towel was pulled away. "All the way to the ground."

The older man huffed a laugh and threw the wet towel on the clothes on the floor. "Yeah probably soon, if you don't see a barber in time."

"Soon. At Christmas." Justin watched uninterestedly as the prince also took the big towel away and gripped himself between the legs automatically.

"Yeah." Brian cleared his throat and quickly looked away again. He went straight to the door. "Come on, the clothes are in the bedroom."

Justin followed the prince with small steps over the damp stone floor, through the door and into a completely different room. It was cool and the floor felt soft as?

"Kitten fur."

Brian tried not to pay attention as the naked boy bent into a squatting position and with both hands stroked over his carpeting in pure fascination.

Instead he snatched the black Boss pants, which Rosa had accidentally washed too hot with the table linens, and held it out towards his guest. "Here. These are too small for me. You can have them."

Justin found the carpet wonderfully fluffy and therefore purred in pleasure while rubbing his cheek over the soft material.

"Justin!" Brian slightly lost his patience as a perfectly formed butt pointed right in his direction. "Would you kindly put these god damned pants on now! Please?!"

Justin blinked up as the prince said his name so loudly and sceptically took the black pants in his hand.

"What're you waiting for? Put them on."

"No." Justin shook his head.

"No? What do you mean no?! Of course put them on!" Brian dragged the boy to his legs indignantly.

Justin shook the head again. "Of course not mine."

"No. Yours are in there." The older man pointed to the bathroom. "Stained with piss. These are clean, so put them on."

"Of course not mine. Certainly not white."

"Pff." Mister Kinney puffed his cheeks out annoyed and laid his hands on his hips. "So you don't want to wear them?"

"No. Of course not mine."

"Fine!" Brian relented patiently. "Here. Then at least put the T-shirt and the trousers on."

Justin looked at the strange garments and felt the soft fabric between his fingers.

"So?" Brian wrinkled his forehead. "Put it on and let's go already!"

"No." Justin shook his head and looked at the prince with big eyes. "Of course the panties first."

A cold shiver ran down Brian's back at such a mode of expression. Where in hell had the boy grown up? In the house of the jolly dykes?! "Underwear. You want to put the underwear on first?"

"Of course. The panties first."

"Go ahead." Brian held the black Boss shorts up. "Be my guest."

The blonde looked away and began to rock while winding a hair strand around his finger. "Of course. Of course not mine. First the panties."

And Brian just stood there and really didn't know whether he should've laughed out loud or yell even louder. It was almost 4:30 in the morning, a blond haired, naked Adonis was in his bedroom, totally refusing to put on any clothes and he, Brian Kinney of all people, actually was on the brink of a nervous breakdown. God, he was so tired.

With a deep sigh he rubbed a hand over his face, shook his head and then, not exactly gently, grabbed with both hands after Justin's rosy cheeks. "Justin. Listens to me, ok? Are you listening?"

Justin didn't stop his rocking but his blue eyes tried to focus on Brian's face. "Yes."

"Good." Brian smiled a wide artificially smile. "Your clothes are wet and dirty, right? Your pajamas and your underwear."

"Yes." The boy tangled his red scratched hand in fair, wet hair.

"And you can't wear them like that. Therefore I'll give you some of mine, okay? Trousers, a t-shirt and underwear."

Justin's eyes wandered restlessly around. "Of course. First the panties."

"While I go downstairs to fetch the ointment for your hand," Brian forced Justin's eyes directly to his.

"Yeah."

"You will dress yourself. With the underwear, the trousers and the t-shirt, understood?"

"Yes."

Brian patted Justin's right cheek. "Good boy."

He left the room in the direction of the stairs. When he was halfway down a quiet yes from the bedroom was heard.

"You bet your ass you will! Brian yelled back.

**

The first weak daylight penetrated through the big window in the kitchen and Brian made something that otherwise he wouldn't ever do. He leaned his forehead against the cold glass and pressed his nose flatly to the pane while gazing out to the other side of the street to the high grey building. The sun would rise from behind it in about a half an hour.

The heavy entry door was locked tightly and the street in front of the building was quiet like it was most of the time. Nonetheless, upstairs on his freshly laid carpet stood a young man who somehow had managed to stroll out of the heavy door in the middle of the night and then nearly got killed by a car accident on the quiet street.

Shit.

Casting his eyes down, he pinched his nose with his thumb before watching himself pick at his perfectly manicured fingernails.

He didn't know with whom he was angrier. With himself for hitting the boy so negligent with the jeep, the idiots in the clinic who were incapable of keeping their patients under control or Justin because he had far too blue eyes for his own good.

"Hff." He stroked through his hair, snatched the ointment tube and walked back upstairs.

He really wanted to end this damn night as quickly as possible.

**

He wasn't sure what he was hoping to find in his bedroom at 4:40 in the morning.

A completely dressed Justin, ready for departure? A naked Justin with his butt in the air in the middle of the bed? Or a completely empty room and the certainty that perhaps everything had only been a very bad dream under the influence of Anita's even worse shit. He really didn't know.

What he found in the end was nothing as expected, or maybe just that.

Justin still stood there unchanged. With his back to the door, softly swaying and a red hand tightly wrapped in his blonde hair.

In his other hand he held three garments which didn't belong to him and a fine layer of goose bumps were drawn over his naked body.

But to his surprise Brian wasn't angry. Not even frustrated or terribly irritated.

No, he simply touched the boy carefully on the back to announce his presence and then reached down for Justin's hand to rub the ointment cream on his wound.

Justin said nothing at all and remained completely quiet when Brian took the clothes from his other hand, led him by two fingers over to the bed and lifted the heavy blanket.

"Lie down, ok? You're tired." Brian told him gently and not very loud and Justin looked at the prince with big blue eyes before he climbed clumsily on the gigantic mattress and almost needed a whole minute to lie himself down completely.

Brian waited patiently and then drew his double filled French down feather duvet up to Justin's chin. "Sleep."

He walked into his bathroom, lifted the wet towels and Justin's clothes and brought them down the stairs to the cellar where Emmett had arranged a fully equipped washing room for him; with washing machine, tumble-drier and an ultra modern ironing press. Two of the appliances Brian had never used and he really wasn't interested in the third one normally either. However, he did know where the washing powder had to be put and that it would be about 70 minutes until Justin's clothes were clean and could be put into the next machine for drying.

On his way back up he turned the lights out everywhere, insured that the door was locked and took a red plastic cup, freshly filled, with him to put on Justin's bedside table.

The boy wasn't asleep yet.

With big eyes and both hands on the edge of the blanket he watched in the darkness as Prian undressed, went in the bathroom and soon afterwards came out again before climbing into the other side of the bed.

The mattress shook and Justin didn't know whether he still liked the castle now that everything was as quiet, dark and different as in the tower.

He stared up to the ceiling and then over where the prince lay. Justin had never lied in bed with another person and he didn't like it. It was so dark and he couldn't see Prian. He breathed deeply and really wished he had his...

...book."

Brian turned his head in Justin's direction. "Your book isn't here. Do you want to drink some water?"

Justin nodded.

Brian didn't hear an answer and sat up to switch on the little lamp on the bedside table anyway. "Sit up."

Justin sat up clumsily, took the red plastic cup with both hands and looked at the prince over the brim. He kept his eyes on the prince the entire time until all the water in the cup was gone completely.

Brian put the cup away. "Good? Lie down again."

The boy slipped into a lying position and smiled as Prian did the same on the other bed side without turning off the light. The castle looked more beautiful when it wasn't so dark.

Brian laid himself down on his back, breathed in deeply, closed his eyes and opened them again after two minutes in slight confusion as he could feel a penetrating gaze. He turned his head aside and looked into a tired face with big blue eyes.

He held the look a moment, extended his hand and touched Justin's soft lips briefly with his fingertip. "Sleep Justin."

Ten minutes later Brian himself was about to sink into a sound sleep, when he suddenly felt a cool finger on his mouth.

It pressed a little clumsy on his lips, stayed there a couple of seconds, and then disappeared.? It was followed by two small quiet words.

"Sleep Prian."

Chapter 9 - Amazing Five minutes before the alarm went off, Brian reached over to the nightstand on the other side of the bed and clicked the timer off. Quietly, he lifted the heavy blanket and went into the bathroom. He still had to take care of some important things before he had to be at the office within two hours; such as drying a pair of freshly washed pyjamas and matching underwear, making a gigantic pot of black coffee (and transferring it into his blood circulation) and waking up the slumbering blonde boy in his bed and taking him to the other side of the street. Presumably, somebody would be there who would instantly report him because of bodily injury and kidnapping of an innocent barefoot lad in midnight blue pyjamas.

"Hff." Brian sighed, flushed the toilet and looked with tired eyes at his image in the mirror. Shit. The boy hopefully was of age, then at least nobody could accuse him of seducing a minor if it came out that the little sleeping beauty had spent the last hours stark naked in his bed. As Justin awoke, he was horrified and drew the blanket up to the tip of his nose. It didn't look like Harrisburg at all and it wasn't his tower in Pittsburgh either. Perhaps he had gotten lost?

"Hh!" He began to nibble at the blanket's fabric nervously. "Such big teeth."

He then heard a ringing noise followed by two different voices. Immediately, he recognized both of them. It was the beautiful prince and...

"...Hello there neighbour!" The servant!

"Ha!" He laughed and climbed off the big mattress. It was cold without the blanket and his belly began to tickle so he quickly put one hand between his legs. "Certainly onto the toilet."

But then, the ground below his feet was so soft and beautiful. He was completely enraptured by it and bent down to stroke it.

"Like cats."

The voices got louder and somebody laughed briefly, before the prince shouted like an angry giant. It was quiet after that.

"Hush, hush."

Justin crawled on all fours over the fluffy white carpeting but then the tickling in his belly got very, very bad and he had to get up really fast. Oh, oh. He grabbed himself firm between the legs with both hands and nervously put one foot on top of the other.

For a while he remained in exactly this same position. Then he looked around suspiciously and took one hand away carefully. Yes, the tickling had stopped. "Plake." But he nevertheless would've preferred to go to the...

"... toilet now."

With small steps he plodded a bit stiffly out of the room, along the corridor, and had to take a nervous break on the third step with his legs pressed tightly together.

"Plake."

Plake didn't come, however, the great pictures on the wall looked really very beautiful and Justin's eyes grew big.

"Ooh."

With an extended finger he tried to touch the painted man without trousers but his arm was too short. "Of course no hair."

The last eight steps down he waddled a little crookedly because the tickling in his belly almost stopped if he walked like this. But as he touched the cold stones on the ground floor with both feet, the titillative feeling began anew.

He started to wail. "Plake!" He bobbed up and down, rubbed his legs against each other and squeezed his penis tightly with his right hand.

Brian heard noises from the direction of the stairs, grinned in amusement and walked to his guest with a raised coffee cup in his hand. "Good morning Sunshi-" But he lost his friendly facial expression in a fraction of seconds as he saw the panic stricken look from two blue eyes together with five delicate fingers strongly curled around a perfectly shaped pink coloured manhood.

Dumbfounded he stared at Justin's middle. "Is this your evil plan to drive me into insanity?"

Justin looked down on himself - searching.

"Of course. My Penis." He pointed downwards with his fingers. "And my testicles." He looked up to Brian with innocent eyes. "It holds sperm inside."

Brian blinked, raised his coffee cup blindly to his lips, drank a large gulp and let out a strong cough. "That is...aha."

"Ladidaa!" Emmett came around the corner with a bucket, mop, and yellow rubber gloves. However, at this unexpected view he stopped and a broad smile came over his face. "Look at you, gorgeous! I had no idea Brian was hiding his own little secret treasure up there. My, my..."

Justin looked at the servant a little frightened and put his feet nervously on top of each other again. He really would've preferred to go to the...

"...toilet now."

"Sure thing sweetie." Emmett let his rubber glove snap against his wrist. "Just give me two minutes and the public peeing palace will be spick and span and lime fresh again. I've recently discovered a new toilet fragrant stone. \$1.29 at Wal-Mart." He winked, shouldered his mop and disappeared in Mister Kinneys over expensive guest loo.

Justin squeezed his legs together as he looked after the servant and then turned his gaze helpless towards the prince.

Brian raised an eyebrow in warning. "Don't even think about it. This is an ancient granite floor, \$750 the square meter."

Justin began to whimper and bounced on the balls of his feet.

"Of course on the toilet."

Brian cursed under his breath. This was too much stress to handle this early in the morning. He put his coffee cup on the little decorated dresser and grabbed the naked boy roughly by the arm. Mumbling angry words to himself, he dragged him up the stairs to the first floor and into his private bathroom.

Justin stumbled behind. Smooth cold floor, dark steps, and wood met the bottoms of his feet followed by white cat fur and cold, smooth, shiny black floor. The castle really had many floors.

"Certainly one hundred."

He looked up when Prian switched on the lights in the bathroom.

"Oooh."

The prince had the most beautiful lamps.

"Yeah." Brian dragged the boy in front of the toilet and opened the lid. "Here. Sit down."

Justin looked down with big eyes.

"Ha!" He laughed in surprise. The prince had...

"...blue well water in the toilet!"

He wanted to bend down and touch it, but Prian captured his hand and held it firmly with big, strong fingers.

Justin looked at the older man in disappointment. "Blue water."

"Yeah. Fascinating. Sit down." Brian turned Justin around and pushed him into a sitting position on the toilet seat.

Justin looked up with innocent blue eyes. "Like in the well."

He then raised one butt cheek so he would be able to see the water. He wanted to know whether the frog was down there or even the...

"...shiny gold ball?"

Brian wrinkled his forehead and held the boy down by the shoulders. "Stay put Justin. You wanted to go to the toilet, right? I thought you had to go."

"Yes." Justin's upper body began to rock slightly, but he otherwise remained calm. "Onto the toilet."

"Hmm." Brian nodded and decided to discreetly divert his look towards the wall while he was waiting for the familiar splashing noise.

After two minutes, though, his fingers became a bit stiff on Justin's shoulders and he cleared his throat. "What's the matter? Are you done already?"

He didn't receive an answer.

"Justin?" He looked down at his guest questioningly. "I thought you needed to piss?!"

"Yeah." Justin rocked a little more. "Of course. Wee-wee into the toilet."

Mister Kinney's fingertips cramped unpleasantly on Justin's upper back area. What the fuck! Wee-wee? From whom had the boy received his education? Bibo from Sesame Street?! A cold shiver ran through Brian's body and he screwed up his face in pure disgust.

"Pissing. It's called pissing, Justin. A man won't ever..." He suppressed his need to dry heave. "...do that thing you just said."

"Of course. Wee-wee."

"No." Brian looked down. "Look at me."

Justin hummed quietly and rocked further, but only looked up as Brian's finger under his chin forced him to do so.

"You are a man."

"Yeah."

"Men piss."

"Yeah."

"Men don't say words like 'wee-wee'. Understood?"

Justin's look wandered to the side, not really focussing on anything. "Yeah."

Brian's grip on Justin's small chin became a little firmer. "Justin. Look at me."

"Yes." Blue eyes found their way back and a small smile formed on red lips. "Prian."

"Brian."

"Prian." A quiet splashing could be heard.

Brian raised his eyebrow and looked down. "There you go. You're pissing."

Justin retracted his neck and looked almost a little shy. "Yes. Into the toilet."

Brian couldn't help but smile a little. "Yeah. Amazing isn't it."

Fifteen minutes later, Emmett had taken fresh, nice smelling absolutely dry pyjamas and matching underwear to the mansions private bedchambers. Moments later, Justin stood completely dressed in the bathroom in front of the big mirror area and rubbed himself with a soft flannel over his face.

Brian pushed a substitute toothbrush from its packing and held it under his guest's nose. "Here. Brush your teeth."

"No." Justin shook his head.

Brian tried to remain calm and took the wash cloth away from the boys' fingers. "Yes. I'm sure you brush your teeth every morning, right?"

"Yes."

"Very well. It is morning, so take the toothbrush and clean your teeth."

"No." Justin's gaze wandered without interest to the side and he started to bob up and down softly. "Certainly not mine."

Brian strained his jaw. This argument was gradually becoming really annoying. "Sure it is. I gave it to you. Your own fucking toothbrush."

"No. Certainly not mine."

"Pff." Frustrated, the older man let his arm fall down, looked irritated in the mirror and then left the room shaking his head. "Fucking shit in the damned morning. Fuck!"

Justin remained in front of the sink and rocked some more. "Of course. Of course not mine."

"Oh, shut up!" Brian rummaged through his bedside table, found a waterproof pen which he usually used on the discs of his self-produced home videos and went back into the bathroom. He provocatively held the toothbrush in front of Justin's eyes and removed the cap of the pen. "What's your name?"

"Justin." The boy rocked further, but his look wandered to Prians' hands. "Of course. Justin Taylor. One five two one nine Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA. One five two one nine."

"Hm" The older man grinned triumphantly and wrote with thick letters on the handle of the toothbrush. "Juustiin Taaaylooooo." He closed the pen again and looked at his work contentedly. "Justin Taylor."

"Oooh." Justin reached for the toothbrush with both hands and stroked with astonishment over the handle. The prince was right. It was his! "Ha!" He looked at Prian and smiled broadly.

Brian raised his eyebrow. "Will you brush your teeth now?"

"Hh!" Justin's beaming face changed into pure consternation. "Of course! No tooth paste!"

"Yeah, well..." Brian grabbed for his \$6.80 tooth paste, enriched with real mint from the Spanish highlands. "That's not a good reason for failure now, is it?" He pushed a broad amount of tooth paste on the brush head.

"Oooh." Justin sniffed at the white paste and poked his tongue out to test the taste.

"Hh. Hurry up. You certainly want to eat some breakfast."

"Yeah." The boy took the toothbrush into his mouth and Brian left the bathroom to put on his watch in the bedroom.

After two minutes of steadily brushing, he leaned into the doorframe. "Come on, are you done?"

Justin spoke without interrupting his brushing motions. "Of course. Three minutes."

Brian sighed. "Of course." He used the time to check his condom stock on the left bedside table.

Exactly after three minutes the boy spat his minty foam into the basin, rinsed out his mouth, smacked his lips twice in front of the mirror and plodded out of the door and into the bedroom.

Bored, Brian lay on his bed. "Are you finally finished?"

Justin said nothing but hurried around the bed to kneel on the soft carpet in front of the prince. Quietly he opened his mouth wide and tilted his head back a little as if it were natural.

Brian wrinkled his forehead and sat up with a slightly amused grin. The little one surely was an entertaining little fellow...and obviously well trained too. "What are you doing?"

Justin tipped his head a bit to the side and tried to speak without closing his mouth. "All clean."

"All clean?" The older man risked a look in Justin's pink oral cavity. "Your teeth?"

"Yeah." The boy nodded and shifted five centimetres further towards the bed to allow a better view for Brian. "Look."

Brian blinked.

"You want me to look at your teeth?"

He sighed deeply, but then hooked his forefinger into Justin's lower row of teeth and drew his jaw a trace further down to be able to look at all 32 teeth (minus one removed wisdom tooth up on the left side). Further more, he saw one absolutely perfect tongue and the most beautiful throat he had ever seen. Justin kept perfectly still and breathed warm mint fresh breath into his face.

Plainly spoken, the whole situation developed into a damned stimulating affair. So Brian cleared his throat with irritation and wiped his salivated finger quickly on his trousers, all the while mumbling. "It looks ok if you ask me."

Justin closed his mouth and smiled brightly. Ok was a good thing.

"And now?" Brian briefly gripped at his crotch to adjust the tightness in his pants. Then he cleared his throat again and stood up from the bed. "Do you want to have breakfast?"

"Of course." The boy got up awkwardly from the carpet and hurried to follow the prince out of the room and down the stairs. "Breakfast on Wednesday. Oatmeal and raisins."

"Yeah right." Brian snorted contemptuously on the seventh step. "Where do you think you are? Mary Poppins little bed and breakfast? You can have toast."

"Of course. Toast on Tuesday."

"You're starting to argue again?" With long steps the older man disappeared in the direction of the kitchen.

Justin padded close behind on naked feet. "Of course. Always on Tuesday. Toast and raspberry jelly."

Brian tried not to let himself become irritated and shoved two slices of bread into the toaster. "Sit down."

Clumsily, the boy climbed onto one of the high chairs and looked up to the ceiling while winding a strand of blonde hair around his finger. "Of course on Wednesday. Oatmeal and raisins. Always on Wednesday."

"Do you want cream cheese?" Brian dug through the five objects in his refrigerator.

Justin further talked about oatmeal.

Brian nevertheless got the cream cheese out and slathered it on the warm bread from the toaster. Without very much decoration, he placed both slices on a plate and put it under Justin's nose. "Do you drink tea or coffee?"

Justin began to giggle and beamed at the prince with bright eyes. He liked the mad hatter. "The tea party is funny!"

Brian wrinkled his forehead and turned around to pour the boy a glass of milk. One never knew how people reacted on caffeine in the early morning. "Here. Drink." He gave Justin the glass and sat down opposite from the kid to study the financial section in the newspaper.

Five minutes later, he peered over the edge of the paper. Justin was looking up to the ceiling again and had neither touched the bread nor the milk.

Brian knocked on the bar in front of the boy. "Hey. Justin."

"Yes."

"Look at me."

"Yeah." Justin looked straight ahead and tried to focus.

"Why don't you eat your toast? You're hungry, right?"

Was he? Justin felt his belly. Yes, he was very hungry. "Oatmeal and raisins. Always on Wednesdays."

Brian closed his newspaper and sighed. "And who the hell told you so?"

"Of course. Of course on the meal schedule."

"You have a meal plan?"

"Yes. Over the bed."

"The plan hangs over your bed?"

"Yes."

"And it says it's oatmeal on Wednesday?"

"Yes. With raisins."

"Hh.. And you like oatmeal? It tastes good?"

Justin looked with uninterest to the side and played with his earlobe.

"Hff." Brian looked at his young guest for a moment and then got up, shaking his head in search for his cigarettes. He really didn't know what to think of this whole thing.

"You know..." He couldn't find his lighter and rummaged around in a drawer for the candle lighter. "You really shouldn't listen so much to other people." He flung a couple of things out, which lay in the way. A broken egg slicer, a bottle-opener, a self-made butterfly noodle necklace and three wine corks. "Or otherwise you'll end up like Mikey."

Justin watched without emotion in Brian's direction and quietly counted the objects which flew from the drawer. He was at seven as he saw the most amazing treasure a prince could have in a drawer. "Butterflies!"

Excitedly he climbed from his chair and grabbed for the necklace on the kitchen cupboard.

"Ha!" They were bound to a cord. The prince was so clever!

Brian watched the boy in amusement while he lit his cigarette and took a deep drag.

Justin held the necklace up and happily smiled in Brian's direction. "So many!"

"Hmm." Relaxed, Brian leaned against the kitchen counter and blew out his smoke in a long trail. "Come here."

The boy hesitated for a moment before walking closer with small steps and shyly holding the noodle chain out to the prince.

Brian stuck the cigarette between his lips, took the necklace and put it around Justin's neck. He wasn't sure whether it was the wonderful push of nicotine or the fact that his brain had to fight with great sleep deprivation, but he actually found that the little one looked somewhat nice with that silly thing. Pretty. With those slightly red cheeks, innocent blue eyes and fair hair deep in the forehead. Hmm. He smiled.

Justin touched the noodles carefully where they laid on his chest. They were so beautiful! Overwhelmed he looked down at himself and then up to Prian. It was real...

"...Prince jewellery!"

Brian pulled on his cigarette. "You want to keep it?"

Justin looked at the prince with big eyes and said nothing at all.

Brian blew out the smoke, took Justin's hand and led him back to his chair. "I tell you what. Sit down, eat your toast and this thing is yours, okay?"

The boy climbed on his place and looked at Prian with excitement. The prince wanted...

"...to make presents!"

"No present." Mister Kinney denied anything that had to do with nobility and moved the milk glass more towards Justin's plate. "A reward. You eat the bread and get the noodles. All right?"

"All right, the treasure jewellery." Justin echoed in a detailed copy of Brian's voice and sniffed at the toast that the prince held in front of his mouth. "Of course. Oatmeal."

Brian rattled with the dried pasta around Justin's neck. "First you eat the toast then you get the necklace."

Justin looked at him with two big blue eyes like a tormented puppy, while nibbling a tiny piece of cream cheese toast from Prians' fingers.

Pleased, Brian watched as the kid chewed and leaned a little to the side to take a drag of his cigarette. Then he held the bread up once more and patiently waited till his guest took a bite.

It took seventeen and a half minutes before the boy had finished both of the bread slices and half a glass of the milk.

Justin licked the milk from his lips in appreciation. He really liked prince food.

"Good? Use this to clean your mouth." Brian handed him a paper napkin and put the dishes into the basin.

Justin sniffed at the napkin and rubbed his nose on it.

The older man took it and wiped over the smeared face himself.

Justin nestled his mouth into the soft material and looked up to Prian through his long strands of hair.

"Prian."

Brian smiled to some extent. "Brian."

"Prian."

Brian kept looking into blue eyes for a silent moment, then threw the paper cloth away. "Come on, brat. Time to go home."

Justin had strictly refused to put on a pair of shoes or stockings because none of it belonged to him and Brian couldn't bring himself to mark his good garments with a text marker.

So the young blonde man left the Kinney estate shortly before nine in the morning the same way he had entered it some hours ago in the evening - in his pyjamas and with naked feet.

Although, he now carried a farfalle noodle necklace around his neck and a broad smile on his face.

With small steps, he plodded behind the prince and tried to walk a bit faster because Prian smelled really good. Quite entranced, he nuzzled himself into a strong arm and sniffed.

"No, tell him to wait. I'll be there at ten o'clock. Yes." Brian felt a little stressed out. With one hand he held his cell phone, put his keys away with the other and then took Justin tightly by his small fingers on his way out of the gateway. "No, just look for the file. I'll call him back. Yes. No make it eight in bright blue."

It was cold outside, the street was wet from the rain and he automatically looked down to Justin's naked feet. Shit. Certainly the boy would have pneumonia by tomorrow. "Yes. Just try to entertain him somehow. Bye." He cut off the connection, slid the phone into his jacket and curled his fingers around Justin's hand a bit more tightly as they reached the road. "Stop here."

"Yeah." Justin stopped and looked with disinterest up to the sky, while winding a strand of hair around his finger.

"Justin." Brian squeezed the boy's hand more strongly to obtain attention. "Look forwards if you want to cross the street."

"Yeah." Justin looked straight ahead.

"And to the right." Brian pointed. "And to the left. You have to see whether a car comes or not."

"Yeah."

"Ok. Do you see a car?"

"Yeah."

Brian wrinkled his forehead and looked around the completely empty street. "Where?"

Justin looked around too and then helplessly up to Brian.

"Hff." The older man sighed and briefly rubbed his thumb over Justin's knuckles. "Well okay, just forget the cars. You'll only cross the street if somebody clearly says you can go. All right?"

"All right." The boy echoed and made a step forward on the black asphalt.

"Hey!" Brian roughly tore back Justin's hand and raised his voice. "What've I just said?"

Justin looked alarmed at Brian's face. The prince was...

"...angry!"

"Damn right I'm fucking angry! I just told you that you don't cross the street until someone gives you permission to do so!"

"Yeah." Justin tugged his neck in and started to rock back and forth nervously. The prince was very angry with him.

"You will only cross the street if someone said you could."

"Yeah."

"Yes?"

"Yeah. Brian says."

"Hh." Brian took a brief look from left to right and squeezed the small hand in his fingers. "Well, come on then. We'll go now."

Tense, Justin looked up to Brian then to the street and again to Brian before he padded with small steps after the prince. He clawed himself with five fingers tightly into his bigger hand. "Of course. Brian says."

"Only then. Never before." The older man confirmed sternly and led the boy straight to the other side of the street and onto the high entrance of the St. James institution.

The heavy door wasn't shut and the stairway behind it was quiet and empty. Justin's feet made splashing noises on the cold stone steps and Brian tried to ignore the bad feeling in his stomach.

It smelled disgusting here. Everything was dreary and grey and he could only hope that the rooms of the occupants were designed a little nicer.

He looked over his shoulder to where Justin walked behind him up the stairs and forced a small smile. "Quite a lot steps. Where is your room?"

Justin smiled shyly and rubbed his cheek against his shoulder. "Of course. Always on the top."

"On the top?" The older man saw a building plan on the wall. "Station 4? That's where your room is?"

"Yes. With Plake now."

"Hmm. Who is Plake?"

Justin counted the steps quietly. "Fourty-two."

Brian squeezed the boys hand a little. "Justin. Who is Plake? Your roommate?"

"Of course. Plake and Justin. Not in Harrisburg anymore."

"You come from Harrisburg?"

The kid looked up completely astonished. The prince knew his old tower!

"Hmm." Brian took the last three steps. "Cool." He led Justin through a glass door. It smelled even worse than the stairwell and he looked around with a disparaging look. This was disgusting and this is how valuable taxes got wasted.

He really thought of having a nice explicit chat with Mayor O'Connell, or just suing him directly. Incompetent fucker.

"Hello?" Male nurse Schmidt saw the two men from his station room and ran to the corridor. "Can I..." Only on the second look he recognized that the boy in pyjamas was the patient from 411. "Are you family? Actually our visiting time is only after 2:00 pm."

Brian kept Justin by the hand and was a little dumbfounded for a moment. He had expected a far less polite welcoming. Hadn't the people here even noticed that the boy had been absent for the last 10 hours?

Male nurse Schmidt looked at the handsome man attentively. "Of course we can make an exception when it comes to urgent family matters."

"Ah," Brian shot a quick look at Justin, saw the boy rocking back and forth with disinterest and was torn apart between the chance to emerge relatively unscathed from this situation or to sue this whole brothel because of neglect.

Since he had an important meeting within less than 40 minutes, though, his practical side won. "No, nurse..." He bent a bit more forward to be able to read the nameplate. "Schmidt Theodore. I am not related to Mister Taylor. We are...we know each other."

"Mister Taylor?" The male nurse took a searching look at the blond. "Ah. Justin. Yes, of course. Then I would suggest you say goodbye and come back at the predefined visiting times. You are welcome to take one of our information brochures with you, if you'd like to."

Mister Kinney gave the male nurse a sceptical look with a raised eyebrow. "Yeah. Sure." He then walked with Justin down the long corridor. "Th. Who the hell was this idiot? Looks like a damn book keeper with impotence to me."

Justin toddled one step behind the prince and absently wrapped a blond strand around his finger. "Of course. Not Plake."

"Hh." Brian turned around to the boy, mid-step. "And that troll works here? Make's your meal and everything?"

"Naa. Always sleeping."

"He always sleeps?"

"Always, always."

Brian shook his head. Perhaps he really should pay a small personal visit to the mayor within the next days with the best advocate of Pennsylvania and a temporary restraining order for the dismissal of some incompetent municipal male nurses.

"Okay." He combed through his hair and looked around searching. "Which room is yours? Do you know the room number?"

"Of course. No green door."

Brian looked from left to right and gesticulated rather wildly. "Justin, all the doors are white. That was not a very good clue, you know?"

"A clue, a clue!" Justin mimicked his voice and addressed the shiny linoleum floor. "Of course into the thinking chair!"

Mister Kinney wrinkled his forehead in deep scepticism as he had terrible déjà-vu of one bad Saturday morning children's television experience with Sonny Boy and some scary guy in a green ringed sweater. "You think this is funny, don't you?"

"Yeah." The boy stopped in front of a door with the number 411 and pressed the handle. "Of course. Funny Justin."

Brian stuck his head through the doorframe. "This is your room?"

"Yeah." Justin walked straight toward his bed. An opened book lay on the mattress. "Of course under the pillow."

The older man looked around sceptically. The room was badly equipped in sterile white. A couple of the boy's personal things were lying around; a blue alarm clock, a silver radio, some clothes. Not really much.

"Have you painted this?" He pointed at a childlike frog drawing over the bed and got nearer to have a closer look. The frog looked happy.

Justin shoved his book under the pillow and answered without looking up. "Yes."

"Hmm. You should paint more, you know? The walls are too white."

"Yes." Justin looked straight ahead. "The cupboard is white too. And the bed."

"I see. It's boring." Brian let the fingers brush a grey sweat jacket which hung over a chair.

"Yes." Justin began to bob up and down on the mattress.

Brian went to the window and looked at his house. "The view is not bad, however."

"Yes." Nervously the boy put his hands between his legs and bobbed some more.

"Yes, it's-" Irritated with the mattress-squeaking the older man turned around. "Justin. You need to go to the toilet again, don't you?"

"Yeah." Justin pressed his legs together. "Pissing into the toilet."

A broad grin moved over Brian's face. "Pissing, ah? I've taught you something."

"Yes. Prian."

"Brian."

"Prian."

"Hff." Brian sighed and went a couple of steps to stand directly in front of the boy. Then he waited patiently till the boy looked up to him, all by himself. "I am Prian?"

"Yes. Prian." Justin couldn't keep visual contact for long before his eyes strayed away again.

Brian nodded and watched the blonde for a moment. He then smiled and brushed a stray hair with two fingers behind a perfectly curved ear. "Hey. You look pretty...with this necklace."

Justin nestled his head against Brian's hand and smiled with an empty gaze to an indefinite point in the room. "Yes. Prince jewellery."

"Yes. I have to go now."

"Yeah."

Brian's thumb stroked over a pale cheek. "Justin?" Gently, he pushed a small chin up to create visual contact.

The boy looked up with blue, childlike eyes.

Brian took one finger to his lips, kissed it and carefully touched it to Justin's mouth. "Later."

Justin blinked, first a little scared then curious. He pressed his lips more tightly against the gentle finger and after two seconds touched the warm skin with the tip of his tongue.

Brian watched this for a moment and unconsciously licked his own lips before he took his hand away. "Ok. See you." He went to the door and was already almost outside when he decided to take one last look back.

The boy sat softly rocking on the bed with an empty look and two fingers at his mouth.

"Justin?"

"Yeah."

"Who has the most amazing water?"

"Yeah." Justin rocked back and forth three more times before a small smile crept over his red lips. "Of course my Prian."

Chapter 10 – Cream cheese for my princess

"What's this?" Daphne leaned over to Justin's side of the table and examined his drawing with curiosity.

Justin didn't like it when Alice came so close to his beautiful picture and bent himself protectively over it.

"Is it a fish?"

Justin shook his head.

"Is it a horse?"

The boy looked emphatically uninterested in the other direction.

Daphne sighed. "Damn. I like horses the best."

She then painted her own picture for a while. Green dots, yellow circles and big red spots.

Justin didn't like it at all. It looked like a big bunch of horrible apples.

He shuddered. Apples were disgusting and....

"...certainly poisoned."

He threw a disapproving look at Alice and continued to embellish his own painting with a bit more of the brown color. Prince-eye-brown.

"Oooh!" Miss Peterson enthusiastically clapped her hands as she made a stop in front of Justin's table. "Justin, how wonderful! Is this a scene out of *Gone with the Wind*? I just love Clark Gable!"

Justin ignored Miss Etersen like he had done for the last 45 minutes.

Today, he didn't smell like violets but like orange-colored tulips. His long finger claws were much too red, and his thick chest was half naked because his shirt had a far too big neck-hole. Justin didn't like people with thick chests and flower smells.

Furious, he took the brown wax crayon and rubbed it noisily over his sheet of paper.

"When you're finished we can hang it on the wall. Would you like that?" The fair-haired woman reached for her patient's picture, but he pulled it away and leaned over it protectively.

"He never allows anyone to touch his things," Daphne explained while scribbling a distorted 'Alice' on her own work of art, "not his book, not his shoes, not his new necklace, and never his hair." With an insulted pout on her lips, she handed her own paper to the therapist. "Not even if one asks for permission!"

"Well," said Miss Peterson, looking at her patient's drawing briefly before depositing it into a thin folder, "It's important, however, to respect other peoples wishes. And if Justin doesn't want you to touch his things, you should respect his request."

Daphne didn't like this suggestion at all and defiantly pulled her seat neighbour's picture out from under his hands. "Eeew!" She held it up, giggled, and screwed up her face. "He paints big red mouths!"

Justin looked up, alarmed. Alice had his picture! The prince and the princess! Oh, oh. Nervously he grabbed the long blond strand behind his ear and started to bob up and down on his chair. Certainly he would never have the beautiful picture again. And the pretty brown prince's eyes weren't ready yet at all. He wailed quietly. The prince could...

"...of course see nothing."

"Oh, that was very rude. " Miss Peterson tried to take the paper away from Daphne. "See? Now Justin is all sad."

Daphne giggled some more and pointed with an extended finger at the drawing. "Mouths with thick lips!"

The therapist caught the drawing, laughed a little and gave the picture back to Justin. "Lips are necessary. Clark and Vivian kiss each other in this scene. It is very romantic. Isn't that right Justin?"

"Of course. Certainly he can't see anything." Justin immediately reached for the brown wax crayon and quickly finished the prince's eyes. "Nothing at all, all dark." He then grabbed for the well-water-blue and promptly painted over the ugly finger spots Miss Etersen made with her long finger claws.

Pouting, Daphne folded her arms in front of her chest and decided to say not one more word for the rest of day. Because, of course, Superman would never kiss anyone other than Lois Lane.

Brian stomped into his office, the door rattling in his wake. "Fuck!" God, he so hated that stupid cow from Eye-Conic Optics.

'I don't like the font. The color somehow isn't right. And what's with the background Mister Kinney? This one seems a bit too obtrusive don't you think?'

He has had the art department revise the boards a hundred times now, but every time the bitch had a new complaint.

Shit, at this moment he was only a breadth away from telling her to shove one of her ugly sunglasses up to a place where the sun would be guaranteed to never shine.

"Boss?" Cynthia peeked cautiously around the door.

"What!" Mister Kinney turned abruptly in his sinfully expensive Italian leather chair. "I said no fucking interruptions!"

She looked at him with a pang of doubt. "I told Michael the same thing. He's on line two." Quietly, she closed the door again while Brian, cursing aloud, reached for the receiver. "Tell me which color is more appealing than royal fucking blue, or get off the phone Novotny. I'm busy!"

"Ah...purple?" was Michael's nervous answer after a pause, and Brian rolled his eyes.

"Yeah, that's it exactly, Mikey. When was the last time that I told you how pathetic you are?"

Michael grinned into the receiver. "Exactly 31 hours ago. I'm deeply disappointed."

"I am sorry. You are a pathetic little mommy's boy with gruesome taste all around. And now either spit out what it is that you want or leave me the hell alone. I have to fire someone in the art department."

Michael grinned even more. "I wanted to know whether or not you can come to Babylon tonight. Ben and I wanted to drop in for a couple of hours."

"No, I have to finish some work tonight."

"Really? Maybe you'll change your mind. If not, we'll see each other at the gym on Saturday?"

"Yeah. Sure. See you then Mikey." Brian put down the phone and decided to take a late lunch. He planned to consume at least ten ounces of latte, one to two packs of Marlboros, and the well-built gas station attendant at 7th and Lincoln.

Male nurse Gold hated the noon shift the most, especially if the doctors have left little yellow post-it notes on the trays with the word 'supervision' all over them.

This usually meant extra long lunch sessions at the patient's tables, making sure that they completely cleared their plates. This simple act was apparently too much for some of the occupants, especially the one in 411. According to Professor Bruckner, even two weeks after his transfer from the children's psychiatry in Harrisburg, Justin still had problems with the St. James eating arrangements.

Sighing, the male nurse grabbed the last tray on the cart and walked into Justin's room without knocking.

The boy sat on the edge of his bed and was kissing, with pointed lips and tightly closed eyes, a page in his fairytale book.

The male nurse snorted contemptuously at the sight, put the meal down, and snatched the book roughly from the boy's fingers. "What's that supposed to be, your porn magazine substitution?" He looked at the page briefly. The badly drawn prince charming sported a slightly damp spot. Male nurse Gold snapped the book shut and threw it carelessly on the bedside table. "Come on, get up already. It's meal time!"

Justin stumbled clumsily as the male nurse grabbed him roughly by the arm and looked around, wailing, for his book. "Of course. Certainly under the pillow."

"Would you come already?! Sit down!" Male nurse Gold plopped the boy into the chair and pushed a fork into his fingers. "The doc said you have to clear the whole plate. Do you understand?"

"Of course. Of course under the pillow." Justin rocked back and forth nervously and then tried to get up. Not under any circumstances could the book be left there on the nightstand. It was the place for his...

"... red cup. Of course prince water."

"Hey! I said sit down and eat!"

Disregarding the nurse, the boy toddled determinedly in the direction of his book.

He blinked when a strong hand grabbed him by the neck. It stung and squeezed. He made himself stiff and held his book tightly with tense hands.

"Damn idiot! Because of you I will get another reprimand!" The male nurse pulled at the book all the while squeezing Justin's neck tighter. He hated it when patients freaked out constantly. "Give me the stupid book!"

Justin squeezed his eyes shut and retracted his neck. It was loud, and everything stung and stung.

"Plake."

With a last firm jerk, the male nurse tore the fairytale book out of the ten small fingers and destroyed the thin wool cord around the boy's neck. Dozens of dried noodles fell clattering onto the floor.

Immediately, the young patient began to shout at the top of his voice while pulling his blond hair strands, clearly distraught.

"Aargh, shit!" Frustrated, Ethan threw the book against the wall and gave Justin a firm shove before storming out of the room.

Justin fell against his bedside table and was still crying and lying there between all the yellow butterfly noodles when the male nurse came back three minutes later.

He came with a set of brown restraining straps and male nurse Schmidt in tow. "He just started to scream!"

"Really?" Male nurse Schmidt looked with compassionate at the disturbed kid on the floor. He carefully took the boy by his right arm, while Ethan grabbed his left shoulder. Together they laid the patient down on the bed.

"I only tried to give him his fucking lunch, and he went totally berserk!"

Justin noticed something biting into his arm and stopped yelling. His mouth was very tired. With empty blue eyes, he stared up at the ceiling. Thousands of brown and green evil vines wrapped themselves around his arms and legs, so he was trapped forever and ever.

But he wasn't sad.

His book was gone, and all the beautiful butterflies were dead.

With one last sob, he let his heavy eyelids drop and wished that he would sleep one hundred years like sleeping beauty... or at least till Christmas.

"Fuckingdamnedshit!" Brian slammed his car door shut and stomped with heavy steps toward his house. The stupid guy at the gas station had given him, not only the lousiest blowjob in history, no, he had also managed to pour an entire latte all over his favorite five hundred dollar Valentino jacket, with the lamest of exclamations, "Oops, a stain."

"Motherfucker!" Mister Kinney entered his Playboy mansion with thunderclouds over his head. Throwing keys, briefcase and cell phone on the foyer table, he trampled with reverberating steps up the stairs to the second floor. He had to change his clothes if he wanted to return to the office.

"Aaah!" Shocked, Emmett dropped his feather duster and laid both of his hands over his chest, his poor heart pounding wildly. "Oh my God. Brian." He breathed, theatrically, in and out four times and forced a small smile. "Do you have to scare me like this? You know my family is hereditarily handicapped with heart abnormalities."

"What!" Brian took his shoes off and opened his cuff-links. "Do I have to first announce myself now? I live here!"

"But not at this time of the day." Emmett laughed nervously and resumed dusting Mister Kinney's bedside table. "Jesus."

Brian took off his pants, threw his jacket and shirt on the floor, and marched, grumbling, to his closet. "Bring the suit to the dry cleaner's. Today."

Emmett grinned while dusting the bedside lamp. "Ah, an occupational accident during lunch break. Was he sweet?"

"He dumped ounces of fucking latte all over my best Valentino jacket!"

"Oh. Poor Baby."

"Yeah." Brian slipped into a fresh shirt and fetched his new Louis Vuitton slacks from the shelves. "Call me baby again and you can go look for a new job. Emil."

"Ugh." Emmett really did not appreciate the negative energy, especially before his afternoon break.

He locked his lips into a thin pout, but had to open them again ten seconds later because he had made a very strange discovery beside Mister Kinney's designer alarm clock. "Have you gotten yourself a new series of tableware? How nice! Red plastic. That's very retro."

Brian turned around, buckling his belt. "Hmm? No. That's Justin's."

"Justin?" Emmett looked at the cup in his hands. "You mean the little blond trick from this morning?"

"He's not a trick."

"He's not?" Mister Honeycutt perked up his ears as his employer climbed into a new pair of shoes.

"He ran into my car last night, so I brought him home."

Emmett eyes widened. "And you guys didn't have sex? But he's so ...small and blond!"

Brian raised his head and lifted the left eyebrow. "Yes. And he lives on the other side of the street."

Emmett wrinkled his forehead before realization hit him. "You mean St. James? The institution where Lindsay works?"

Brian nodded.

"Who would've thought? He seemed so...normal."

Brian grimaced. "He is normal. ...In a non-defined, non-conventional way."

"I see." Emmett waved with his feather duster mischievously. "And am I right to assume that we can expect this gentleman more often in the future? As a guest?"

Brian threw an evil look at his maid and grabbed the red cup. "I don't do 'guests'!"

He needed to check St. James' visitation brochure, buried somewhere in his glove compartment.

Ten minutes later, he pushed open the heavy doors of St. James and climbed up a reeking stairwell to the 5th floor. Brian entered Ward 4 for the second time in one day.

Male nurse Schmidt, seeing him from a distance, immediately approached him with a broad smile. "Hello! You were here this morning, correct? To visit Justin."

"Right." Brian looked at the enthusiastic nurse sceptically and refused his extend hand. "Is it okay if I go see him for a little while?"

"Absolutely!" The male nurse nodded vigorously and pointed at the large clock on the wall. "It's 14:10 pm. We have official visiting time, Mister..."

"Kinney." Brian wrinkled his nose and walked away in the direction of where he dropped the boy off in the morning.

"It was my pleasure Mister Kinney!" Male nurse Schmidt called out, motioning excitedly after the handsome man. "Feel free to ask if there is anything you need! I am here at all times!"

"Hmm," Brian mumbled, reading room numbers while walking along the corridor. He finally knocked on the door marked 411.

He didn't receive an answer. Hesitating briefly, he knocked again. "Justin?" Without waiting, he opened the door. "Hey brat, are you..." As Brian carefully peeked around the door, he lost his words. A firmly tied up ,pitiable figure laid on the bed.

With a suppressed curse and a thick lump in his throat, Brian entered the room, closed the door quietly, and hurried to the bed.

Justin laid on his back with closed eyes. Broad leather cuffs held his ankles and wrists immobile to the mattress, and a torn farfalle noodle necklace laid half crushed on the floor.

Brian picked up the necklace, put the remnants in the empty red drinking cup, and quietly placed it on the bedside table. He carefully extended a hand toward Justin. Gently, he stroked the pale forehead, while brushing strands of blond hair aside. "Hey. Justin."

Justin's eyes were heavy like grey stones, and the evil vines held him down tightly and tightly. But he could hear Prian's voice, and everything smelled of the beautiful prince.

Brian bent over the boy, and whispered into a warm ear, so close that he touched it with his lips, "It's visiting time."

The boy breathed in deeply, whimpered and nestled his cheek against Brian's head. "Dream of...Prian."

Brian smiled thinly, kissed a pink earlobe so briefly that it never could've actually happened and whispered again. "Why are you strapped down? You want me to unfasten it?"

Justin's eyelids fluttered, and his whimpering got a little louder. The prince was really here! Here at his tower. "Christmas..." He tried to shift his head closer to where he could feel Prian's soft hair and the beautifully whispered words, close to his ear. The prince came to rescue him. Of course with the shiny...

"...silver sword."

"I don't think that will be necessary." The older man stroked through Justin's hair one last time and began to undo the cuffs. They worked like normal belts but were far too tight. The pale skin underneath looked strangulated and sore and Brian really wondered whom he had to kill in order to prevent this from ever happening again.

He rubbed the bruised skin, and smiled as Justin indolently opened his eyes, slowly trying to re-orientate himself.

"Sleep well?"

Justin turned to look at the prince and said nothing at all.

"Why were you strapped to the bed?"

Justin blinked. Not angry and not sad, but full of innocence with big blue eyes and long dark eyelashes.

Brian sighed and pointed at the bedside table. "I've brought your cup back. Do you want a drink?"

Justin stretched his head to see what the prince was pointing at, and an astonished small 'O' appeared on his lips. The red cup had magically returned to his nightstand.

"Of course prince water."

"Yeah. Maybe." Brian poured the noodles out of the cup and went in search of fresh water.

When he came back five minutes later with disgustingly cheap water and a nauseated facial expression, he found the blond boy sitting on his mattress holding broken noodles in his fingers.

"Of course. Certainly dead. The beautiful treasure jewellery."

The older man closed the door behind him and sat with Justin on the edge of the bed.

"Here, your water."

The boy looked up. "All butterflies."

"Hmm." Brian nodded. "Did you drop it?"

Had he? Justin looked at the noodles in his hand scrutinizing but couldn't remember.

"Of course. Prince treasure from Prian."

"Are you trying to make excuses now?" Brian raised an eyebrow.

"All right." Justin made big eyes. "First the toast then the necklace."

Brian nodded, smiling. "Indeed. Drink your water now, and then I'll repair this thing for you."

The boy peered critically into the offered drinking cup and sniffed.

"Prince water?"

"Try it." Brian took the broken pasta away and gave him the cup instead.

Testing, Justin stuck the tip of his tongue in it, smacked twice and then smiled at the prince happily.

"Nah. Of course puddle-water!"

Brian grinned proudly. He had trained the boy into a real water connoisseur. "Drink it anyway. You're thirsty."

"Yes." Justin took the plastic cup obediently with both hands, drank with large gulps, and watched the prince over the brim of the cup.

The older man took the pile of noodles and cord from the nightstand and tied the loose ends together. The broken noodles made their way into his jacket pocket.

Justin sighed contentedly as he finished and put his empty red cup back to its rightful place on the bedside table.

Brian held up the repaired necklace. "Here."

"Of course. " Justin glanced at it briefly before looking aside uninterestedly. "Six are missing."

"Six are missing? You've counted them?"

"Yeah."

"Okay." Brian put the necklace carefully around Justin's neck. "However, it still looks nice."

"Yes. Six are missing."

"I'll bring you six new ones next time."

"Yeah. On Christmas."

Brian grinned. "I think I can manage it a little sooner."

"Of course. Certainly on Thanks giving. Fried bird without feathers."

"And yams."

"Of course. Yams. Always on Friday."

Brian wrinkled his forehead and scratched his ear. "Am I the only one who finds our conversations always a little strange?"

Justin rocked softly back and forth, but said nothing.

Mister Kinney looked around the room for a moment. A full tray sat on the table. "You've eaten nothing for lunch."

Justin quietly counted the small stripes on the prince's tie while curling blond hair around his finger. "Twenty...twenty-seven."

"Justin." Brian touched him by the hand and waited for eye contact. "Your meal hasn't been touched. Weren't you hungry?"

The boy looked over to his table and rocked a little more. "Of course. Certainly under the pillow."

Brian wrinkled his forehead. "You want to put your food under the pillow?"

A broad sunshine smile quickly blossomed over Justin's pale face and he happily touched the prince's cheek. Brian made jokes with him. Of course the food would make big...

"...sauce stains on the bed!"

Brian was a little surprised by the boy's laughter, but didn't fight the innocent touch to his face.

"Funny, hu?"

"Yes. Funny Brian." Justin stroked the prince's cheek again time with clumsy fingers and then dropped his hands.

"Hmm. You want to eat now?"

"No." The blond pointed with his finger. "Of course first the book under the pillow."

"Well then go ahead. Where is it?"

Justin looked silently over to where male nurse Gold had thrown his fairytale book on the floor, next to his shelf. It was broken now. Wide open and all crinkled.

Brian walked over and bent down. "Why is it lying here?"

Justin rocked back and forth. "Of course. Of course no kissing."

Brian thumbed through the pages and smoothed out some of the wrinkles. He shut the book properly before putting it back on Justin's nightstand. "No kissing?"

Justin rocked some more, played with his long hair strands and looked at the floor.

"Justin." Brian gently lifted his chin up. "No kissing?"

"Of course. Not Justin."

"Not you?"

"Yeah."

"Why?"

"Of course. Certainly not Justin."

"Hmm. Why not?" Brian waited but got no answer. After a while he sighed and sat down again on Justin's bed. "Justin?"

"Yeah."

"Have you ever kissed anyone?"

"Yeah."

"Yes? Who?"

"Of course. Alice." He didn't like to think about that at all. It was not nice to kiss Alice. Alice was sticky and his chest was far too thick.

"Which Alice? Does she live here too?"

"Of course. In Wonderland." With the rabbit and the queen of hearts. Everybody knew that. Only the egg was...

"...fallen off the wall."

"Pff." Brian combed his hair in frustration. "Remember the strange conversations? We're drifting in that direction again, aren't we?"

"Yes."

"Do you even know what a kiss is?"

Did he? Yes, of course. He'd painted it. At Miss Eterson's.

He got up and walked, with awkward steps, to fetch his picture from the shelf. Shyly, he held it out for the prince.

"Hmm. Who's this?"

"Of course. Prian."

Brian pointed at one of the two drawn figures. "This is me?"

"Yes. Prian my prince."

"And this?" Brian pointed at the other figure, not sure if he really wanted to know the answer.

"Certainly the princess."

"Princess." Brian wrinkled his forehead.

"Justin in the tower." The boy pointed to the many yellow lines. "With long hair."

"Hh." Brian blinked as dots connected in his head. "You are Justin the princess?"

Justin batted his long eyelashes at the prince just like Miss Eterson.

"And you live in a tower?"

"One five two one nine Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA."

Brian looked at the picture, held it up for a closer inspection, and then pointed at it almost reproachfully. "And you and I... we kiss each other in this picture?"

Justin nodded. "With the mouth."

Yes, he'd already feared something like that. "You paint pictures where we kiss each other? Why?"

Justin looked uninterestedly aside and twisted the long blond strands behind his ear around his middle finger.

"Justin." Brian touched him on the cheek and waited for visual contact.

"Yeah."

"You want to kiss me?"

"Yeah."

"Kiss Brian?"

"Yeah Prian."

Brian took hold of the boys chin. "Justin."

"Yes."

"We can't kiss each other."

"Yeah."

"You can't even cross the street by yourself."

"Yes. Of course Prian says."

Brian smiled a little and brushed over Justin's soft lips with his thumb. "But your mouth is beautiful."

"Yeah." With a shy look the boy reached forward and did the same to Prian. "Beautiful mouth." With clumsy fingertips Justin pressed on the warm lips and tried to push one finger between them.

After a moment, Brian relented. It was damp and hot, and he could feel Prian's tongue. Without withdrawing his hand he looked nervously aside and whimpered. His fingers tickled and his belly, too. And his heart pounded fast and loud. The prince smelled so good and his eyes sparkled lovely like dark pebbles in water.

He began to rock slightly and knotted his free hand into blond strands of hair.

Brian watched Justin closely while letting his tongue circle once around the small fingertip, he then took the boy's hand away and kissed the knuckles.

Justin was still looking uneasily aside. He really would've preferred to...

"...kiss Prian."

Brian smiled and stroked Justin's neck. "No."

"Yeah."

"I have to go now."

"Yeah."

"You want me to tell the stupid troll outside to heat up your meal?"

"Yes. Of course always sleeps."

"I'll wake him up."

"Yeah."

"Promise to eat your lunch if it's warm again?"

Justin changed his viewing direction. "Of course Wednesday. Meat-loaf and mashed potatoes."

"Hmm. You like meat-loaf?"

The boy looked up to the ceiling and said nothing at all. Meat-loaf really was disgusting.

"What would you like to eat?"

"Of course. Certainly white beet and toast."

"You want to eat toast?"

"Yes. Toast from Prian."

"No fucking oatmeal with raisins?"

"Of course toast."

"Okay." Brian stood up. "Later you twat." Kissing his own finger, he touched it to the tip of Justin's nose and left the room to pay a little visit to the ward nurse on duty.

"Hey! Theodor Schmidt!"

Twenty minutes and a strategically planned bribery flirtation later, a new tray was brought to the blond patient in room 411.

On it were two slices of toast with cream cheese, one glass of milk, and a little piece of paper that Mister Kinney had put, with a wink, into male nurse Schmidt's pocket before leaving.

Prince food. For Justin from Prian.
...because meat loaf is disgusting. Of course.

Chapter 11 – Dream of Prian

...He went on farther, and in the great hall he saw the whole of the court lying asleep, and up by the throne lay the king and queen. He continued to go further and all was so quiet that a breath could be heard.

At last he came to the tower and opened the door to the little room where briar-rose was sleeping. There she lay, so beautiful that he could not turn his eyes away. He stooped down and gave her a kiss, but as soon as he kissed her, briar-rose opened her eyes and awoke looking at him quite sweetly...

Justin sat in front of his book for a long time, looking at the image.

There was Sleeping Beauty in a huge bed with a lot of pillows and the beautiful prince bending down to kiss her. On the mouth.

Justin touched his finger to the point where their lips met and then gently touched his own. They were soft and warm. Like Prian's mouth.

"Sleep Prian."

Justin crawled off his mattress and plodded over to the window.

"Of course. Later." The courtyard of the prince's castle was empty and no lights could be seen in the windows.

Prian maybe had driven to Harrisburg with the black car-vehicle?

"Beep-Beep."

Justin looked from left to right and couldn't see the fast car anywhere.

"Of course to Harrisburg."

"Hey Justin." On Wednesdays Blake had the late shift and made his rounds to ward 4 shortly after 6:00 pm.

“That necklace is pretty.” Blake smiled as he pointed to the noodles around Justin’s neck and the boy smiled back proudly.

“Of course the treasure jewelry.”

“Have you done handicrafts at Miss Peterson's?”

Justin made an angry face and turned his head away. Of course Miss Eterson could never make prince treasure!

“Justin, you have to take it off for the night, okay?”

“No.”

“Yes. You can't breathe properly with the necklace around your neck.”

Justin was stubborn and didn't want to look at Plake, but he breathed three times in and out, testing.

“You can put it with your book under the pillow, okay? Then nobody can take it.”

Justin thought about it for a moment and let Plake take the jewelry without resistance. Quickly he put a hand with it under his pillow.

Blake smiled and covered Justin's small body with the blanket. “Mm. Your pajama smells good.”

Justin beamed blissfully and sniffed at his sleeve. Yes, everything smelled of Prian and the wonderful prince's castle.

“Sleep well frog.” The male nurse stroked through Justin's hair, turned off the light and left the room.

Not more than 10 minutes later, the patient in 411 slept soundly with the smell of his prince in his nose and his fingers securely on his noodle necklace.

Until evening hit, Brian's mood was down to a frosty point zero. Everyone at the office was simply incompetent, the guy at the drugstore clearly had a deficient in intelligence, and Emmett had ruined his favorite Lacoste Shirt by boiling the laundry.

Mister Kinney had wanted to ram his beloved jeep into a concrete wall before the end of the night if it weren't for the 32 messages from Mikey on his answering machine begging, 'Don't you want to change your mind and please, please, please come with us?'

So he got dressed after a long shower in his hottest club fashion, forgone the use of a comb to achieve the ultimate freshly fucked look, and shortly after 10:00 pm sat behind the wheel of his car on his way to Pittsburgh's number one gay club for an extensively round of frustration and degradation in the backroom.

And even though it was quite early, the dance floor was well attended and the climatic conditions quite to his liking - muggy, hot and smoky with a sweet scent of illegal herbs from all over the beautiful world.

Target oriented, he shoved himself through the dancing masses in the direction of the bar, ordered a glass of something that contained a high percentage from the Irish motherland and relaxed against the bar to look out for his first prey. Preferably small, blond and surrounded by a touch of innocence. He instantly took another big gulp while refusing to think of any possible motivations for such a specific type.

“Brian!” A bright smiling Michael came running in his direction and happily hugged his friend with a wet kiss on the lips. “I thought you couldn't make it!”

“Change of plans.” Brian grumbled against the rim of his glass and quickly drank what little was left in it as a petite blond twink with a belly shirt danced in his irritated line of sight.

“Hey Brian.” Ben stood close behind his partner. “The next round is on me. You want the same again?”

“Double.” Coughed Brian. He averted his gaze as his prey twinkie sent a big sunny smile across the room and wondered why in the hell had he thought of his last pasta plate at his favorite Italian restaurant.

“Brian.” Mikey worriedly clapped his friend on the back. “What’s wrong? Are you sick or something?”

“Bad night.” Assured Mister Kinney quickly and excused himself for a short visit to the men’s room and a subsequent excursion to the backroom to release a little pressure.

The prince climbed back on his horse and sadly looked at the princess. “I can’t kiss you my beautiful Justin. You can’t even cross the street alone.” And he pulled at the red reins, clicked his tongue and rode away without looking back. He left the poor princess all alone on the side of the black road as she called for him, crying as all the butterflies on her necklace flew away.

Justin whimpered in his sleep and moved under his blanket in unease until he opened his eyes in confusion sometime later. He blinked with fear and looked around the dark room as he lay in bed with the soft pillow and red cup that stood on the nightstand. He wasn’t on the street.

Nevertheless, the prince had rode away with his white horse and all the butterflies had left the cord, flying up high to the clouds.

Justin felt so sad. His tummy really hurt because of it.

Clumsily, he wiped with the back of his hand over his damp eyes and sat up.

“Plake.”

Of course Plake didn’t come. He never came when it was dark. But Justin really wished this time the door would open so that Plake could perform real magic with the alarm clock and it wouldn’t be night any more. He really wanted to...

“... stop sleeping.”

He sniffled and wiped his eyes again. Then grabbed under the pillow to feel for his book. It was still there. He took it out with the thin wool string with knotted noodles.

Justin looked at the necklace for a moment and a little awkwardly, put it around his neck.

“Of course. Six are missing.” Had they flown away? No. They had died and now were in Prian’s jacket. “Of course six new ones at Thanksgiving.” He scratched his forehead. “Many yams.”

He moved a little on his mattress, stretched his legs under the blanket and placed the fairy tale book on his lap. It was heavy and smelled good when it was opened.

Justin turned a few pages and stroked over a few flattened folds and bends. “Certainly not Plake.”

On page sixteen was a huge tower and the beautiful prince who looked up to it. Justin smiled and stroked gently with one finger over Prian’s brown hair. Even in the book it was soft.

He turned a few more pages. Past the cat with the big boots and the bad giant. He turned many and stopped when he looked at the picture of Sleeping Beauty. The longer he looked at it, the more his tummy pinched. He even got mad and laid his hand over the painting where the prince awakens Sleeping Beauty with a kiss. Slowly he took his fingers away again and looked at it after all. It just was so beautiful and he really wished he could be Sleeping Beauty. Then the prince would kiss him, too.

But it couldn't happen. Prian had explained it to him.

"No." He said in an exact copy of Brian's voice and climbed clumsily off of his bed.

"Of course. You can't cross the street ... " With plodding steps we walked over to the window.

".... street alone. Prian says."

He pressed his nose against the cold pane and breathed with his open mouth against the glass while looking down.

It was dark and all the lights in the castle were off.

"Of course. Sleep Prian."

He thought of the big pillows in the prince's bed and then of the white cat fur carpet directly in front of it. He sighed a little and touched the moist window pane with his tongue. The castle was so beautiful and big. He really wanted to see Prian and go there for...

"... a visit."

He moved his nose from the pane, rubbed it because now it was all cold, before he turned around to leave the room with small steps.

"Exactly. Cross the street alone. Of course a kiss."

The light in the corridor was bright and he blinked a few times, until his eyes worked again properly. Then he padded to the nurses room and stopped in front of it.

"Plake." Of course he had to tell Plake before he went for a walk. "Plake."

Justin stood there in front of the pane for a while and rocked while turning his blond strands around his finger, but Plake didn't come. "Of course. Sleeps, sleeps."

So the boy plodded along to the exit, through the glass door, down the cold stairs and with lot of effort through the big entrance door.

It was cold outside and he looked up, crinkled his nose and sniffed. It smelled like moon but he couldn't see one. "Of course. Certainly fell into the lake."

With his gaze to the side, he walked further, through the gateway and the heavy iron gate, to the sidewalk where the stones had small slits.

He saw the black street and looked straight ahead.

"Have to look if..."

Then his gaze went from left to right.

Brian ran a hand through his hair, looked around the empty street and watched the boy in blue pajamas with a mixture of frustration and pride. "You wanted to cross the street?"

"Yeah." Justin turned his gaze further away from the beautiful prince. He certainly was very angry.

"Yeah? Why haven't you?"

Justin began to count the peas which he'd eaten last Friday with his fried bird. "Five... fifteen."

"Justin." Brian stretched out his hand to gently put it on Justin's warm neck. "You haven't crossed the street because I've told you you're not allowed without permission. Right?"

The boy stopped twisting his hair. He liked Prian's hand on his neck. It was so soft and big and strong.

"Right?" Brian stepped closer and tried to look the blond in the eyes.

Justin looked uninvolved past the prince. "Yeah. Only if... if Prian says."

Brian smiled casually, but stopped immediately as he realized it. Instead he stroked with two fingers over the soft deepening at Justin's neck and played with the thin necklace string. "Good boy."

"Yeah." Justin rocked a little, but nestled into Prian's touch. "Justin."

This time the older one didn't fight the smile. "Yeah. Justin is a good boy. Never cross the street without permission."

"Yeah. Very angry."

Brian sighed and closed his eyes. "Yeah. Very angry."

He took his fingers away from Justin's neck as he opened his eyes again. "Come on. Go back inside. It's cold and you're tired."

Justin didn't say anything and Brian grabbed him by the arm and guided him a few steps to the huge iron gate of the institution.

As he saw the doors, the boy went stiff and began to wail. Defiant and furious.

"Justin. Come on, I'll bring you back to your room."

"No." With surprising strength Justin broke free and plodded back to the sidewalk. But not one step further.

Brian sighed deeply and rubbed both hands over his face. He was tired, had way too much alcohol in his system and wasn't really in the mood for another power struggle of this kind. "Justin. You have to go back to your room."

"No." Justin rocked back and forth and tucked a long blond strand behind his ear.

"Yes you have to." Brian walked over to the kid and wanted to grab his shoulder, but the boy jerked and stepped a little further away.

"No."

For a moment Mister Kinney played with the thought to go over to the other side of the street to his luxurious mansion, in his huge, warm bed, and back to his uncomplicated life. Free of all kinds of responsibilities for other people.

But he didn't, despite the fact that he really couldn't think of one good reason why not.

...Maybe because he had a luxurious mansion, with a huge bed, in an uncomplicated life and really could understand why Justin wasn't in the mood to get back to his sterile hospital room, with all the medication and the sad life that was reality for him.

"Hey." He walked two steps closer to the boy, but didn't dare to touch him. "Justin, look at me."

It took a while until Justin raised his head to look at Brian. As he did, his eyes weren't blank and unfocused, but frustrated and enraged and so misunderstood. "No."

"You don't want to go back to your room?"

"No."

"Where do you want to go then? It's the middle of the night Justin."

Justin couldn't hold the visual contact to Prian's face any longer and so he looked over to the other side of the street. To the beautiful huge prince castle.

Brian also looked over to his house and then back to Justin. "You can't go with me. It's night."

Justin's tummy tightened and his heart pounded loudly. He could hear it in his head.

He wouldn't go back to the tower and he was angry that Plake hadn't come to do the magic with his alarm clock. He was angry that it wasn't Christmas yet. He was angry that he couldn't cross the street over to Prian's castle, where he could get toast, cat fur and butterflies in boxes.

He was angry that he wasn't Sleeping Beauty and that the prince would never kiss him.

Brian looked at the boy for a long time and got a strange feeling in his stomach as he noticed clear anger in the blue eyes. Anger and a thin film of wetness which grew more and more, until one drop ran over a pale cheek and silently fell onto the dark blue pajamas.

He didn't know what to say but started anyway. "Justin you simply can't-"

"Dream of Prian!" Justin looked directly at the prince as he said it and his voice sounded defiant and almost begging, like Gus sounded when he wanted to assure that he definitely had not thrown the French paper weight on the floor.

Brian stared at him perplexed because at this moment Justin didn't look like an innocent boy with his fairy tale book under the pillow. Instead, he looked like a young man who knew exactly what he wanted but unfortunately nobody seemed to understand his language. Which wasn't the whole truth because Brian understood him perfectly.

"What was the dream about?"

Justin held his gaze to Prian, but didn't say one word.

"You dreamed of me? Was it a good dream?"

Justin looked away.

“Were you in the dream, too? Were we together?”

The boy rocked gently back and forth and sniffed. “Leave me all alone.”

“Leave you alone? Why?”

The boy seemed to think about it for a moment. His gaze was blank and he curled his middle finger in blond hair, before saying something. “Of course. No kiss.”

Brian wasn't shocked to hear that. He couldn't think of anything else since he left the boys' room hours ago, and even a whole backroom full of blond tricks couldn't kill this little burning need.

Nevertheless, it was an urge that had to remain unfulfilled.

“No.” He stepped closer to the boy, bent a little to create the same height and touched his large hand to Justin's cheek. “Not on the mouth.”

Justin looked in the prince's brown eyes and nestled his face in the large palm. He was so close to Prian that he could smell his warm skin. Quickly, he closed his eyes tightly, exactly like Sleeping Beauty did, so that Prian had to kiss him awake too.

A small smile crept over Brian's lips as the boy squeezed his eyes together. With a gentle thumb he stroked over Justin's high cheekbone.

The kid was hot. Way too hot. So much so, that his decision wasn't really hard to make. He bent down for a gentle kiss on Justin's forehead. Then one at Justin's left temple and a little lower on Justin's cheek. He put his arm around the boys waist, pulled him closer and pressed his nose in Justin's neck to inhale deeply.

God, the boy was so soft and warm and smelled so wonderful. He took another deep breath, kissed behind Justin's earlobe and then just stopped thinking as he took the small face in a secure hold and closed his eyes for a kiss on these perfectly curved raspberry lips.

He felt the boy grow stiff for a moment and heard his little whimpering. Out of shock or just gratitude. He didn't know and didn't care as he felt Justin's shy hand on the front of his shirt. Five small fingers searching for a hold and trying to come closer somehow.

Brian simply stood there, mouth to mouth with the boy, so close. So close that he could feel the beating of Justin's heart against his chest.

Justin thought his tummy would explode. Everything tickled and twinkled. He could feel all the butterflies deep within his belly, and they fluttered and wanted to fly high up to the dark sky. He wanted it too.

His feet were all jittery and he put them on top of each other for a moment and then firmly on the ground again because suddenly they were soft like the pillow in his bed.

Prian smelled so good and his lips were like gentle winds on his skin. First on his forehead, then on his face and then it tickled somewhere behind his ear.

Justin whimpered and started to feel dizzy, as the prince held his head tight with both hands and really kissed him. On the mouth, like a prince certainly did to Snow White and Sleeping Beauty but never with Rapunzel.

It felt weird and he whimpered again. He noticed that he had to breathe hard and that his heart beat louder and louder, but he stopped breathing completely because he was so excited and didn't want the prince to ever stop.

With one hand he grabbed for Prian's beautiful t-shirt, held on to it and then made a noise like a baby cat, as he stuck out his tongue a little.

Brian almost lost his secure foothold, as he heard the boy mewl like a starving kitten and at the same time felt a shy tongue against his lips. Wet, warm and so fucking sweet that he had to twist his arm like a vise around Justin's small waist, nearly pushing him off the feet.

He heard himself moan and knew he had no chance to fight against the hardness in his pants. He threaded his fingers into blond hair and tilted his head, before carefully meeting the little innocent tongue on his lips with his own.

Justin pulled back with shock for a moment, but then huffed a shuddering breath against Prian's cheek, stepped whimpering on his tiptoes and sighed quietly as he could feel the warm tip of the prince's tongue somewhere in his mouth.

It wasn't a real kiss. Not a kiss like Brian would give normally. It was nothing than cautious touching and shy fumbling, surprised wincing and whimpering in pure amazement, but maybe it was just the mixture of all this that brought Brian to the edge of madness. He had to fight really hard not to lose his control and showing the boy all the things that lie far behind the borders of fairyland.

With a deep inhale near the boy's skin and a long kiss on closed lips he pulled back, rubbed his thumbs over Justin's high cheekbones and held his eyes closed just a little longer before he even dared to trust himself again.

He smiled to some extent at what he saw the second he opened them.

Tousled blond hair, a numb gaze out of blue eyes, blushed cheeks and a nervous hand on dark blue pajama pants.

"Do you have to use the bathroom?"

Did he? Justin looked down at himself and pressed the hardness between his legs through the thin flannel material. He looked up to Prian in confusion and shook his head.

Brian smiled and stroked the soft blond hair. "That doesn't happen when you kiss this Alice, hmm?"

The boy looked again at his trousers. "No."

Brian laughed quietly and pulled Justin's chin up with two fingers. "We've kissed."

"Yeah." Justin rocked gently back and forth. "Kiss Prian."

"Yeah. Was it good?"

Justin touched the prince's mouth with three clumsy fingertips while looking at the dark sky. "Yeah."

Brian kissed the fingers and then pulled them away. "It was a good night kiss. That means that you have to go to bed now."

"Yeah. Of course in the castle."

"No. Of course in your room."

“Certainly my toothbrush. Justin Taylor.”

Brian shook his head. The kid wasn't stupid and definitely stubborn. “I'll watch over it until you visit me the next time. But not today. Today you go to your room.”

Justin looked at the ground, ignored the prince and counted the slits in the stones while he gently rocked back and forth. “Seven... seven, eight, nine.”

Brian skeptically raised his left eyebrow. “You think this is clever, don't you?”

“Yeah. Clever Justin.”

“Hmm. Think again.” The older man took Justin's hand and walked with him through the large gate, to the entrance of the building.

Justin didn't want to and tried to free himself out of Brian's grip.

Brian held him securely and went further. “You don't like that?” He squeezed Justin's hand to illustrate. “Holding hands?”

“Yeah.” Justin held his hand still. “With Prian.”

Brian stroked with his thumb over Justin's knuckles. “With Brian. Until we're up there. Then you go to bed, all right?”

“All right. Up in the tower.”

Brian pushed the heavy door open and guided the boy quietly inside. “How many stairs until the top?”

“Of course... five times. Five times eight... forty eight.” Justin padded with bare feet behind Prian, up the stairs. He really liked how it felt to hold hands with the prince. “Certainly two hundred... two hundred forty.”

“Two hundred forty stairs until we're up there?”

“Yeah. Of course two hundred forty.”

“Hmm.” Brian used his tired brain for short multiplication and squeezed Justin's hand in reward. “Good boy.”

“Yeah. Justin.”

“Hmm. How old are you anyway?”

The boy counted the stairs on the forth step sector. “Two.. thirty two.”

“Justin.” Brian gently tugged at Justin's hand.

“Yeah.”

“How old are you? How many years?”

“Justin Taylor. Certainly eighteen.”

“Certainly eighteen?” Brian skeptically looked over his shoulder. “Are you sure?”

“Yeah. Certainly eighteen.”

“Hh.” Brian ignored the small voice in his head that lectured him about youth security. “That is young.”

“Yeah. Certainly not a child. Not in Harrisburg anymore.”

“You moved to Pittsburgh because you weren't a child anymore?”

“Yeah. Justin now is eighteen years... years old.”

Brian pulled the boy up the last stair and looked cautious through the glass door into the station. It was bright, but no one was to be seen. He moved Justin in to the dark corner beside the door and spoke quietly. “You go to bed now, okay?”

“Yeah. With Prian.”

“No.” Brian grinned. “My bed is-”

“Of course in the castle.”

Brian blinked at the boy with irritation. “No, in my house and I hate it when other people finish my sentences, understood?”

“Yeah.” Justin looked up at the badly plastered ceiling.

“Good. Now go in there and look out of your window. You can wave me goodbye.”

“Yeah. Prian wave.”

“No. Pr- Brian never waves. Justin can wave.” Mister Kinney tried to rescue his male honor and gave the boy a quick peck on the forehead. “Now, go to your room or you won't see me when I'm standing on the street.”

“Yeah.”

Brian held the ward door open for Justin, looked after him for a moment and than rushed down through the dark staircase to position himself in the gateway.

Justin padded with small steps along the bright corridor, pushed the handle of his door and walked eight and a half steps to his small window.

He stood close to it, laid his hands on the pane and pushed his nose against the cold glass.

“Ha!” He laughed happily because the beautiful prince really stood on the street. Just like that, under a streetlamp without a horse or a silver sword, but with pretty clothes and a smile only for Justin.

Justin smiled back, waved and pushed the tip of his nose a little closer to the pane as Prian kissed his palm and blew until the wonderful prince's kiss flew all the way up to the tower and through the small slid by the window.

Justin felt so happy but couldn't fight the sadness as Prian turned around and walked away, over the street and into his castle.

"Sleep Prian." He spoke against the fogged windowpane and touched the moist glass with his tongue before he plodded to bed with bare feet and crawled clumsily under the blanket. With butterfly noodles around his neck and the prince's taste on his lips.

"Dream of Prian."

Chapter 12 – Two on the wall

Today Miss Eterson painted pictures with the patients of station 2, and nurse Sherman said it would be fun to play in the community room and everyone would be happy if Justin would come too to play Bingo, Scrabble and the game with the money.

Justin had only looked to the side pretending not to hear nurse Sherman. He hated the Saturday afternoon game fun and wasn't in the mood to see all the other patients. They always were too loud and chattered and chattered. Justin didn't like too many words.

He preferred to sit at the window in his tower and look outside at the prince's huge castle because today everything was so exciting there.

The servant had come with his feather handle in a backpack and a huge basket in his hand. A basket like Little Red Riding Hood had, but without the green bottle. Instead there were flowers, white milk and a large loaf of bread.

"Of course. Toast from Prian. Certainly with milk." Justin pressed his nose flat against the pane as the servant disappeared with the basket inside the castle.

It took a little while but after ten minutes three windows opened. Every time the servant opened one, he looked through it and sniffed the good air.

Justin laughed. The servant liked the smell of air as much as he did!

"Pull, pull." He rattled a little at the handle to open his own window. Then stuck his head outside crinkling his nose. Hmm. Today there was no rain and it also wasn't cold. It was...

"... of course dazzling weather." He said in the same voice as the man with the silver tray did on TV all the time.

"Hey frog." Blake opened the door, but stayed outside in the hallway. He wore civil clothes – jeans, a white shirt, a gym bag over his shoulder and sunglasses in his hand. "I'm going home. Do you want to say goodbye?"

"Yes Plake." Justin remained still at the window and blinked up into the bright sun. It was round like the shiny gold ball which the frog had...

"... in the well."

Blake smiled friendly. "No I go rollerblading. The weather is pretty good today."

"Yeah." Justin rubbed his eyes. They didn't feel that well and flickered funny. With little red and blue flying dots.

Blake put his sunglasses on his nose and changed his gym bag to the other shoulder. "You could go outside too and take a walk in the park."

"Yeah." The flickering dots made Justin's head all dizzy. He would've preferred to not...

"... look out of the window."

"Look out of the window again later. Now you can go for a walk in the park."

"Yeah. Of course funny noises." Justin really didn't like the way stones.

Blake waved. "See you tomorrow frog. I told the nurse that you wanted to go outside."

"Yeah." The boy looked to the door as Plake closed it. Then he blinked heavy a few times because the colored dots just wouldn't go away. Now they also flew over his bed and they were even at the table and on the shelf.

"Hhh." He sighed and put his hands on his hips. Of course it would take some time until he could catch them all.

He scratched his forehead and rubbed his ear with two fingers. Hmm. Maybe he could get some help from...

"... Cinderella?"

Brian really hated Saturday afternoons. Or at least all Saturday afternoons Lindsay had to work and put a hyperactive four year old in front of his door.

"You want what?!" He almost couldn't believe his ears and gave his son a totally disgusted look as he grabbed for the latest issue of Mens Health.

"I want to go for a walk!" The boy bounced with joy in a small circle on the expensive hardwood floor. "We can collect stones!"

Brian frowned in deep skepticism. "What good would that do?!"

"We could paint them!" Gus jumped a little higher. "With color!"

"Pfft. Yeah sure." Mister Kinney had heard enough and buried his face in the magazine for cover. "Why don't you go and watch TV?"

"Mom said I'm not allowed to watch TV in the afternoon." Gus was slowly running out of steam, but nevertheless jumped along. "Only in the morning and when she's really tired."

"Hmm." Brian turned the pages until he stumbled upon an article about brand new ab training. "Well, then read a book."

Gus breathed heavy and had to try really hard to jump 20 centimeters one more time. "I only can read the large G and the M like Mommy."

"Hff." Brian moved the magazine down because the steady jumping really got on his nerves. "What do you want to do then?"

"Go for a walk. Collect stones."

A bright artificial smile appeared on Mister Kinney's face. "Why don't you go in the garden and start? I'll meet you later."

"Okay."

The boy immediately jumped in the direction of the exit and Brian leaned back and relaxed as the entrance door closed and nothing but complete silence pleased his ears.

"Justin?" Nurse Sherman touched the boy gently on his arm as her pager beeped three times. "Would you like to stay outside a little longer?"

Justin turned his head in the other direction because he would never speak with male nurses who had big chests and weren't called Plake.

"I have to go back to the ward. If you don't feel like walking here any more, simply come back inside, okay?" With a friendly smile, the nurse walked away and Justin remained completely still until she disappeared from his field of vision. He then looked contently from left to right, took his book tightly into his arms and walked with little steps over the pebble-way, careful not to make too much noise.

A crooked piece, a straight one, crooked again and crooked once more, and then he stood in front of the many bars and sticks and could see the big castle from behind. With the pear tree, the well with blue water and the big, soft meadow.

A quite ticklish feeling engulfed his belly and he sighed before beginning to rock softly, while holding his book a bit more tightly to his chest.

He could smell the good white beet, the silver sword and the frog water all the way from where he was standing. He really would've preferred to go...

"...across the street."

Awkwardly, he lifted one foot over the hip-high fence, stayed in this position for a moment and then heaved his other leg over it.

"Of course for a visit."

With little steps and his book tightly in his arms he toddled over the pavement up to the roadside and stopped. He looked to the left and to the right and remembered he had to look forward too.

"Hh!" He was given a horrible fright because in front of the prince's castle he saw a very little man.

"Of course. Certainly the dwarf."

"Hello!" Gus grinned happily and climbed on the low stone wall which hedged the Kinney property. "I'm waiting for my daddy!" He called explanatorily across the street to the strange fair haired boy. "We're going to collect stones and paint them with color!"

Justin looked nervously to the side and bobbed up and down while twisting a thick strand of hair around his finger.

"Of course seven. Seven dwarves... six are missing." Perhaps the other dwarves were still in the mine?

Gus looked at the odd boy thoughtfully for a moment and simply decided to talk a bit louder. "I am already four, and you?"

Justin felt very uncomfortable. The dwarf talked and talked, but of course dwarves were never in the beautiful castle. Only behind the...

"...seven, seven mountains."

"Hmm." Gus said with understanding. "The kid who lives next to my house is already seven too. Of course you have to go to school then."

Justin looked up to the clouds and then over to the other side of the street. The dwarf had no cap and no beard.

"You can come over here to play with me till my daddy comes." Gus suggested generously.

Could he? Justin looked back where the big tower stood and then forward at the black street.

"Of course. Of course never cross the street without permission."

Gus climbed from the wall and hopped along the pavement. "You can come now. There is no car."

Justin wasn't sure whether the dwarf really was right or not but he wanted to play at the castle and see the golden ball in the well. So he made a careful step forwards onto the asphalt. It worked well and he tried it once again. After four steps he was in the middle of the street and needed only seven more steps to get to the castle and directly in front of the dwarf.

"You walk funny!" Gus giggled and ran in the direction of the courtyard. "Come with me! You can help collect stones!"

Brian raised his head in irritation from a really interesting article about the prevention of impotence. He could hear his sons excited cackling in the garden. The boy didn't talk again to his invisible friend Izzy, the pink guinea pig, did he?!

Slightly concerned, he rose from his place on the sofa and went over to the terrace doors, searching out into the mirrored pane.

What he found had little similarity to an invisible pink gnawer. No, it was rather slender, blond, had a noodle necklace around the neck and sniffed interestedly at the water in the swimming pool. While Sonny Boy bounced right beside like a doped up kangaroo, up and down.

"What he fuck..." Immediately he pulled the terrace door open and trudged quickly over the lawn.

"Daddy!" Gus smiled broadly and ran cheerfully to his father. "Justin and I are looking for stones and the frog!"

"Justin!" Brian ignored the boy and marched furiously towards Justin. "How'd you get here?"

"Of course." Justin padded two steps to the left and leaned closer over the pool. "The shiny gold... gold ball."

"Hey!" The older man grabbed his unwelcome visitor tightly by the arm and drew him in an upright position. "You walked alone over the damned street again, didn't you?"

"Hh!" Something stung at his arm and the prince was terribly loud and held him tighter and tighter. "Aah!"

"Daddy!" Gus stood close to Justin and looked up frightened at his father. "We only wanted to play!"

Brian shouted and pointed at the terrace door without even looking at his son. "Go into the house Gus!"

Immediately the boy's dark eyes filled with tears, but one look into his outraged fathers face clearly showed that he better obey. Upset and frustrated, he ran away, turned around three times, and finally disappeared in the house.

Justin pressed the old fairytale book close to his chest and, whimpering, tried to escape the prince's rough grip.

Brian shoved him away. "Go home, Justin! You had no permission to come here!" He left the boy wailing at the edge of the pool basin, went quickly into the house and pulled the mirrored door shut with a loud bang.

Justin's heart pounded fast and his head buzzed. His arm was hurting and he didn't know what direction he should go. He walked a couple of steps to where the castle stood and then turned to the left in confusion before he stopped and looked up into the sky. The prince was angry and he didn't know where the dwarf had gone and why Plake had glasses today, although he certainly wasn't the grandmother.

He really would've preferred to go to...

"... Harrisburg."

Brian lit a cigarette and threw the lighter furiously onto his coffee table before he slumped against the sofa and inhaled deeply. Fuck, he really had enough of this bullshit! Who the hell did people think he actually was? A fucking babysitter? He had never been good at taking care of other people and everybody knew that damn well!

Gus appeared beside the armrest of the couch and looked at his father; sulking. "We only wanted to play."

Brian took a drag of his cigarette and opened his mouth to say something but only blew smoke out, deciding to ignore his son's sad face.

Gus waited a moment and received no reaction. Finally, he stomped away and pressed his little nose flat against the terrace door.

Brian turned his head slowly after three more drags. First he looked at his son, then out of the pane. Justin still was there. Rocking back and forth while he stood in the middle of the lawn and curled blond hair around his finger. He walked around for a couple of small steps as if he was confused, said something to himself and stopped again to rub his upper arm.

Brian looked away and inhaled his Marlboro deeply. Damn shit, why didn't everyone simply leave him the fuck alone...

Ten minutes later the cigarette lay stubbed out in a sinfully expensive crystal ashtray and Gus crawled on the sofa, curling up next to his daddy.

Irritated, Brian looked quickly aside and ignored the unpleasant burning in his stomach. But after a moment he put his hand carefully on Gus' head and stroked the dark hair.

"You don't like Justin?"

Brian really didn't want to speak and hated how cold his voice sounded as he did.

"Where do you know his name from?"

"We introduced each other." The answer came in the deepest implicitness and Brian ventured a small peek down at his child.

"Mummy says I can't play with people I don't know."

Brian played with the small, soft strand behind Gus' ear and looked away again. "She's right. Why didn't you call for me when a stranger came into the garden? Justin is not norm-... he's not well."

Gus sat up and looked at his father. "I invited him to play with me and took very good care of him."

"You invited him?"

Gus nodded. "He is not allowed to cross the street alone but I looked to the left and to the right for him. There was no car."

"Th!" Brian shook his head and huffed a short laugh. Damned brats. One like the other.

"Can Justin come back again now? We weren't finished playing yet."

Brian wrinkled his forehead and looked at his son scrutinizing. "Justin has gone?"

The boy nodded. "He is already seven but I can climb over the wall better than he can."

"Fuck." Brian ran a hand through his hair and lifted Gus off of his lap.

"Stay here." He told his son and hurried out of the door.

Quickly, he jogged over the lawn, around the house and finally found the blond boy on the sidewalk in front of the court entry.

He stopped.

"Justin."

Justin looked at the ground and immediately plodded away to the edge of the street, but not one step onto the black asphalt.

"Justin." Brian followed him slowly. "Can you stop, please?"

"Of course." Justin rubbed his arm and moved his book protectively up to his chin. "Never cross the street. Very angry."

Brian sighed, stopped and rubbed his neck. "Do you want to go across the street?"

"Certainly they are seven." Justin looked up into the sky and marched further with small steps. "Always seven dwarves, never only one."

"Justin." Although the distance between them got bigger, Brian didn't raise his voice. "Where are you going?"

After another two steps, Justin stopped. He stood with his back to Brian and rocked.

"Nine...nineteen." There were so many clouds in the sky now and one was directly in front of the bright ball-sun.

"You want to..." Brian pinched his nose and looked irresolutely aside. "You want me to take you home?"

The boy scratched his forehead as two clouds, which he had counted already, floated against each other and became a very big one. "Of course. This is all wrong."

Mister Kinney looked up to the sky too, but didn't find clouds particularly interesting and looked quickly away again and then slightly frustrated at the boy.

"Justin. Don't you want to talk to me?"

"No." The younger one rubbed his arm and walked a couple of steps further away.

Brian followed him. "Can you at least look at me then?"

"No." Justin looked uninterestedly aside and crinkled up his nose.

"Why not?"

Justin picked at his hair ends and said nothing at all.

"Justin."

"Yeah."

"Turn around."

With three small clumsy steps, Justin turned around; his book tightly in his arms and his gaze fell uneasily to the side.

Brian's hard features softened and a little smile could be recognized on his lips. "Thank you."

"Yeah." Justin rocked back and forth nervously. "Certainly always bites."

"Bites?"

"Yes, always."

"Who bites always?"

"Of course." The boy changed his line of sight up to the sky. "Brian bites Justin Taylor."

Brian wrinkled his forehead. "I bit you?"

"Certainly." Justin toddled away. "Again, again."

"Justin!" Brian held the boy firm by the arm. "Stop!"

"Ah! Oh no." Justin looked at the large hand that held him tight by the arm and immediately began to pull at his hair. "Of course. Not alone. Certainly very angry."

"What?" Brian tried to turn the kid around to create visual contact. "Cut it out!"

The blond squinted his eyes and started to scream disturbingly loud with five fingers clenched on his book and the others tangled in his hair.

"Fuck!" Brian took his hands away, kicked the low wall in front of his property in frustration and sat down on it all the while cursing.

In the next two minutes he did nothing but simply sat there, head buried in his hands, and listening to Justin's shouting.

In the third minute the boy gradually grew quieter.

In the fourth one, he only swayed softly back and forth and mumbled to himself.

"Not without permission. Brian says."

Brian turned his look towards Justin's feet, while he played with one long blade of grass that grew out between the stones of the old wall. "You have shoes on today."

Justin didn't stop rocking, but looked down to his shoes.

The blade of grass tore off and was wound around a long middle finger. "They look fucking old."

Did they? Justin was quiet now and stood almost completely still with an attentive look towards his feet. He wiggled his toes in his shoes. They were really very old. Almost...

"...seven hundred days."

"Hmm." Brian threw the grass away. "Who buys new shoes for you?"

"Yeah." Justin looked up to the sky. There were new clouds.

"Justin?"

"Yeah."

"I've hurt you?"

Justin wrinkled his nose and squinted his eyes a little. It was very bright in the sky.

"Justin. Look at me."

"Yeah." It took almost a complete minute till the boy looked in the direction of the prince. As he did he began to giggle. Brian sat on the wall exactly like the egg in wonderland!

"What's so funny?"

"Of course...falls off the wall."

"You think so, huh?" Mister Kinney raised a skeptical eyebrow and tapped next to him on the brittle stone. "Come here."

"No." Justin looked away quickly. Of course one could...

"...not sit there."

"Why not? Come here."

"Of course no chair."

"You can sit on walls too." Brian extended his hand. "Come here."

"Yeah." The boy clumsily took hold of Brian's fingers.

"Well, come on." Brian drew the boy firmly to him until Justin finally sat a little stiffly next to him on the wall.

"Of course." Fidgety, Justin rocked back and forth while peering anxious at the 30 inch depth. "Certainly falls down. One thousand shards."

Brian grinned, extended his long legs onto the pavement and patted his trousers in search for his cigarettes. He found nothing. "Why don't you sit still then?"

"Of course." Justin looked nervously aside and clung to his book. "Always on the ground. All broken."

"Justin." Brian put a broad hand on Justin's thin thigh. "You will not fall okay? The damned thing isn't even 2 feet high."

The boy looked skeptically down where his seven hundred day old shoes stood on the ground and wiggled his toes in them.

"Yeah."

"Yes?"

"Yeah." Justin looked at the prince with worried blue eyes. "Certainly lots of shards."

Brian stared back, expressionless into a childlike face. After a moment, he smiled slightly, raised one eyebrow and put his left arm slowly but securely around Justin's shoulders.

Justin froze and held his breath.

Brian pulled him closer anyway and leaned his head carefully against soft blond hair. Temple to temple. "Better now?"

The boy did not dare to blink. But he liked that the prince was beside him. Brian held him...

"...tighter and tighter."

The older man nodded and stroked with gentle fingers over Justin's shoulder and down a thin upper arm.

"Sorry is bullshit." He really didn't say it very loud and his hand remained on the place where he had grasped a little too roughly earlier. "But I promise no more biting, okay?"

"Yeah."

"Hmm." Brian put his legs loosely on top of each other and really wished he had a cigarette. "When is dinner time?"

"Yes." Justin's eyes wandered unfocused aside. "Of course at six. Tuna and cheese."

"Tuna and cheese?" Brian sat up straight again and looked at the boy. "You like it?"

"Five." Justin looked up into the sky and counted all clouds which were grey. "Six, seven."

The older man stood up and stretched his hand out for Justin. "You like Thai food?"

The boy took Brian's fingers, got up awkwardly and let himself be led in the direction of the court entry. "Yes. Toast from Brian"

"Not toast. Kong-Pow chicken."

"Yes. Of course with toast."

"No." Brian opened the door. "Of course with spicy bean curd."

Justin loved the feeling of the big hand around his wrist and held his book tightly in his arms while he toddled with small steps into the castle. "Of course. First the beans then the toast."

Chapter 13 – stones in the belly

Justin felt very shy today.

Quietly, he sat on the warm wooden floor in the living room and watched as the dwarf played with two tiny cars. His eyes followed every small movement and registered every detail carefully. But whenever the dwarf would look at him or say something, he looked quickly aside and grew into a motionless statue.

"Oh. My. Lord. " Sang Emmett in an enraptured whisper as he rubbed his extra fine steel wool in little circles over the dirty pan. "He is so adorable!"

"Yeah." Brian typed three last words onto his keyboard and looked blankly in the direction of the kitchen. "Stop drooling into my fucking pot. It's unhygienic."

"It's a pan..." The cleaner pouted at the insult and turned his attention completely to his activity with the cookware. "Spoil sport."

Humming car noises, Gus shoved his red toy car to the front of Justin's shoe, ramming against it as if he were creating sound effects for an action movie, before he let the little car make a fivefold overturn.

Justin looked rigidly to the wall, with wide eyes and a pounding heart. He didn't know that such little cars existed. He didn't like the noises the dwarf was making either. They were loud and like the bad wolf. Then the red car fell down and the dwarf sat too close beside him. He really would have preferred to have his toast now and also his...

"...book."

Brian looked up from his desk. "Here." With his pen he tapped on the old book that lay next to his documents.

Justin didn't react. Instead he started to bob up and down nervously and wrapped a thin hair strand tightly around his finger as Gus now let the black car bang frontally against his shoe.

Brian closed his pen and sat straight up. "Justin."

"Of course. Certainly broken."

"Whooom!" Gus let both cars run into Justin's foot now.

Justin's eyes flickered irritated from left to right while he whimpered weakly.

"Gus!"

The boy looked innocently at his father.

"Stop it."

Gus held both cars up. "But I am a stuntman!"

"Not on my Milan wood floor." Brian raised his voice slightly. "Justin. Look at me."

"Of course. Certainly... always behind the seven mountains."

"Justin."

"Yeah." The blond turned his head and at first didn't know where the prince exactly was.

He found him at a little table at the other end of the room and looked at him with helpless blue eyes. "Of course. Now the book is gone."

Brian held the book up. "Come over here."

"Yeah." Justin looked at the wall and grew stiff. The dwarf crawled around him in little circles and whroomed and whroomed and pushed the little cars faster and faster.

Brian got up without any emotion on his face and went over to where his son played. With two hands he lifted him up and put him one foot further to the left. "Come on." He extended five fingers and a book towards Justin.

"Yeah." Without looking, the boy took his book, took hold of Brian's hand and got up awkwardly.

The older man led him to his desk without any comment, sat down and patted himself on the thigh. "Sit down."

"Yes." Justin looked down briefly and then immediately away and up to the white ceiling. Of course there was...

"...no free chair."

Brian pulled him by the wrist. "I know."

Justin's back was bolt-upright and the rest of his body petrified instantly as he sat on Brian's beautiful leg. The prince smelled so good; his head started to buzz from it.

Brian laid an arm loosely around Justin's hip and his other hand on the mouse to open one of his layouts on the screen. "Do you see this?" He pointed at a blue stroke.

"Yeah." Justin stared up to the ceiling. The prince held him tightly although he wasn't sitting on the wall.

Brian tapped him softly on the leg. "Justin. Look over here."

"Yeah." The boy turned his head and looked at the little television set standing on the prince's table. A film with a grandmother came on it. A grandmother without hair and with black glasses. Nothing moved. Everything was...

"...of course asleep."

The servant had given him sticks to eat with, but Justin used his fingers to fish the soy sprouts out of the greasy carton because one never could eat with wood sticks.

Emmett dropped a deep fried shrimp off of his chopsticks as he watched two shiny fingers disappear in the boy's mouth, welcomed by a diligent pink tongue.

Brian, however, didn't even look up while scraping the last rice grains from his carton. "Eat the meat, Justin."

"Yes." Justin had found white beet number 21 under a large piece of a flabby mushroom, sniffed at it, licked it clean and then ate it up with pleasure. "Of course Saturday. Tuna and cheese."

Brian wiped his mouth. "Eat your chicken. You hate tuna."

He did? Justin peered for a moment at his wonderful box meal, pressed one finger carefully on a piece of fried chicken and finally put it into his mouth. His gaze skeptically turned towards the prince.

Brian got up to dispose his empty food cartons and while he passed by, stroked over Justin's head. "Good boy."

"Yeah." The blond chewed proudly and leaned into Brian's strong hand. "Justin."

"I want to eat with my fingers too!" Gus had watched Justin's greasy fingers with pure jealousy and buried his own hand deep in a portion of fried noodles.

"Good." His father took the two coloured plastic chopsticks away and went to the rubbish can.

"No!" Gus immediately started to cry out in panic. "Don't throw them into the trash, daddy! These are my chopsticks!"

Stressed, Brian looked back at his son. "You know I hate it if unused things lie around here."

"But I need them!" The boy declared quickly and took his hand out of the food.

"You just said you wanted to eat with your fingers!"

"No!" Gus vehemently shook his head.

"Hff." With an annoyed look, Brian dropped the trash bin lid, took a wet cloth out of the sink, went to clean his sons' fingers and gave the chopsticks back. "Would you kindly make up your mind a bit earlier next time? I don't have time for this nonsense."

"Okay." Gus nodded guilty.

Emmett grinned around a mouth full of fried duck. Who would have thought? Mister Kinney's education methods were perhaps a little unconventional but nonetheless very effective.

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Brian always represented the opinion that democracy was generally overvalued and decided on supporting the reintroduction of monarchy in the State of Pennsylvania with full force from now on, as he found himself on some dirt road which he'd never seen in his life before. A good 50 meters behind his property.

"Didn't we already walk far enough?! Let's go back." Disgusted, he lifted a black leather shoe from the ground. The dirt around here was absolutely unbelievable.

"No-o." Gus twittered and ran from the left to the right side because he had seen a really great stone next to the faded dandelion.

"Pff..." Mister Kinney puffed his cheeks out, looked at the clock on his cell phone and then his gaze fell over to the blond boy who padded in turtle speed next to him, with a tight hold on his hand and blinking up into the sun with a crinkled nose.

"Are you having fun?"

"Yeah." Justin looked a little more to the left, where a big cloud looked like the pumpkin coach which Cinderella used to drive to the ball at the beautiful castle. "Holding hands with Prian."

Now Brian crinkled his nose too and turned his gaze uninterested to the other side. But five long fingers nevertheless drew themselves a trace firmer around Justin's hand. "Hmm. I meant the damn walk."

"Yes. Fun with Prian."

"Ah. You think so, yes?" Brian pointed to his dusty shoes in proof. "Do you see this?"

The boy looked down. "Yes."

"These are original Forzieri calfskin shoes from Italy. Hand manufactured! Have you any idea how much something like that costs?"

"Yes." Justin looked up again. "Of course twelve dollars."

Mister Kinney stopped and looked at the boy. "Twelve?"

"Yes. Certainly twelve dollars at Wal-Mart. Shoes in supply for Justin Taylor."

Brian wrinkled his forehead and looked at Justin's old shoes. "Your shoes are from Wal-Mart? Who bought those for you?"

"Yes." Justin looked aside and wrapped a hair strand around his finger.

"Do you have other shoes too?"

"Yes." Justin started to rock softly. Of course there were his...

"...slippers under the bed."

"Hmm." Brian rubbed his neck and went on after he had again a secure hold around Justin's fingers. "You need more than one pair of shoes. Do you have money?"

"Yes." Justin rubbed his ear and smiled as he thought of his Christmas-pudding money treasure. It was so shiny and lay...

"...of course in the drawers."

"Your money is in the drawers? In your room?"



"Yes. All fourteen."

"Fourteen? Fourteen what?! Hundred, thousand?"

"Yes. Of course fourteen pennies."

Brian's eyebrows shot up. "Fourteen pennies? This is all your money?"

"Yes. Money treasure in the pudding. Always on Christmas." Justin's cheeks shone rosily at this thought. Christmas always was so beautiful and of course one would have...

"...fried bird without feathers."

"Th." Brian was speechless for a moment. The damned boy had nothing but fourteen fucking pennies from his damn Christmas pudding and actually believed this were a good thing?! That was really ridiculous and made his anger level dramatically rise when he looked at Justin's ancient, cheap shoes and wondered who the hell was responsible for dressing the boy. Apparently nobody.

They walked some time in silence before Brian squeezed the smaller hand slightly in his fingers. "Would you like to have other shoes?"

Would he? Justin looked up in the clouds. Of course his other shoes stood...

"...under the bed."

"Hmm. Which shoes do you like?"

A broad smile moved over the boy's pale face in the fraction of seconds. He liked the...

"... seven league boots!" He laughed at the prince happily. "So fast!"

Brian looked down at Justin and smiled himself for a brief moment. "Yeah? Where do you buy those?"

The smile disappeared and was replaced by pure confusion. Hmm. Justin didn't know where one could buy seven league boots. They simply were painted in his...

"...book."

"Hh." Brian stroked his thumb over Justin's knuckles. "Emmett is looking after it, remember?"

"Yeah." The boy smiled. The servant was funny.

Gus came running and held his hands out proudly. "I already have eight and I'm going to find much more!"

Brian blinked skeptically at the stone and earth clod collection in Sonny Boys hands. "Weren't there stones without mud?"

Gus shook his head. "No."

"Wonderful." Sighed Brian and accepted the findings reluctantly.

Gus immediately ran away again. "I go and look for more!"

"Only five more minutes." Brian called after the child. "Your mother comes then!"

"No."

"Hm?" The older man frowned at Justin.

"Certainly she won't come."

"Who?"

Justin scratched his cheek before looking aside again. "Yes. Of course mommy can't come."

Brian raised his eyebrows. "Why won't she?"

"Yeah." Justin made six small, clumsy steps before he gave an unemotional answer. "Of course she doesn't come. Justin certainly isn't alright."

"Your mother? When was the last time you saw her?"

"Yes. The eighth...February eighth."

"In February?" Mister Kinney's anger level rose another two points as he calculated the difference from February to September.

"Yes. Of course the eighth...February eighth...nineteen hundred...ninety two."

Brian grimaced as a flush of unwelcome emotions rushed through his abdomen and stopped in the pit of his stomach. It was a heavy feeling.

He looked up to the sky and squinted his eyes before exhaling deeply. But this stupid feeling wouldn't go away.

He didn't know what to say, so he let go of Justin's hand and without looking, stroked his hand through soft blond hair before putting his arm around thin shoulders. "We should go back. Emmett probably phoned his little hustler friend in Honkong again on my fucking account."

"Yes. Of course back to the castle." Justin's hand wandered nervously between his legs. "Certainly to the toilet."

"You have to go?"

"Yes. Pissing into the toilet."

Brian looked at Justin, smiled in slight pride and drew his arm more tightly around the boy. "Damn right pissing!"

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Gus ran into the farthest corner of the living room as he heard his mother ringing the doorbell.

"Hello my little lamb. Did you have fun with daddy?" Lindsay discovered her child behind one of Brian's designer stand lights.

"I won't go home!" The child immediately explained and held on to the lamp with both hands for support.

Lindsay drew closer and smiled friendly. "But pumpkin, it's late and we have to stop at the supermarket."

"No!" Gus clung a little more tightly to the lamp and shook his head. "I haven't painted the stones yet!"

"Gus." Brian interfered. "Go and fetch your jacket. You can paint the stones next time."

Gus stomped his foot and thick tears of despair collected in his dark eyes. "But Justin won't be here then!"

"Who's Justin, darling?" Lindsay got hold of her son's hand and dragged him out from behind the lamp. "A friend of Izzy?"

Gus cried bitterly as his mother helped him with his jacket. "No! Izzy only likes other guinea pigs! Not people!"

"Well if you say so, pudding pie." Lindsay smiled in understanding while Brian rolled his eyes. "Say goodbye to daddy, okay?"

With one arm in front of his face and deep sobbing the boy replied half haterdly. "Bye, daddy." His mother then took him away.

"Bye, Sonny Boy." Brian waved only briefly, before he let the door fall shut and leaned with a deep sigh against it.

It was always nice if he had Gus for a couple of hours, but once in a while it was almost nicer when Lindsay picked him up again and nothing but perfect silence was to be heard all over beautiful Brighton.

An unpleasant clattering noise came loudly from the upper floor and Brian closed his eyes and rubbed his neck. Seems as if he'd overlooked the other boy in this whole peace and quiet thing. The one pissing in his private bathroom.

"Justin." Brian trudged up the stairs, obviously exhausted by the unforeseen activities of the last hours, and didn't bother to knock at the bathroom door. "What the fuck is taking you so long. I thought you only had to pi- Fuck!" Shocked, he tore open the door at the sight of his London imported, \$61, Taylor of Old Street aftershave lotion shattered in thousands of well smelling fragments on the luxurious marble floor.

"Of course." Justin stood a little beside, pants around his ankles and an innocent look turned to the wall, while he was rocking softly back and forth. "All broken."

Brian blinked twice before he gesticulated in outrage at the mess on his floor. "Damn right it's fucking broken! My things are none of your fucking business! I thought you had to piss!"

"Yeah." The boy wrapped a hair strand around his finger nervously. "Into the toilet. Prian says."

"Shit!" On his tip toes Mister Kinney stilted through the shards and shoved Justin further in the back. "This crap costs a fucking fortune!"

"Yes. Smells like Prian."

A little helpless, Brian grabbed a towel, knelt down and shoved the wet shards aside. Pfft. Smells like Prian. Damned brat.

On all fours he wiped over his sandalwood floor and peeked up briefly to where Justin played with his bare penis nervously. "Could you please pull your fucking pants up again if you're finished?!"

"Yeah." Justin bent down a little clumsily. "Certainly not catch a cold."

Brian dropped his head and threw the towel away. "Yeah. Exactly." He got up and wiped his hands on his Levis while Justin was trying to close his trouser buttons. "So. Do you want to go back now? It's almost six."

"No." The tip of Justin's shiny wet tongue appeared in deep concentration. It wasn't easy to slide the second button into the provided opening.

Brian took his hands out and worked the last two buttons of Justin's fly personally. "Why not? Dinner's at six, isn't it?"

"Yes. White beet." Justin rocked again and looked up to the ceiling. He liked Brian's hands. They were strong and big and felt good. "Brian has box...boxes."

Brian watched his own fingers with a certain fascination as they stayed much longer than necessary at the boy's pants before clearing his throat irritated as he took them away and rubbed his neck instead. "It's called kong-pow chicken."

"Yes." Justin curled his left hand in blond hair while sliding the right one between his legs where the beautiful prince's hand had been just a moment earlier. "Good boy. Justin."

Brian smiled slightly, although he really didn't know why, when a hot ache shot through his abdomen. "Yes. Come on now." He turned around and switched off the light.

Justin followed with small steps. He wiggled his toes in his shoes and pouted because he couldn't feel the beautiful soft fur carpet in front of Brian's bed through the thick shoe soles. He really didn't like his shoes.

The older man walked down the corridor, to the stairs and looked around twice whether the boy still was behind him or not. "You have twenty minutes. What do you want to do?"

"Yeah." Justin plodded awkwardly on the steps while his fascinated look was attached to the large naked guy painting. "Certainly watch TV."

"Watch TV." Wow. Brian was positively surprised. No messy handicrafts, no pointless walking around. Only watching the damn television. This was one of his easiest exercises.

"Yes. Of course. In the community room."

"Yeah, well," Brian went into the living room, snatched the remote control and flopped down on the sofa. "My community room isn't G-rated, Rapunzel. The television is here."

"Yeah." The blond stopped and stared at the screen mesmerized when the prince flipped through the channels.

Brian patted the cushion beside him. "Come here, Justin."

Without taking his gaze from the screen, Justin toddled closer to the couch, crawled laborious on it and knelt beside Brian. With straight back and big, attentive eyes.

Brian switched from football, to a kids show, to a program for deaf people and finally stopped on a documentary about Hollywood celebrities. "Do you see this?" He pointed with his finger. "This blond bitch over there is stupid like an empty breadbasket but the heteros love her."

Justin tipped his head aside. There was a small...

"...dog in the bag." He laughed. He wanted a dog in a bag too!

Brown eyes lost their focus on the television, to become a silent witness of a broad sunshine smile. "Yes. Disgusting. I'm not sure who licks whom in this relationship."

"Yeah." Justin moved with his butt from the left on the right heel and rubbed his ear as on cue a tiny dog licked the powdered face of his blond haired owner.

Justin's own tongue peeked briefly out to lick over raspberry colored lips.

Brian was incapable of looking back to the screen. Or closing his mouth.

Justin laughed again and looked at the prince excited. "He can lick!"

Brian cleared his throat and tried to look as uninterested as possible away. "Wow. Imagine that."

"Like Prian." The boy touched Prian's mouth a little clumsily with two fingers.

Brian looked steadily at the television, but opened his lips and bit briefly in Justin's fingertips.

Justin squeaked and pulled his hand back before he first looked alarmed at his fingers and then at the prince.

"Hh." Brian grinned at Justin's shocked expression, grabbed for the small fingers, took them back and licked over the place where his teeth had been. "Better?"

Justin's fingers tickled and he fidgeted nervously. He really would have preferred to...

"...lick Prian's mouth again."

Four small words which shot directly to Brian's crotch. But he remained cool and took Justin's fingers away. "It's called kissing."

"Yes." Justin looked to the ceiling. "Very wet."

For a moment Brian looked at the younger man silently before leaning back relaxed into the cushions. "Do you remember the kiss?"

"Yes."

"At night on the street?"

Justin scratched himself with one finger behind the ear. His belly began to tickle and his face became really warm. "Yes. Prian's tongue."

A small evil sparkle flashed through Brian's eyes. "You want to kiss me again?"

It took a while till the boy answered, but as he did, it was very clear. "Yes."

Brian had his foot placed firmly on the floor, the other leg outstretched alongside the whole sofa length and his arms loose on the couch's arm and back. "Then come over here and do it."

"Yes. Kiss Prian." Justin didn't change his position.

"Justin." Brian too.

"Yeah." The blond turned his head slowly and looked at the prince. With rosy cheeks and long eyelashes over innocent eyes.

Brian didn't know why, but he could've sworn his heart suddenly pounded a little faster than usual. Perhaps this was the reason why the next words came out a trace gentler. "Come here to me."

Justin didn't give any answer but moved closer, on his knees on one ridiculously expensive couch cushion. Closer and closer until he knelt precisely between the wide opened legs of the prince. "Yeah." His gaze uneasily turned upwards.

Brian brought a hand to Justin's cheek and whispered because he knew that he had the full attention of the boy. "You want to kiss me?"

Justin said nothing. But he nodded and nestled in Prian's large hand. He would've preferred to kiss the prince right now.

Brian's long fingers slipped back on Justin's neck, caressed the warm skin there briefly. "Come closer." He directed the boy firmly but gently forward.

Justin grew stiff at first but Brian let his thumb stroke over the velvety lips and finally pressed it carefully between them to elicit what was hidden behind.

Justin whimpered quietly and pushed with his tongue against Prian's thumb. It tasted slightly salty and he began to lick it.

Brian slid his thumb more deeply and then drew it back almost completely. The tongue followed him and with a last helping push in the neck it found its way without resistance over onto his waiting lips.

Justin squeezed his eyes shut tightly and breathed heavily through his nose. His hands cramped and his whole belly boiled with heat.

The prince tasted so good and smelled of Prian and almonds.

Justin couldn't do anything against it, this little wailing in his throat had to come out. Followed closely by a noise that sounded like the whimpering of a very hungry puppy.

Brian drew back a little, stroked calmingly over the back of Justin's head and looked at the pale face with a searching gaze.

Tightly shut eyes, rosy cheeks, blond hair, and swollen damp lips..

Brian smiled, traced over a high cheek bone with his thumb and then licked Justin's lips with a soft tongue. Once, twice and by the third time dived softly between them.

Justin mewled and Brian growled overwhelmed as the boy began to suckle his tongue like a newborn child.

With firm arms, Brian dragged Justin against his chest, held him tight and heard himself moan with pleasure. Again and again. Completely taken by the sweet taste that was pure Justin.

Justin couldn't breathe and couldn't think. Prian held him tighter and tighter but not close enough.

He whimpered and tried to crawl closer and more deeply into this warm mouth. He licked with his tongue over Prian's lips, smooth white teeth and every millimetre he found behind. He never wanted to stop. The prince tasted better than white beet and Christmas pudding. He tasted better than every almond could ever smell.

He felt a hand on his butt and was frightened for a second, before he sucked harder on Prian's tongue and pressed his pelvis forward with a whimper.

"Ahh..." Brian moaned loudly as the boy began to rub his hardness against him. He kneaded Justin's perfect ass, followed by an adventurous middle finger. A promising crack under the material of thin trousers intensified his expertly tongue work.

...before his blurred mind realised that he couldn't take the little one up to his 'community room'.

"Justin!" A little more abruptly than both would've expected, he broke the kiss and breathed hot breath into Justin's face. A face with glowing cheeks, swollen wet lips and blue eyes that looked at him longingly and almost desperately.

"We can't-" He looked at the boy, pushed the blond head quickly down to his chest and kissed his soft hair. "It's time for you to go now."

Justin blinked and pushed his nose tightly into Prian's shirt. He really wanted to...

"...stay with Prian."

Brian closed his eyes briefly and rubbed his hand over Justin's back. "But you have to eat your cheese and go to bed."

"Yes." Justin kept absolutely still. He liked Prian's fingers on his back and listened to a fast heartbeat. "Of course toast."

"Cheese." Brian whispered.

"Sleep with Prian."

Mister Kinney wasn't sure whether he should laugh or cry out of frustration, as his pants grew still a bit tighter at this suggestion. "No. You have to go to your room."

He did? Justin thought this over and grew sad because the prince was certainly right. Justin had to stay in the tower until Christmas. But he hated to wait.

He sniffed noisily and rubbed his face against Prian's chest.

The heavy stone in Brian's stomach appeared again but he tried to ignore it and patted the boy's butt. "Hey, did you just blow your nose into my \$120 Armani shirt?"

Big blue eyes looked at him innocently.

Brian pressed a small kiss on a pale forehead. "Come on, brat. Time to take someone across the street."

Chapter 14 – Fairy Tale Food Poisoning

On Sunday there were waffles and fruit salad for breakfast. Justin only wanted the waffles because he was clever enough to not eat poisoned apples.

"What's with the fruit salad?" Blake pronged a piece of orange on the fork.

Justin shook his head and blew the powdered sugar off waffle number three.

"Dr. Bruckner'll want to know whether you ate everything or not." The male nurse tried a new tactic and held a little piece of banana in front of his patient's mouth. "I'm sure he would be very happy if you try the fruit salad."

Justin pressed his lips tightly together and remained completely motionless while looking uninterested up to the ceiling. Sometimes he simply didn't want to listen to Blake.

Blake put the fork aside. "Sometimes you're so stubborn."

"Yeah." The boy moved again and bit into his waffle. "Justin."

The male nurse shook his head and walked around the room to clean up a couple of things.

He hung clothes on the hook, put Justin's shoes under the shelf and arranged the boy's toothbrush properly at the sink. Then he went over to the window and opened it wide.

"Wow, isn't it nice weather today? Not one cloud at the sky."

"Yeah." Justin crinkled his nose as the powdered sugar from waffle number four tickled onto his face. "Of course. Go for a walk."

Blake smiled. "You like to go for walks, don't you?"

"Yes. Collect stones."

"Good idea." Blake was surprised. It was really rare that his patients brought in ideas of their own. "You can even paint them afterwards."

"Yes." Justin licked the last bit of sugar off before he bit into his waffle. "Certainly next time."

"Ok." The male nurse leaned out of the window a bit further and enjoyed the view.

Contentedly, Justin chewed his waffle.

"Hh!" He stiffened in a matter of seconds as a strange noise was to be heard. It wasn't a bird and not the fast car-vehicle of the prince. Probably it was...

"...a dragon with fire."

Blake turned around to the boy. "Did you just hear that?"

Justin stared blankly to the wall with a mouth full of waffles. Of course fire was rather hot. He was very sure that he didn't like dragons.

The noise came again and Blake put a hand to his ear and pointed outside the window. "Hear that? Those are frogs. The other station arranged a pond last year and the frogs decided to live there."

They did? Justin chewed slowly. He didn't know many frogs. Only the one from the well with the...

"...shiny gold ball."

Blake laughed. "Yes, I bet that one is there too. Come over here to the window and then you'll hear it better."

A little awkwardly the boy got up from his chair and toddled to the window while keeping his gaze to the side. He was a bit nervous. Perhaps these were dragon-frogs?

"Come here." The male nurse laid a hand on Justin's back and pushed him a little more forward. "Can you hear that? They croak. Like quak-quak."

Justin listened attentively and then was startled briefly as the noise came again. It was no quak-quak. The frogs said...

"...ribbit-ribbit."

Blake looked at his patient dumbfounded as a perfect frog noise came out of his mouth.



"Wow. You can speak exactly like a frog."

"Yeah." Justin heard the frog again and answered him promptly. "Ribbit."

Blake laughed and mussed the fair hair. He really liked Justin Taylor.

\*\*\*\*\*

Today, Brian had woken up with a rumbling dark thunder cloud over his bed and the fucking thing had since followed him unrelentlessly.

In the shower it had turned the daily 'Oh welcome you beautiful day!' orgasm into a really unsatisfactory experience, then, while shaving, it was to blame for the small cut on a before perfect chin. Afterwards in an attempt to kill it with a big pot of coffee, his plan had failed terribly because the stupid thing had, of course, seen this gambit coming and destroyed the Italian mocha machine with a short circuit that not only had set every electronic piece in the kitchen out of service, but moreover had given a howling Mister Kinney a heavy electric shock.

Now Brian had sat for about an hour in front of his high-resolution television with plaster on his chin and an ice pack on his right hand. He was watching one of those pathetic talk shows with the beautiful title: 'Help! I love Gay as Blazes! Am I gay now?'

In short it was a very gruesome Sunday and Brian couldn't imagine where the negative vibrations in his house could have originated. Well, maybe he had a slight idea but strictly refused to think of the topic 'blond brat.'

But hell, it was terribly frustrating! There stumbled this twink with innocent eyes onto his private botanical grounds, flinging himself openly at his neck with a suffering, 'Please feed me!' request and since then, strictly refused to leave his well organized life again!

Really, it was nearly impossible to take only half a step these days without tripping over the boy behind every fucking corner. And if not over Justin in flesh and blood, then surely over one of the thousand little memory breadcrumbs which the boy had planted strategically everywhere. In the bathroom, where a Justin Taylor toothbrush stood in the cup besides his own. In the kitchen where suddenly a stock of soy bean sprouts had grown in the cupboards. At work, where everybody was absolutely enthusiastic about the new layout in hot orange tones. And even at fucking Babylon, because simply not one blond twinkie tasted as good as Justin's sweet lips.

Cursing unchristian things, Brian switched the TV off as Paris Hilton advertised her cheap canned champagne while her ugly yapper tottered through the picture.

It was definitely too much and all this bullshit had to end immediately!

For a moment he remained sulking on the sofa, cursing the whole world from this position and then with a pout, reached for the telephone to arrange his, 'I don't give a damn about the damned boy in the damned tower...in the damned institution!', Sunday afternoon. With a little help from Matt and Benny, his two baths acquaintances with a deep throat guarantee.

What else could be better to take your mind off of things then to spend a couple of chilling hours at the pool, with one or two wet and sticky activities?

\*\*\*\*\*

On Sunday there was something new for lunch that wasn't written on the meal plan because the kitchen wanted to try something new.

It was lamb ragout with brown rice. Plake had said it would taste almost like the lamb that his grandma had cooked back when he was a little boy. But Justin had screamed and screamed and pulled 24 hairs out of his head until Plake had taken the plate away. Justin could hear little Mary's crying all the way up to his tower room.

Five minutes after the male nurse had left the room, Justin still stood sniffing with his face to the wall. And he held his place until he was sure he could only hear the funny frog noises from outside and not poor Mary's sad sobbing.

"Rebbit-rebbit" The frog said from outside.

"Ribbit." Justin answered him after a moment. He liked to speak frog language. There the words were much simpler and sounded rather green.

"Rebbit. Rebbit-rebbit" Could be heard.

Justin sniffled. He was still a little sad. He then rubbed his moist eyes and plodded to the window to look outside.

"Ribbit." He wanted to know why the frog wanted to live in the pond behind the tower and not in his well with the blue water.

"Rebbit." It croaked. "Rebbit-rebbit."

Justin rubbed his ear. "Ribbit." Perhaps the frog had gotten lost?

Hmm. He turned around, shoved his book and his noodle necklace deeply under the pillow and with a last Ribbit-ribbit, left his room.

Plake stood at the end of the corridor and put the trays into the cart. He smiled friendly as he saw his young patient. "Hey, do you want to go for a walk in the garden?"

"Ribbit." Justin said and looked to the wall because today he didn't like Plake that much.

"Have fun, you frog." Blake grinned nevertheless and waved after the kid.

"Yeah." The boy hiked through the ward door, down the stairwell and then out through a side exit directly into the garden. There he stopped and listened. He couldn't hear the frog anymore.

"Of course under water."

With small steps he waddled over the neatly laid out stone ways, looked up at the sky, counted some clouds, stopped briefly in front of a big tree to smell the leave scent and finally arrived in the back area of the St. James gardens. Right by the small pond.

The water looked black and small green dots swam on it.

Justin didn't like the pond, but he went closer anyway. He got onto his knees and took a better look at the water. Carefully he put a finger in, splashed a bit and then licked at the wet skin. It wasn't tasty and certainly...

"...puddle water."

"Rebbit."

A loud frog noise startled the boy and he twitched, looking quickly up to the sky while pausing motionlessly on the pond shore.

"Rebbit-ribbit" It came again and he ventured an anxious look

At first he found nothing, but then he saw the frog sitting quietly on a stone.

"Ha!" Justin gave an enthusiastic laugh and pointed with his finger. The frog was...

"...so small!"

"Rebbit."

The animal moved its throat funny and Justin raised his eyebrows in fascination. "Ribbit."

"Rebbit. Rebbit-ribbit."

"Ha!" Justin laughed again. The frog was so great and nice. He wanted to stay at the pond and talk to him forever. "Ribbit!" He said loudly to the frog and splashed his hand onto the green dot in the water.

The frog took a big leap and jumped over the leaf and onto the grass.

"Hh!" Frightened, Justin fluttered his lashes rapidly. The frog was so fast! He turned around and saw the little animal sitting two feet further away. He crawled over to him.

The frog made two big jumps.

Justin crawled a little faster.

The frog hopped four times and remained at the wayside. "Rebbit."

Justin followed him and stopped at the park way border too. In a seated position, he looked at the little pebbles. He knew exactly why the frog was afraid to go further. The stones always made...

"... funny noises."

He rubbed his forehead and looked up into the sky. There was another 'splash' and the frog hopped again. Once, twice, three times, always along the way. But only on the grass and never on the stones.

Justin laughed. The frog was so clever! He followed him and at times, pointed his finger, because he knew exactly where the frog wanted to go. Back into his blue water well at the castle! Fortunately, Justin knew the way there very well.

\*\*\*\*\*

Brian changed into a relaxing position for an even tan, while his two guests Brad and Kenny (or was it Jack and Danny?) had a small swimming break. Well built and appetizing they came out of the pool, dripping, to keep their patronizing host a little company on the lawn.

Yes, these were the privileges one had as a filthy rich mansion owner with an attached luxury pool area in an exceptionally hot Sunday afternoon in September.

"Mmh... your pool is great." Brad/Jack/Matt purred and crawled with glittering water droplets on his sun-tanned Adonis body between Brian's legs on the deck chair.

"And your house..." Benny/Kenny/Danny, also deeply impressed, applied himself on Mister Kinney's left nipple. "...man, it's a fucking castle."

Brian's head shot up in irritation. "It's not a fucking castle!"

The man with the tongue at Brian's chest blinked dumbfounded twice. "Okay."

"Hmm." The host grumbled and lay back down, getting comfortable and enjoying the current blowjob. Come what fucking may!

\*\*\*\*\*

The frog stopped at the curb stone and Justin bobbed up and down nervously. He'd hoped the frog would be allowed to walk alone across the street.

"Rebbit." The animal said.

"Yes." Justin curled blond hair around his finger and looked after a passing car.

The street was quiet for a while and then a blue car came and simply stopped.

Justin looked at it and it flashed with its bright lights. Twice.

Justin tipped his head to the side.

"Rebbit." The frog said.

The old Misses Joffrin wound down her window and, smiling friendly, called outside. "You can cross the street now, young lad. I'll wait here."

He could? Justin knew exactly who the man in the car was. The grandmother.

"Go on now, darling." The old lady demanded and waved her hand.

"Yeah." Justin made a careful step onto the asphalt and the frog followed with a big hop.

"Rebbit."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Ahhm." Brian burrowed his hand deeply into Matt's hair and arched his back. The deep throat guarantee had definitely not expired yet.

Only Benny interrupted his professional work on a stiff nipple to look up when he saw in the left corner of his eye, something jumping by. Hmm. It looked like a rather fat toad...followed by some fucking hot twink on all fours.

"Hey Matt." He tipped his brother's shoulder.

"Hh?" Matt took his mouth out of Mister Kinney's lap and looked up a little dazed.

"Hey! Who told you to stop?!" Brian lifted his sunglasses to throw an evil glare at the trick before he saw it.

"Fuck!" He snatched the black designer piece then completely off his eyes as soon as he saw the blond boy, with his butt high in the air, crawling through his freshly cut grass landscape. Croaking like a damned frog.

"He's absolutely adorable." Matt grinned broadly and licked his lips in great expectation.

"He is damn hot." Benny purred with his best predator expression.

"He is not on the fucking menu!" Corrected Brian furiously and shoved the trick between his legs roughly aside and got up to tuck his currently very impressive manhood back into an unpleasantly tight Speedo.

Damn brat. Rubbing his hand between his legs, he stalked over the meadow and stopped with folded arms in front of his guest. "Well if it isn't the ubiquitous Justin Taylor."

The boy took his nose from the blades of grass and gazed up to him with a worried look.

"Not in the well."

"Don't say!" Brian smiled more than artificial and bent a little more down to shout the next words loudly in Justin's face. "What the hell are you doing here again?!"

"Yes." Justin blinked up through long eyelashes and pointed at his slippery companion. "Certainly the frog."

Eww. Mister Kinney wrinkled his nose and with irritation, moved one step back. Great. Now he had varmints in his damn garden.

"Ribbit." The boy explained in due seriousness.

"Hmm." Brian quickly went to grab Justin's wrist to pull him a few steps aside. As far as he knew these things secreted hallucinogenic substances and would further distort little sunshine's brain convolutions.

"Of course into the blue water." Said Justin wrongly emphasizing and struggled against the prince's solid grip because the frog hopped in the direction of the pear tree.

"Certainly not. The damned pool is just freshly cleaned."

"Of course." The boy stumbled clumsily after the prince. "Certainly he has to go into the well."

"Hello." Matt established his best macho grin as his host came with the fair haired twink in the direction of the deck chairs. "I am Matt."

"Yes." Justin held on to Prian's hand tightly and looked nervously up to the sky. Of course the man had...

"...no pants on."

Brian stroked his thumb over Justin's knuckles and threw one scattered shirt in the trick's direction. "Grab your stuff and your brother. The party is over."

"Asshole." Matt mumbled angrily but did as he was ordered.

"Motherfucker." Benny said goodbye too and raised his middle finger half way to the garden gate.

"Yes." Justin rocked a little and pulled at the long strand behind his ear. "Asshole."

Brian squeezed the small hand. "Forget them." He then pointed to the empty deck chair. "Sit down and stay there until I come back."

"Yeah." Justin didn't know how one should sit on such a funny chair and was still engaged in crawling on it awkwardly as the prince disappeared behind the mirrored terrace doors.

When Brian came back in jeans and a t-shirt fifteen minutes later, the deck chair was empty and the one who was actually told to wait there, knelt a couple of steps away at the edge of the swimming pool.

Brian sighed and went over. "Where did I just tell you to wait for me?"

"Yes." Justin leaned closer over the blue shining pool water. "Of course the frog has to go into the water."

"Not into my pool."

"Yes. Certainly a well."

"Trust me." Brian turned around and flopped down onto his deck chair. "It is a fucking pool." He lit a cigarette.

"Yes. Fucking well." Justin had looked into the well for a very long time now but the frog could not be seen. He was probably still under the...

"...tree. Certainly a pear."

He got up clumsily and toddled away.

Brian let him. Inhaling deeply, he watched the boy a couple of minutes as he wandered through the garden, all the while saying things like 'shiny gold ball', 'yoghurt with fruits' and 'Ribbit-ribbit'.

After the last drag he stubbed his cigarette out in the ashtray on the little side table next to the deck chair. "Justin?"

The boy squatted on the ground and looked interested at something between the blades of grass.

"Justin, come here."

"Yes. Prian." Justin got up and plodded with small steps in the direction of the prince.

Brian got up. "Do you have everything? I'm taking you back now."

"No." The blond turned around and walked away.

"Justin." Brian followed. "You have to go home now."

"No." Justin walked straight ahead until he pushed the tips of his shoes at the bordering wall of the property. Then he stopped and twisted a long hair strand around his middle finger.

"Justin."

"Two...twenty." There were no clouds in the sky but Justin wanted to count anyway.

"You're ignoring me again?"

"Yes. Justin."

Sighing, Brian drove a hand through his hair. "One fucking hour. Then you'll go."

The boy rocked softly back and forth and looked blankly up to the sky.

"Justin! Did you hear what I just said?"

"Yes. One...one fucking hour." It was again in a wrong emphasis but Justin nodded while he was saying it.

"Hmm." The older man grumbled contentedly and went back to his deck chair.

Justin followed him after eight minutes. With awkward steps and his gaze turned upwards.

Brian lit a new cigarette. "Come here."

"Yes." Justin stopped in front of the lounge. The smoke from Prian's fire stick flew up to the sky. "Ha!" He laughed. "New clouds!"

Brian inhaled and breathed out long before he moved aside and patted next to him on the bolster. "Sit down."

"Yes." Justin looked after the little prince clouds. "Of course. No chair."

Brian dragged calmly on his cigarette. "It's a deck chair. You can lie on it."

He could? Justin wasn't sure because it was ...

"...of course no bed."

Brian grinned and tapped beside himself again. "Try it."

"Yeah." Justin lifted his feet far too high and almost needed a whole minute to find a way to climb over the prince's legs. But then he actually laid on the deck chair. Near Prian, even if he didn't dare to breathe or blink.

Brian put his arm around the boy's shoulders and drew him closer. "Comfortable?"

Justin remained stiff like a window dummy. "Yeah."

Brian laughed, stroked Justin's neck and pushed the blond head down to his chest. "Better?"

"Yes." The boy blinked, put a hand on Prian's t-shirt and listened devoutly to his belly. "It bubbles."

"Hmm." Brian turned his head a little while he was pulling on his cigarette. "I haven't eaten anything today."

"Yes." Justin pushed his nose deeply into Prian's shirt. It was so soft and smelled of beautiful prince.

Long fingers found their way into blond hair. "What did you have for lunch today?"

For a while Justin said nothing at all. His face rubbed into the nice smelling material and then he remained quiet because it was nice the way Prian's belly rose and fell with every breath. But then the answer came. Not very loud but clear. "Of course lamb."

Brian's fingers stroked their way behind Justin's ear. "You had lamb for lunch?"

"Yes." The boy buried his face again into Prian's t-shirt to say a wrongly emphatic, Mary's little lamb.

Mister Kinney wrinkled his forehead and exhaled the smoke. "Who's Mary?"

"Always cries."

"Hmm. Then you didn't eat the lamb?"

Justin didn't give an answer but discovered Prian's navel under the shirt. Testing, he stuck his finger inside.

Brian reached over the boy's body to stub out the cigarette in the ashtray and then clapped on Justin's upper arm. "Get up. We're going in."

"Yes." Justin sniffed on the warm skin right over Prian's navel. "Of course television. Certainly in the community room."

"Food. In the kitchen."

\*\*\*\*\*

Justin had washed his hands with a lot of foam soap for a long time. After that he had stroked the carpet in the prince's bedroom and would have enjoyed remaining there but he could already smell the good toast all the way up the stairs and his belly began to grumble.

Therefore, he toddled out into the corridor, down the steps by the naked man picture and over the smooth black stones, on the warm wooden floor in the living room.

Briefly, he pushed his nose against the terrace door to see where the frog was.

"Ribbit." He really wondered if the frog was hungry too.

"Justin." Brian appeared next to him with a plate. "Here. Sit down with it."

"Yes." Justin turned around, looked blankly for a second at the prince and then began to cry out in sheer panic. With one hand he slapped the green apple from Prian's mouth and then beat himself with the other one heavily against his head. Again and again and again.

"Fuck, you little-" Shocked, Brian touched his bleeding lip and furiously pushed Justin out of the shards of the broken plate. "Shit!"

"Ah!" Justin shouted and tore at his hair. With wide eyes he stared at the red blood which dribbled from Prian's mouth and the poisoned apple on the warm wooden floor. He knew exactly that the prince would die and his brown eyes would never open again.

"Hha!" With all strength he ran into the glass terrace doors and beat his head against it.

Brian bent down to pick up the shards and then let the porcelain pieces fall down again irrespectively.

"Fuck, stop it Justin!" He grabbed the boy by the arm and was immediately fended off hysterically.

"Of course! Dead forever!" Justin's belly was cold and his throat too tight to breathe. His head stung and stung and his nose was aching terribly. He shouted louder and beat himself with his hand against the right temple. "Certainly dead!"

Brian cursed and grabbed for Justin's wrist. At the top of his lungs he yelled in the boy's face. "Stop it!"

Justin only rampaged more. "Dead, dead!"

"Justin!" With his whole physical strength the older one gripped Justin's arms and pressed him tightly against the terrace door. "Dead?"

"Ahh!" The blond shouted desperately and tried to escape from the firm grip.

"Justin!" Brian leaned even closer with his full weight, belly to belly, to push the small body securely against the pane. "Who's dead?"

"Yes!"

"Who?"

"Yeah..." Thick tears ran over Justin's pale cheeks as he gave up the fight against the superior strength and weakly let his head fall back against the glass door. "Of course my Prian." He sobbed, cried and sounded so pained that for a moment Brian didn't know what to do or think

He swallowed the thick lump in his throat and became aware of the nausea in his stomach. He leaned his forehead against the cold glass of the door. Right next to Justin's wet face. "Justin." He whispered and turned his mouth a little more to a perfectly curved ear. "Prian is dead?"

Justin sobbed loudly and bucked under Brian's immovable body.

Brian pushed his nose into Justin's neck and shook his head. "I am here." He kissed the warm skin. "Not dead."

"Hhu..." The younger one wailed tormented and squeezed his eyes tightly together.

Brian spoke again. A little louder now. "Why would I be dead? Hmm?"

More than quiet whimpering sounds couldn't be heard from Justin.

"Because of the blood?" Brian licked his lips automatically. "It's only three droplets."

Justin cried more but nestled his cheek against Brian's face.

"Ok?"

Justin sniffled. Of course one must...

"... always die."

Brian shook his head again and kissed the crook of Justin's neck. "Why do you say such things?"

"Yes." The boy sobbed. "All poisoned!"

Brian strengthened his grip around the smaller body and breathed warm breath into Justin's neck. "What is poisoned?"

"The apple." It was hardly audibly and Brian needed a moment to process this information.

He stood up straight again and took Justin's face into his hands. "You think my apple was poisoned?"

Justin squeezed his eyes and mouth tightly shut.

"Justin!" Brian lowered his knees to create the same eye level. "You think I died because the fucking apple is poisonous?"

The boy whined and tried to turn his head to the side. He didn't want to hear those words.

Brian smiled weakly and brushed Justin's high cheeks with his thumbs. "You stupid little twat. Is this in one of your stories?"

Justin kept his mouth locked tight, but blinked with long damp eyelashes in Prian's face.

"Where? Cinderella? Little Red Riding-hood? The princess and the fucking pea?"

It was clearly obvious as the boy thought this over and his body relaxed a little in this process. Of course he liked...

"... no peas."

Smiling, Brian raised his eyebrow and wiped the wetness under Justin's eyes off with his thumbs. "Now, where are poisoned apples then?"

Justin sniffled. "Snow white." He looked at the prince sadly. "Behind the seven...seven mountains."

Mister Kinney stared at the boy blankly for a moment. "Snow White. Do I look like fucking Snow White to you?"

"Of course." Two moist blue eyes blinked innocently. "The apple is certainly poisoned."

Irritated, Brian rubbed his forehead. "Don't tell me you've never eaten an apple in your life?!"

"Hh!" Justin made a shocked face.

"Huh." Seems this was a no then.

"Certainly red lips. Like blood." The boy looked up to the ceiling and started to rock softly.

Brian wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "Yes. And if you see blood, don't ever touch it, alright?"

"Yes." One last little snuffle came from the boy's mouth.

"Hmm." Brian caressed Justin's neck briefly. "Do you need a handkerchief?"

Did he? Justin pulled up his nose. "No."

Brian wrinkled his forehead critically. "Good to know." He took the younger one by the hand, "Come on." went with him up the stairs and put Justin on the lid of the toilet in the bathroom.

"Yes." Justin spread his legs and looked down. "Of course. The lid is closed."

"You do this if you don't have to piss at the moment." explained Brian and examined his split lip in the mirror, before he wet a cloth and wiped his mouth.

"Yes." Justin twisted his hair around his finger and looked up to the ceiling lighting. "Of course the toast is gone now."

"Are you hungry?"

The blond felt his belly. "Yes. Certainly white beet."

"What's about a turkey sandwich?"

"Yes. Of course always on Thanks...Thanksgiving."

"You can always eat turkey. It's good for you." Brian made wet a second cloth and wiped it over Justin's puffy face.

"Yes." Justin poked his tongue against the cloth and looked up to the prince with big eyes.

Brian held the long hair with one hand out of Justin's forehead, wiped over the pale skin a little longer than necessary and smiled without even noticing it. "Feel better?"

"Yes. Wash with Prian."

"Hmm." Brian threw the cloth back into the sink. "And now?"

"Of course. Sleep with Prian."

Brian grinned and switched off the light in the bath before he went out. "Yeah, I bet you would like that, brat."

"Yes. Brat Justin."

Chapter 15 – The right thing to do

"Ooh." Justin stood in his dark tower room with his nose pressed flat against the window. He looked with fascination to the outside where cars stopped in front of the Prince's big castle and many different people got out. Again and again.

There were people Justin had never seen before. People who laughed and wore pretty clothes. People who disappeared behind the castle's doors while he had to stay all alone in his tower.

He was really sad.

The castle looked so, so beautiful today as it stood there in the darkness, brightly illuminated. Little lights shone everywhere and the music could be heard all the way across the street.

Justin knew exactly what that meant because he had read about it in his book many times. The prince was giving a big ball! A ball with the most delicious food, as well as music, dancing and of course the whole kingdom was invited. Well everyone but the wicked witch and Rumpelstiltskin that is.

His breath was warm against the window pane and left little droplets of water that he licked away with his tongue. Another car stopped and a man with black hair got out. He was not very tall but he carried a huge present.

Justin's eyes shone and he laughed happily against the glass. He liked presents!

The man locked his car, stumbled over the curb, caught his big present in the last second before it could fall onto the asphalt and then disappeared like all the others behind the palace doors.



Justin hummed softly against the foggy pane. He wanted to dance too and eat all the good things. Presumably Prian had hundreds of boxes full of white beet and toast and a big bottle of prince water.

"Evian." He remembered and turned around to plod over to his shelf. Of course one needed to dress very nicely to go to a real prince ball. With a long gown and...

"...glass slippers."

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"Novotny! A years supply of my favourite fisting gel! Really, you shouldn't have bothered."

"Brian!" With a smile on his face, Michael jumped onto his friend's neck and kissed him on the lips. "It's about time you finally gave yourself a house warming!" He looked around between all the people who populated Mister Kinney's comfortable home. "My God! How many have you invited?"

Brian looked over the crowd and shrugged. "Only five. Oh and I told Todd to bring a couple of friends."

"Todd? Todd from the Backroom?" In closer examination, Michael could recognize one or two faces in the room. "Oh my God, half of Babylon is here! In Hugh Hefner's fucking holiday home!"

Brian grinned in content and put an arm around Mikey's shoulders. "95%, plus four of the very best go-go dancers."

Michael shook his head. He should've known that a housewarming party for the Kinney residence wouldn't be held with close family and good wishes for the new home and an exchange of gardening experiences.

Brian pressed a kiss on his friend's temple and disappeared between two hundred dancing men in the flickering neon lights.

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Justin didn't have any glass shoes nor could he find a pretty dress in his wardrobe either. But he painted his lips green, eyelids blue and rubbed a red wax crayon on his cheeks. He then took a brush and combed his hair for a long time, so it would become soft and shiny like silk.

His sneakers were old and ugly, so he sat down awkwardly in front of his bed on the floor and put his blue slippers on. They looked pretty with his white pyjamas. With a smile, he took his wonderful prince necklace out from under the pillow.

He put it around his neck. "Of course. The treasure jewelry."

Fascinated, he stroked over the little butterfly noodles for a moment and then toddled out of the room and down the corridor. For a while he stopped in front of the nurse's room and petted his soft, smooth hair. Of course one always had to....

"...inform Plake."

But Plake didn't come and after a couple of minutes, Justin went on down the corridor and left the ward.

The stairwell was quiet and dark but Justin didn't have an anxious feeling in his belly today as he slowly walked down the steps. No, he could feel the butterflies flutter and was very excited. He was so happy to see the beautiful prince and all the ball guests. Presumably he would even see the...

"...Puss in boots."

The big exit door was very heavy and creaked as it opened but the outside night air wasn't very cold. It smelled of moon, music and Justin sniffed while smiling up to the dark sky.

He hurried out of the court entry and through the big iron gate to the sidewalk. Parked cars were everywhere and at first he didn't know how to find the right way across the street between them.

Confused, he plodded along the pavement, while looking over to the beautiful castle. He really would've preferred to go there right now, so he could...

"...dance with the prince."

Another car came and stopped a couple of feet further away in a free parking space at the roadside.

Justin stopped and rocked nervously back and forth. He had never seen the people who got out of the car. They were loud and laughed like the bad giant.

"Hey!" One of them called and raised his arm. "You! Goldielocks!"

The other two men laughed.

"Come here!"

"Yes." Justin looked aside. He would've preferred not to go over to the strange men. He didn't know whether he liked them or not.

"Come on, angel!" The largest of the men gestured with his hands. "Come over here!"

"Yeah." With small steps the boy walked closer and looked blankly up into the light of a streetlamp, as a couple of hands grabbed at him.

"Holy shit!" One of the men laughed and wiped at the red color spots on Justin's cheeks. "Where the hell did you come from?"

"Who cares!" Grinned another man broadly and put his arm around the blonde's shoulders. "We're on the way to a party. What do you think, little boy, wanna join us?"

Did he? Justin didn't like the arm on his back and stiffly retracted his neck. Of course he only wanted to...

"...walk across the street."

The men laughed and flanked the boy on the left and right before they shoved him over the street. "But of course! You'll have the time of your life with us."

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"Ahhm..." Brian pushed the trick's head more tightly into his lap and overwhelmed closed his eyes as the consumed E together with his approaching orgasm unfurled its full effects. God, how much he loved this! Willing men as far as the eye could see, hot music, good shit in all colourful variations, and far and wide no obligations in form of stone painting sons or blonde boys with apple-phobia. Yes, it was definitely the best night in a long time!

Somewhere under the dull sounds of the booming music and the countless loud voices, the doorbell rang for the hundredth time tonight and Emmett hopped with light feet in the direction of the lobby. "Coming!" He said smiling and opened the door for the guests.

"Oh my God!" Pleasantly surprised he placed his right hand on his chest. "Baby, I had no idea he invited you! How wonderful to see you!" He reached for one of Justin's hands, but the men in his company didn't seem all too happy about it.

"Fuck off, Honeycutt. The little one is with us."

"Oh yeah?" Emmett's voice became two octaves deeper and his kind facial expression disappeared. He totally disliked this Kip-person. "I cannot imagine that Brian would appreciate it if one of his personal guests were molested."

A duelling stare was exchanged before Kip grumbled and took his arm from Justin's shoulders and disappeared with his friends somewhere between the other guests.

The friendly smile immediately returned to Emmett's face.

"Come on in, baby!" He took the boy by the arm and closed the door. "I love your outfit, honey! Just recently I've seen something similar in this British fashion magazine. It's the latest style in Europe!"

"Yeah." Justin curled a strand of hair in nervousness around his finger. Today it was quite dark in the prince's castle. Little coloured flashlights flickered around, it smelled funny and everything was loud and loud. He wasn't sure if he liked it.

Smiling brightly, Emmett linked his arm with Justin. "Well, how about I show you around a bit? Are you thirsty? Fancy a Cosmo?"

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"So Mikey," Brian hugged his friend from behind. Higher than a kite and more than content in all the pleasant atmosphere. "Where's the good professor?"

Michael grinned and leaned his head back against Brian's shoulder. "He had to work on a couple of things. He gives a lecture at the college next week."

"Really." Brian was obviously extremely bored with this conversation. "And what is it about? How to put my patients down?"

Michael clapped his hand on Brian's arm. "No. It's all about Autism. Ben is a real expert on this subject, you know."

A dark skinned man with a promising bulge in his tight trousers strolled by and Brian kissed his friends neck briefly before taking up the chase. "Yeah well...coincidentally I am a real expert on many subjects too. See you later, Mikey."

"Michael!" Emmett waved happily and dragged a fair haired boy along through the crowd. "I haven't seen you the whole evening!" He kissed Michael's cheek and looked then around searching. "Where is Ben?"

"He has to work." Michael smiled and gave Emmett's company a skeptical look. "Who's your ...friend?"

"Mikey," Emmett put on a proud face and pushed Justin one step forward. "This is Justin." He put a hand to his mouth and whispered discreetly. "I'm afraid he's a little shy."

"Aha." Michael wrinkled his forehead as the blond nervously began to rock back and forth and then rubbed a blue painted eye with two fingers. "Hey....Justin." He extended his hand for greeting but however, was ignored completely.

Justin felt quite scared. Everybody chattered loudly but he couldn't hear anything at all because the air was so terribly loud in the whole castle. He didn't know why the lamps flickered and where the puss in boots was. His eyes were aching and burned from all the stinking fog. He really would've preferred to go outside to see where the frog was in it's...

"... blue water."

Emmett put an arm around Justin's shoulders. "We were just on our way to the bar. What's with you? Care to join us?" He blinked at Michael invitingly.

"No," Michael held his Pepsi glass up. "I'm good. But you go ahead."

"Okay. See you then." Emmett chirped, waved his fingers and shoved his young companion through the dancing masses.

Justin blinked and retracted his neck when a heavy man without sweater bumped hard against him.

"Hey! The Stone Age is over, Mister Flintstone!" Emmett called after the unknown man and patted Justin's hand. "Isn't it just unbelievable how impolite some people are?" He put the boy next to the bar and began to busy himself with a couple of bottles and glasses. "But no worries, auntie Emmett'll make you a wonderful relaxation cocktail. Rum or Vodka?"

"Yes." Justin looked apathetic up to the ceiling and started to rock softly. His belly felt quite ill and his head hurt. He really would've preferred to go back into his bed with the soft pillow.

"Plake."

"What was that, darling?" Emmett asked without looking up and garnished a perfect Vodka Tonic with a small lemon slice before passing the glass to the kid. "Cheers, Baby."

"Yes." Justin didn't like the strange glass in his hand. The water in it stank and the servant had put fruit salad on the edge.

"Try it." Emmett encouraged and raised his own drink to his lips. "Brian always buys his foreign liquors at the best trader in town. This Vodka comes directly from Russia."

"Yes. Prian." Justin looked uninterestedly to the wall.

"Hach, I love Russia!" Emmett sighed and slurped noisily at his drink. "Fur caps, rough landscapes and just think of all the bathhouses in the- Hello. Cutie..." He interrupted his songs of praise over the foreign culture abruptly as a godlike man in white shorts and laced boots walked by.

Blindly he put his cocktail down on the bar and kissed Justin on the cheek without breaking the visual contact with his new love. "I'll be right back, sweetie. Don't you go anywhere, okay?"

"Yeah." Justin bobbed up and down uncomfortably and wrapped a thin hair strand around his finger. His eyes hurt and he didn't know where the servant had gone. "Plake."

He really would've preferred to go to Prian now and see his beautiful toothbrush in the cup.

"Of course. Certainly Justin Taylor."

With small steps he toddled away and didn't like the many big hands which touched and touched him. There were so many people here in the castle and everything stank like wicked witch and fire dragon.

"You are hot..." Somebody purred into his ear and a man pressed up to him and held him tight and tighter. "Wanna dance?"

Cold lips made his face wet and Justin grew stiff and counted the black stripes that Plake had on his sweater on Tuesday. "One...eleven."

"Why don't you drink that..."

The stinking glass was pushed to his mouth. "Hh!" It was hot, tangy and burned and burned. Everything was like fire. His mouth and his belly and he felt for his cheek when his face began to glow.

He wailed against the shoulder of a man who he had never seen before and closed his eyes tightly shut because somebody took hold of his butt and rubbed and rubbed.

"Ahh...your ass is great. I bet you're so tight..."

Justin opened his eyes again as something hard pressed against his belly and then the whole world simply fell over.

Everything spun and the air was loud and bumped. The thin glass fell down without making a sound and one thousand shards lay together with a yellow piece of fruit salad there on the floor. Then his stomach stung painfully and he howled as the hot puddle water came out of his mouth again and made everything wet.

He didn't fell as the strange man yelled and shouted before pushing him away with a hard hand against his chest. But he couldn't walk very well either. His legs were heavy like stones and the whole castle was askew and crooked. He rubbed his forehead and howled this time only quietly when more hot water ran from his mouth. He looked down and it dripped on his blue slippers. He moved his toes in them and watched as the wet shoes slowly found a way outside. Over a warm wooden floor, on smooth black stone plates and up to the stairs with the naked guy picture.

Certainly he needed one hundred years to climb all the steps and tried to call for Plake, but no voice came from his mouth.

Upstairs, the corridor was cool and it had stopped stinking. The air was no longer so loud but it still roared and bumped in Justin's head. He squinted his eyes and rubbed his fair hair. It was smooth and soft because he had combed it for such a long time.

"Yeah." He plodded further and all the doors were closed. But he knew exactly which one the white cat fur carpet was behind and pushed it open.

"Of course." However, he didn't want to go in there anymore and looked up to the ceiling expressionlessly. "Licks...licks Prian's penis."

"SHIT!" Brian pushed the nameless trick so roughly that he landed on the floor with a loud thud.

Hard, naked and fuming with rage he rolled from the bed and stood with two large steps in front of a blonde boy with a snowy white flannel pyjamas.

He grabbed him hard by the arms and shouted into his face without wasting a second look at his smeary colored face. "You damned little shit! This is a private party and you are not fucking invited!" He shook the boy twice and only let go of him, cursing loudly, when Justin began to gag.

Brian kicked a naked foot against the bed, rubbed his neck, and then snatched the dark skinned man on the carpet roughly by the shoulder. "You need it in writing?! Beat it, Asshole!"

The man threw a death stare into his host's face, fetched his clothes and walked slower than necessary past Justin with one well placed fucker in the kid's direction.

"Yes." Justin swayed, stared up to the ceiling, and didn't even bring his gaze down as he dry heaved again.

Brian looked at him, cursed without saying it out loud and then disappeared, slamming the door to the bathroom.

It lasted only two good minutes until he came out again. With a stone cold expression on his face, jeans which were closed to the very last button, and a half filled glass of tap water.

He pushed it in Justin's hand.

"Drink." It wasn't a kind intonation but he said it calm and without anger in his voice.

"Yes. Of course puddle...pud-" The boy gagged again and started to wail quietly while he was frantically trying to keep his gaze up.

"You have to throw up?" Brian took the glass away and gripped Justin's chin to produce visual contact. "What have you...did you take anything?"

The prince kept Justin's head firm and he whimpered before turning his eyes away because he didn't want to see Prian.

"Justin!" Brian lightly slapped his cheek and looked into blue, watery eyes. "Did you drink? Alcohol?"

He didn't get any reaction and cursed again. "Of course you have. You reek like a fucking distillery!"

He took Justin's a damp, cold hand into his own. "Stupid twat."

He then led him into the bathroom and put him on the toilet seat lid. "Wait here!" He said it extra loud and with anger before he closed the door behind him and left the boy alone.

Justin rubbed his forehead and blinked. He liked it here. It was warm, quiet and everything smelled of beautiful prince. He really would've preferred to stay here on the toilet seat.

"Of course." He opened his legs a little and looked down. "Always closed. Certainly not...not pissing."

It took a long time till the prince came back and Justin found it difficult to keep his eyes open. He was tired and wondered whether it was bedtime on his blue magic alarm clock.

Brian was silent as he came into the bathroom again and locked the door. Without looking at Justin directly, he put turned on the shower and got a couple of towels ready.

Warm fog rose and Justin opened and closed his eyes lazily.

"Take this off. You puked all over yourself."

Justin remained motionless and Brian grabbed the little white pyjama buttons, before he put a wet noodle necklace in the basin.

Justin looked up. The prince seemed nice again.

With two non-coordinated fingers he reached for Prian's face.

Brian didn't avoid the touch, but averted his gaze. "Get up." He took the boy by the arm, helped him to stand up and then bent down for soggy blue slippers. He pulled them off Justin's feet and put them aside. "The pants." With two countless practised grips he shoved the white trousers off Justin's legs and held his unemotional facial expression as he removed badly fitting underwear.

Justin looked aside to the wall and picked at his hair end's. "Two...twenty-two." The tiles on the wall got wet and small water droplets ran down.

"What are you counting?" Brian asked, although he didn't want to know, and took off his own pants.

"Yeah." Justin dry heaved and squeezed his eyes shut because he didn't like it and everything began to spin again.

The older man stepped closer and put a hand to Justin's cheek. "Try breathing through your nose."

"Yes." Justin wheezed loudly in and out.

Brian's thumb brushed over pale skin. "Good boy."

"Yes." Justin opened his eyes again and looked at the prince with helpless blue eyes. "Justin."

Brian hated this expression so much but didn't look away. "You want to take a shower now?"

The boy said nothing at all and blindly grabbed for a brown hair strand.

"Come on." Brian took him by the hand and led him into the shower stall.

"Hh!" The water was warm and drummed. Justin retracted his neck and panted with fright.

"Too hot?" Brian blocked the way to the exit and held the kid firmly with one hand.

Justin licked his lips and then opened his mouth as wide as he could. The water was very good. He poked his tongue out and curled up his nose because the droplets tickled on his face.

With a watchful eye Brian stepped under the jet, rubbed his face a few times and then dragged Justin a bit closer. "You have to stand right under the water."

"Yes." Justin obeyed and stood close beside Prian and extended his tongue again. Smiling.

The corners of Brian's own mouth went up briefly, before he saw the colored water drops that were running down Justin's face. "Why did you paint yourself?"

Justin looked at the prince and blinked intensely against the splashing water.

Brian touched the green lips. "Here. Why did you paint your face?"

"Yes." Justin's look got blank and wandered aside. "Of course the ball. Dance with...dance with Prian."

Two soaped hands stiffened motionlessly in wet brown hair. "Which ball?"

"Yes." Justin rubbed his forehead and started to rock softly under the warm water. "So many...many guests. All in the castle."

Brian pressed his lips tightly together when the hated hot stone fell without warning back into his stomach. He closed his eyes, held his face under the drumming water and washed his hair for a full three minutes before he rinsed the foam and reached without comment for the soap.

A little more roughly than he had intended, he removed the green from a raspberry mouth, blue paint from tightly closed eyes and a remaining red shadow of pale cheeks. And he held the thin face tightly with both hands, even after the color had long disappeared into the drain.

"I like you better without paint." The words were quiet enough not to be regarded as a real statement, but Justin nevertheless looked at him with big, childlike eyes.

"Yes. Certainly beautiful for Prian."

Brian drew his lips into his mouth and held his breath for two seconds without even noticing it. Then he smiled but it didn't look real. "And? Did you like the ball?" It was a stupid question and every word was dripping with hidden anger.

"Yes." Justin sighed a little. He loved the ball. The pictures were all in his book and the prince and the princess danced and danced and almost flew over the shiny floor although none of them could really perform magic. Justin would also...

"...love to dance."

"You want to dance?"

"Yes." The boy swayed from one foot to the other. "Dancing with Prian."

"Hmm. You can't dance without music." Brian leaned his head back, closed his eyes and enjoyed the hot water on his face.

Justin swayed some more. From left to the right, on stiff legs, and after a moment he began to hum. He liked music.

Mister Kinney's forehead wrinkled and he blinked the water from his eyes. "Are you singing now?"

"Yes." The blond looked uninterestedly aside and hummed further. It was a nice song.

Brian stared for a while at his own feet before he finally dared to move one step forward. Without saying anything, he laid his arms on Justin's shoulders and slightly started to move his body.

"You have to put your arms around my waist." He said it almost too quietly under the loud water.

"Yes." But Justin heard it and brought two hands around Prian's back.

"Come here." Brian leaned his forehead against Justin's and drew the slender body a little closer. "To which song are we dancing?"

"Yes." Justin breathed damp warm breath in Prian's face and quietly hummed along.

"What's the song called?"

The boy sang his little melody for a small eternity, before giving a quiet answer. "K-E-double L-O-double good...Kellogg's best to you."

Brian closed his eyes and shoved the tip of his nose against his pale counterpart. "We're dancing to a cornflakes jingle?"

"Yes." Justin's right forefinger began to stroke small movements over one special point at Brian's naked back. "Dancing with my...my prince." He emphasized it completely wrong but said it nevertheless totally clear. "Of course in the rain."

Brian drew his arms around the boy more tightly, and tighter and tighter, until it turned into a real embrace. He held his head a little higher and kissed Justin's nose before he put his cheek on fair, wet hair. He felt the delicate naked body close to his own, heard the soft singing and for a tiny moment, actually allowed the nonsensical thought of dancing in the rain. Anywhere. Together with Justin Taylor...15219 Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA.

And it was ok and the best thing he could think of as a farewell present.

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The castle didn't smell very good and everything was dirty and messy, but all the ball guests were gone now.

Only the servant sat still on the stairway. He looked sad and his eyes were wet.

"Yes." Justin looked down as the prince closed the zipper of a thick silver jacket in front of his belly. "Of course not mine."

Brian closed the jacket up to the collar and spoke in a calm voice. "You like it?"

Justin looked up to the ceiling. The jacket was silver like the prince's sword and also...

"...very warm."

"It's Emmett's. He wanted you to have it. It's cold outside."

"Yes." Justin had many clothes on today, which weren't his own. White shoes with long shoelaces, black underwear, black socks, grey trousers without buttons and a soft T-shirt that was way too big. Everything from Prian. "Of course my pyj....pyjamas."

Brian held a bag up. "Your things are in here. You've thrown up and everything is dirty."

"Yes. Certainly wee-wee."

"No. Puke." Brian put his leather jacket on and searched in his pockets for cigarettes. "And don't say wee-wee."

"Yes." Justin wrapped a hair strand around his finger. "Of course pissing. Prian says."

"Good." Brian grabbed his key, stuck the bag under his arm and reached for Justin's hand. "Come on."

"Wait!" Emmett jumped up, with trembling lips and thick tears in the eyes, and flung his arms around the boy's neck. "Good bye, Baby. Take care of yourself, okay?"

Justin grew stiff and stared up with wide eyes. He didn't know what the servant said.

Emmett caressed the blonde hair and pressed a kiss on Justin's cheek. "I'm so, so sorry."

"Yes." Justin still stared stubbornly upwards as the servant let go of him and Prian led him out of the door and into the courtyard. It was dark, cold and he really would've preferred to...

"...stay with Prian."

Brian ignored him and lit a cigarette one handed, while marching straight ahead with the boy through the gateway.

They stopped at the roadside and Justin looked blankly aside. He liked how the big prince's hand felt around his fingers. All warm and strong.

"Come on." Noisily, Brian blew a long smoke trail into the dark sky and briefly squeezed Justin's fingers before leading him across the street and directly through the big iron gate of the St. James Institution. He threw the cigarette in a wilted ugly rose bush.

The heavy door creaked and no lights were on in the stairwell. Justin counted the steps. At first only quietly and then really loud but the prince didn't say that he was a good boy. The prince said nothing at all. He only walked and opened the ward glass door and then the white one with the 411. He led Justin in, put the bag down and closed the door again quietly.

"I have to go now."

"Yes." Justin stopped next to the little table and softly rocked back and forth.

Brian went over to him and opened the silver jacket. "It's only half past three. You can still go to bed."

"Yes. Certainly eyes are open."

Brian bent down, opened Justin's shoes, pulled them off and put them away. "Come on, take your pants off and go to bed."

"Yes." Awkwardly, the boy climbed out of his far too big trousers and then scratched himself uninterestedly at his butt, when the prince hung the pants together with the silver jacket on the chair's armrest.

Brian held the blanket back "Come here."

"Yes." Justin toddled to the bed, crawled slowly in and looked with big eyes up at Prian, as he pulled the blanket up.

Brian smiled slightly. "Close your eyes."

"No."

"Why not?"

Justin turned his head aside.

Brian went to turn off the lights and laid himself next to the boy on the mattress as he came back. Complete with shoes and leather jacket.

He rolled over onto his side and put an arm over Justin's body. "Sleep." He only whispered the word and could see in the darkness that the blue eyes remained open.

Never had another person laid in his bed, but Justin wasn't frightened. The prince held him tight and tight and smelled of almond cake, little fire sticks and Prian.

Clumsily, he extended a hand and touched soft lips. "Sleep with Prian."

Brian closed his eyes and kissed the cold fingertips. But he didn't say anything and hated the crushing feeling of two hundred pounds of rock, lying heavily and immovably on his chest.

The cool fingers stayed on his lips for a while, then wandered over his face, felt a little clumsily for his closed eyes and finally found their way into brown hair. And they were gentle and stroked around until the hand became too tired to move.

Brian brushed evenly along the form of a distinguish rib, listened to the quiet wheezing sounds and breathed in the smell of warm skin and soft blond hair. For a full 22 minutes, before he carefully got up and drew the thin blanket neatly over the small frame.

For a moment he watched the sleeping figure quietly and then leaned down to bury his nose in Justin's neck. "We'll see each other in your dreams." He said it too low to be able to hear it himself and kissed a soft earlobe.

Then he grabbed the bag with the dirty laundry and left the little sterile room without a last glance back.

...to conduct a clear conversation with the clinic staff about the safety precautions in Mister Taylor's room.

## Chapter 16 – Green Wisdoms

When Blake started his shift that afternoon, a safety lock was attached to the door of room 4.11. One could hear the hysterical screaming from behind the door through out the entire ward.

After a quick look into the documents, Blake also knew why.

"Hmm." He put the case sheet aside and looked at his colleague. "Who is this guy who brought him back?"

Theodore Schmidt sipped at his coffee. "Well, I assume it was Mister Kinney. He visited him once in a while."

"Justin had a visitor?"

"Two or three times during my shifts." Teddy shrugged. "Didn't you ever seen him? He's cute."

Blake shook his head. "And the little one simply strolled out of here last night?"

"Apparently not only last night. Dr. Marcus said he went on regular excursions."

"Hmm." Blake got up. "How long has he been screaming like this? Have you tried talking to him?"

"Sure." Ted got up as well, clearing his cup in the process. "He wailed and blubbered something about wet butterflies in the basin."

Blake raised his eyebrows. "Wet butterflies."

Male nurse Schmidt shrugged his shoulders. "Maybe it was wet bees."

"Ok." Blake rubbed his forehead, inhaled deeply and took his keys off the board. "I'll go and look after him."

"Need any help? The kid can really freak out if he wants to."

"Teddy. It is only Justin."

Hmm. Ted looked after his colleague and popped a peppermint between his lips. Nobody could say he hadn't warned him.

\*\*\*\*\*

Justin didn't know where the prince had gone, the door was closed and all the pulling and rattling wasn't helping.



Sometimes people would come in, but if left, the white door was a thick wall again and remained closed forever.

Justin didn't like it and had to cry a little.

Of course he was captured now and the prince wasn't in his bed anymore. Although he was sure that Prian had slept in it that night. He knew it for sure.

With a clumsy hand, he wiped over his moist eyes and then plodded to his bed and curled up under the thin blanket. He closed his eyes and felt new tears running down his face. Everything here smelled of beautiful prince and almond cake. The mattress, the pillow and even the book hidden underneath it. Only the treasure jewellery had disappeared. Exactly like Prian.

Blake unlocked the door and smiled slightly as he heard the sobs under the blanket.

"Hello Justin."

He put the cup he brought in down on the bedside table, sat on the edge of the bed and pulled the corner of the blanket back.

"Why are you laying here? It's not bed time yet."

Justin tried to be quiet but the noises came out of his mouth anyways. He knew that it wasn't bed time yet, but he didn't want to open his eyes either.

Blake stroked the fair hair. "Don't you want to see what I brought you?"

Justin sobbed somewhat quieter but kept his eyes shut.

The male nurse took the cup. "Look? Chocolate milk. It's still warm."

Justin liked milk. Especially with cookies.

"You want to try it?"

Did he? Justin sniffled and rubbed his nose before raising his head. Yes, he wanted to have the milk. He was very...

"...thirsty."

Blake smiled, wiped Justin's face with a handkerchief and held the cup up with his other hand. "Here."

"Yes." The blue eyes were wet, red rimmed and looked at the male nurse only briefly before ten thin fingers took hold of the cup.

Justin knelt down on the mattress and sniffed curiously into the cup. Hmm. The milk was...

"...of course all dirty."

Blake shook his head. "There's chocolate in it. It makes the milk brown."

"Yes." Justin looked back at the milk and then with disinterest to the side. "Certainly all dirty."

Blake sighed and put the cup back on the bedside table. "Doctor Marcus said you made an excursion last night."

Justin's eyes wandered up to the ceiling.

"Over, on the other side of the street. To the big mansion."

Justin curled his nose. Of course the prince's castle was rather big and also really beautiful.

"Do you know the man who lives there?"

Did he? Yes, of course. They had introduced each other. Justin Taylor and Prian. With a big P like Prince and Pudding. Justin smiled. He liked Prian.

Blake smiled too. "Is he nice? Nurse Schmidt said that sometimes he paid you visits."

"Yes." Justin started to rock back and forth softly and twisted a finger into his blond hair. Of course the prince came to save him with the red cup and the shiny...

"...silver sword."

"He has a sword?"

Did he? The boy wrinkled his forehead. Actually Prian didn't have any swords. Only foamy soap and delicious...

"...water."

"He has water?"

"Yes."

"He gave you water?"

"Yes. My Prian."

"His name is Brian?"

"Yes. Prian."

"He walked you home last night, right?"

"Yes." Justin rubbed his ear. "Of course don't cross the fucking...fucking street alone. Prian says."

"He takes you across the street?"

"Yes. Holding hands with Prian."

Blake smiled. "He takes you by the hand, hmm?"

Justin smiled too. "Yeah."

The nurse's face grew serious again. "Justin. Do you know Brian spoke to Dr. Marcus yesterday?"

"Yeah." Justin liked the white ceiling and wanted to paint yellow butterflies on it. With a blue wax crayon. He giggled. Blue yellow-butterflies.

"Brian's worried because you leave your room without letting somebody know. He thinks you shouldn't cross the street alone."

"Yeah." Of course the prince always became...

"... very angry."

"No. He isn't angry. He just wants us to take better care of you. So nothing bad happens."

"Yes." Perhaps he also could paint the dwarf. Without a cap and beard but with many stones.

"That's why Dr. Marcus decided that your door should be locked with a key. See?" Blake held the keys up. "I put it into the lock on the outside of your door and can open and close it."

Justin looked at the shiny bunch of keys closely. Of course Plake was the tower guard and would never let him free again because the princess had to stay in the tower forever and ever.

He looked to the side and bobbed up and down a bit. His belly pinched terribly.

"Justin. It doesn't mean you can't leave your room anymore." The nurse tried to touch Justin's shoulder but the boy flinched away. "You have an alarm button. Here, right next to the bed and another one next to the door. You push it and someone will come to look after you. If you want to go for a walk or into the community room, a nurse will go with you, okay? You just can't go on your own anymore. It's too dangerous."

Justin didn't want to speak with Plake and made an angry face. He started to count everything beautiful. Prian's brown eyes, Prian's strong fingers, the pear tree in the castle gardens and the green frog underneath. "Two, two...one." He counted loudly and angry and pushed Plake's fingers away. He hated the shiny, tinkling key and he hated the alarm button next to the bed.

"Justin." Blake tried to stroke the blond hair soothingly, but the boy turned his head and shouted at him.

"Not Prian!"

"No. Plake. We're friends, right? Plake and Justin."

Justin stared in the direction of the window and bobbed around on his heels for a little while, before giving a dark answer.

"Blake."

\*\*\*\*\*

At 3 am, Brian couldn't bear it any longer. Cursing, he rolled off the mattress, stomped over to the window, threw it shut, and stomped back to his bed to fling himself furiously under the blanket again.

He sighed, waited a moment, then closed his eyes contentedly, and-

'Rebbit-Rebbit'

"Fuck!" He opened them again three seconds later, as the ubiquitous frog croaking could be heard easily. Even through the tightly closed window.

Ok, this was it. Kermit could make his appointment for the coroner's inquest!

Grumbling, Mister Kinney jumped out off bed again, trampled down the stairs with nothing on except really fantastic fitting boxer shorts, and started digging through the kitchen drawers in search of a proper murder weapon.

The damn critter prevented him for the third night in row from getting his well deserved sleep and in the life of every man there was a healthy tolerance limit, which was exceeded at some point.

His eyes sparkled evilly as he pulled a barbecue fork out of the cupboard and decided instead in favour of a big meat mallet, before heading into the garden.

Fifteen minutes and an unsuccessful frog hunt later, the terrace door was thrown shut. The meat mallet landed with a clatter against the wall and Mister Kinney typed one of his emergency numbers into the buttons of his telephone.

It tooted three times before a young voice in correct Oxford English snuffled through the receiver. "This is the Institute for biological pest control, you're speaking to Michael Thomas E. Davis, how may I help you?"

Brian was a little irritated by so much politeness at half past three in the morning and grumbled somewhat mistrustfully into the mouthpiece. "Hhm. Kinney here. You do home visits, too?"

At the other end of the line a short typing could be heard. "But of course Mister Kinney. The customer comes first at our company. May I assume that there is an infestation on your private property?"

"You bet your ass it is!" Brian immediately felt 50% better and really well supported by this company. "I haven't gotten any sleep in past three nights because of all the fucking noise in the garden."

Typing could be heard again. "I see. Has the infestation expanded into your home yet?"

Brian blinked and then wrinkled his forehead. He surely hoped the damned toad didn't have any plans so far to set a foot/paw/fin/whatever into his house. But you could never know...

"Not yet! How fast can you be here?"

"Well, Mister Kinney, of course none of our employees are in the office at this hour, but, if you consider your situation quite urgent, I will execute this assignment myself, if you would be kind enough to confirm your personal information."

"Hh." Brian grumbled again and passed his address to the friendly British guy at the other end of the connection. "And you should bring the poison for big animals. The fucking thing is really persistent."

"I can assure you, Mister Kinney, here at Biological pest control we are absolutely up-to-date with the scientific research. Don't you worry."

"Hhm."

"Wonderful. Thank you very much for your call. I'll be on my way."

"Great." Brian mumbled what could be interpreted as 'Goodbye' for answer, before he put the receiver down.

Damn Englishmen. So much fucking politeness couldn't be healthy by any means...

-----

Fifteen minutes later a young man in a tweed jacket entered Brighton's courtyard on a dark green Dutch bike, took his wooden box from the carrier and cleaned his polished shoes on Mister Kinney's doormat.

"Mister Kinney, " He said with a firm handshake and small nod of his head. "It's a pleasure to meet you. May I say, I'm really impressed by your stately home."

"Yeah." Brian examined the skinny guy in the doorframe more critically. Perhaps he should've asked Santos with the big spade to come over to help. After all, the fucking toad under the pear tree wasn't one of the small kind.

"If you could point me directly to the affected areas in your garden, please?"

"Hh." Brian closed the door behind him and led the vermin exterminator around into the dark garden. "It was over there the last time I saw it. I know it's dark but perhaps I could-"

"Oh, that should be fine, Mister Kinney." The busy Brit rummaged with both hands in his wood case and in the next moment, switched on a handy 500 watt searchlight. "I am very well prepared for situations like this. You wouldn't believe how often I'm stuck in some dark place."

"Damnfuckingshit!" Mister Kinney stumbled haphazardly over a neglected garden hose and rubbed his eyes.

"Upsa-daisy! See? This is exactly the reason why I always use to say," A smart forefinger rose into the cool night air. "A tidy house, a tidy mi-Oha!" The young man stopped abruptly and whispered. "Did you hear that? A pond frog. *Rana esculenta*. My guess, it's a fully-grown female."

Brian couldn't see any reason for the lowered volume. "That's really fascinating. You have the poison gun in your fucking wood trunk now. So what's the hold up?! I'd like to see the damned thing dead before sunrise!"

"Sssh!" Mister Davis brought a finger to his lips and shone his lamp as he searched for the frog, while carefully stepping over the expensive lawn. "Perhaps you would prefer to wait in the house, Mister Kinney? Amphibians are very sensitive creatures, you know?"

"Sensitive my ass..." Brian mumbled and trudged in the direction of the terrace door.

Kermit better enjoy his last three minutes on earth, because frog legs were definitely on the menu tomorrow.

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"Hello? Mister Kinney?" At 4.20 am, a British vermin exterminator knocked at Brian's terrace door and tried to peer through the mirrored glass. "Are you in there?"

Brian rolled his eyes, stubbed out his cigarette and rose with great effort from the sofa to open the door. "Is it dead?"

Mister Davis looked around in alarm. "What?!"

"The fucking frog. You got it, or what?!"

"Oh," The Brit smiled, blushing. "But yes of course! A lovely specimen. Dark skinned and a very distinctive back line. These are extremely rare."

Brian raised his eyebrow and looked around. "Hmm. And where is it? Buried? Burned?"

"Of course not, sir. The *Rana esculenta* is protected by the conservation of nature."

"Protected." Mister Kinney wasn't really fond of a term like that.

"That's right. These species are extremely rare in our country and worldwide. They are threatened by extinction. Therefore I suggest," The young man entered unasked and opened his wood case. "You lay out a species-appropriate pond. Here are the schemes." He pushed a couple of paper sheets into his client's hand.

Brian blinked, unable to cope. "A fucking pond!?"

"Well, a water place with sandy sub-ground, so the frog will have the possibility to hibernate and spawn next spring."

Brian blinked once again before his eyebrows contracted darkly. "What the hell?! I will not dig any fucking pond for the fucking frog! I called you to dispose the damn thing!"

Mister Davis remained completely calm, confronted with such an emotional outburst. "I'm really sorry Mister Kinney, but I am afraid I'm bound to the laws of conservation and the *Rana esculenta* is-"

"What do you mean fucking bound?! You're a goddamned vermin exterminator! It's your fucking job to kill these things!"

"Well actually," A forefinger lifted for the second time that night, "I am not only an exterminator but also an honorary member of Pennsylvania's biggest association for nature protection and landscape conservation."

Brian growled.

"And if you may excuse my bluntness," The Englishman conjured a little business card out of his tweed jacket, "I am also the leader for the reduction of aggressions in your daily life. A tester hour is for free."

Brian's death stare slowly melted a little hole between Mister Davis' eyes.

"Well then," The young man cleared his throat, adjusted his jacket, fetched his wood case and nodded politely with his head. "I think I'll find the way out myself. And please don't hesitate to consult me for any support or advice concerning the damp biotope."

Mister Kinney remained motionless, stared after the man till he had disappeared from the door, threw his pond plans on the floor furiously and slammed the terrace door shut. Finally, he slumped on the sofa for a necessary sedation-cigarette.

...and it seemed to work wonderfully too, until a metallic sounding 'Rebbit-Rebbit' easily echoed through the mirrored glass doors.

Damnedfuckingshit.

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On October the first there were oatmeal and raisins for breakfast and Justin threw both on the floor because he wanted toast with cream cheese.

On October the second it rained in front of the window and Justin painted a beautiful prince with a water droplet on the nose.

Miss Etersen wanted to hang it up but Justin tore the picture in half and furiously knocked over the box of crayons, before he hid under the table for three hours.

On October the third it was Friday, there was pudding for dessert and Justin has thought about Christmas so much that he crawled under his bed to cry.

On October the fourth he decided it was very comfortable under the bed and listened to the radio there the whole day. It was silver and the little buttons shined pretty in the darkness.

On October the fifth two tall men came and lifted the bed up so that Blake and male nurse Schmidt could pull Justin out from under it.

He screamed and wanted his butterflies and yellow wings because one didn't have to use doors if they had yellow wings. He didn't get any butterflies, but a syringe that stung and bit and made his eyes heavy like stones.

Justin thought of Prian's belly-button before he fell asleep.

On October the sixth many people came. Dr. Bruckner, Miss Etersen and the man with the MARCUS nametag. Everyone chattered and chattered and nobody gave Justin the big key for the wall door. Justin looked out of the window and counted every white beet he ever ate at the prince's beautiful castle.

On October the seventh Nurse Sherman asked whether Justin had to do wee-wee into the toilet. Justin said "Fuck...fucking pissing." and made a big yellow puddle in the middle of his room.

On October the eighth, Justin combed his blond hair for three hours; crying.

Then he beat his head so hard against the mirror that it broke into a thousand shards.

-----

In the afternoon of October the eighth, nurse Blake didn't go to his car in the parking lot after his shift, but walked across the street to ring the doorbell at the splendid door of a former Playboy mansion.

It took almost five minutes until someone opened it for him. The man in the doorframe was tall, handsome and dirty from head to toe.

"Hello. Are you Brian Kinney?"

Brian looked at the blond man on his doormat critically. "Yes. What do you want?! I'm busy."

"Yes. I can see that." Blake smiled. "Gardening? Looks like a ...big project."

Brian wiped a dirty hand across his forehead. "I'm digging a fucking pond."

"Wow." Blake nodded and looked to the side. "Ah look...my name is Blake. I work over on the other side of the street."

Brian's facial expression changed in a fraction of seconds, but he didn't say a single word.

"I am a nurse in Justin's ward."

"Hmm." Brian looked to his shoes and rubbed his neck. "Plake."

Blake laughed briefly. "The former Plake. The P was revoked and I am punished with the bad B."

Brian couldn't find the humor in it.

"But you..." Blake gestured a little nervously. "Ahm...you're still Prian. Just in case you're...well you know." He looked away and rubbed his neck too.

Brian wasn't sure what to say and wished he had his cigarettes.

"I don't know how well you know him. Justin I mean." Blake shifted uncomfortably from the right foot to the left. "According to what I'm told you visited him sometimes and I know the little one likes you. He smiles when he talks about you."

Brian's face remained blank but he rubbed two fingers over the door knob. "And?"

The nurse looked at the other man directly. "He's not well. He's suffering under the new... rules."

Brian tore his head up sharply. "And what the fuck should I do about that?"

"You could visit him."

Brian held the look a moment before he looked away and shook his head. "I have to go now. I'd like to get done today."

Blake pressed his lips tightly together and nodded. "Yes. Of course. I just wanted to..." He took a step back and turned to go. "Good luck with the pond."

Brian slammed the door shut and cursed at the croaking frog in the garden for the next hour, while trying to lay out the gigantic black foil without any folds.

-----

On October the 11th, Justin still had a big white bandage on his forehead and pushed Doctor Cameron's bell again and again and again.

He knew that there were far too many lines to actually build the word Prian but he didn't like all the other words and rang and rang and called the prince name loudly until the syringe bit into his arm and his eyes grew heavy like stones.

When they opened again, Justin wasn't in the community room anymore and a big Tuna-Cheese Sandwich lay on his nightstand because it was, of course, supper time.

"Yes..." Justin still felt tired and rubbed his left ear weakly. "Of course Justin hates... hates...tuna." And he looked at the stupid fish sandwich for a long time. Until his eyes were quite wet and blurred and he sobbed loudly. He then pushed his face back into the pillow but it didn't smell like Prian anymore and of course he would never be able to eat meat from boxes and sit on a high wall again like the egg in wonderland.

-----

In the evening of October the 11th, Brian stood on the terrace and smoked his second cigarette while Santos watered the last of the plants at the edge of the pond.

And even though he hated the damn pond quite as much as the damn frog, which sat croaking in it's middle, he couldn't ignore the fact that together they looked astonishingly nice. Slantwise between the crippled pear tree and the stupid hydrangea.

When Santos looked over to him and smiled seductively, Brian threw his cigarette away, went back into the house, put his jacket and shoes on, grabbed a box of pasta from the kitchen cupboard, and left his playboy castle to cross the street.

Seven steps over black asphalt, through a big iron gate and a heavy entry door, 248 steps upstairs and straight ahead over the stinking corridor of ward four. Without looking to the left or the right, directly to a door that wasn't green but was marked with the number 411.

"Mister Kinney." Nurse Schmidt put a tray down on the cart and smiled broadly. "You haven't been here in a while. It's nice seeing you again." He brushed a hand through his dark hair.

Brian didn't even look at him. "Is his door locked?"

"What?" Nurse Schmidt seemed a little confused. "Oh, you mean Justin's door? Yes, of course. Twenty-four hours as ordered. Only God knows what could've happened if it weren't for you Mister Kin-"

Brian didn't have any desires to hear stories. Neither about himself nor about God. "You have the key?"

"Absolutely!" The nurse smiled proudly. "Would you like to pay him a visit? It isn't visiting time but I can make an exception if you would like to-"

Brian rubbed his forehead in frustration. "Could you just open the fucking door?"

Ted immediately unlocked the door and held it open for his favourite visitor. "There you are, Mister Kinney. When you want to leave, simply push the button right here next to the doorframe."

"Hmm." Brian entered the little room with an ache in his stomach and closed the door behind him. It smelled of tuna, urine and Justin and all he could see was a big mess as far as the eye could see. He saw the slender boy sitting on the bed. Crying and wailing in front of a sandwich plate.

Brian stopped in the middle of the room and didn't have the chance to say anything before Justin looked in his direction with red rimmed eyes and a big bandage on his forehead.

"Of course. Certain..." He sobbed bitterly and brushed a few blond hairs out of his face. "...certainly very hungry."

Brian stayed where he was and pointed slightly forward with his hand. "Eat your Sandwich if you're hungry."

"No!" Justin cried more loudly and threw his right arm up in a defiant gesture, while his eyes showed pure despair. "Certain-nly Sat...Saturday!" Weeping, he let himself fall down, face first into a grey pillow. "Justin hate- hates tuna!" His voice was shrill and hardly understandable between deep sobs and muffled from the cheap cushion filling.

Brian stepped closer, placed the noodle box he had brought on the nightstand, "Drama queen." Before he bent down a little to speak into Justin's ear. "And you're also very rude. Aren't you planning on telling me hello?"

The boy listened to what he was told and pushed his nose deeper into the pillow with a loud wail. "The do-oor is closed!"

"I know." Brian leaned his forehead against blond hair.

"Certainly not into the castle!" Justin's voice once again changed into shrill tones. "Vis-visit!"

"You wanted to pay me a visit?"

"Ye-es!" Justin sobbed. „Of course...my P-Prian!"

"Hmm." Brian watched himself as he wrapped blond hairs around his finger. "No. You can't cross the street."

Ten thin fingers cramped in the pillow on the left and right and pressed the soft material tighter against a puffy face.

Brian stood upright and clapped Justin's head softly. "Stop it. You can't breathe properly if you do that."

But Justin was stubborn and didn't change his position. Only when he heard Prian step away, did he turn his face a little to the side.

The prince walked around the room, took a small silver box from his pocket, stopped and held it to his ear. "Yes, It's me. Order me the usual from Kazuo and have it delivered to St. James. Yes." It made 'click' and the prince put the box away again before sitting in the chair, over at the little table.

It stood rather far away and Justin had to crane his neck to see Prian. It was difficult because he was still sobbing and sniffing and he didn't want to actually move.

Brian leaned back in the old chair and remained completely quiet, while staring at Justin directly.

Justin stared back. With wet blue eyes, a thumb at red lips, and every few seconds sniffing sadly.

It was really unbelievable what a princess the boy could be and after two minutes of silent staring, Brian raised his left eyebrow. "You know, if you get a visitor, you're supposed to have a conversation with them."

Was he? Justin sniffled again and let out a shuddering breath.

Brian nodded his head in Justin's direction. "What happened to your forehead?"

Automatically, the boy turned his eyes up to be able to look at his forehead.

"You have a bandage there."

"Yes." Justin grabbed and felt it curiously. It was soft and stuck and stuck.

Brian watched the boy for another minute before he said something again. "Come here. I want to see it."

"Yeah." Justin looked up to the ceiling.

"Justin."

"Yes."

"Get up and come over here."

"Yes." A little awkward, the boy kneeled down, rocked in this position for a moment, rubbed his ear, and crawled backwards off the mattress.

With little steps and his gaze held to the side, he toddled forwards and stopped right beside Brian's chair.

Brian waved him closer with two fingers. "Show me your forehead."

"Yes." Justin's look changed from the wall to the ceiling. Then he knelt on the floor directly in front of the prince's legs and opened his mouth as far as he could.

Brian smiled. "Not your teeth." He gripped Justin's chin, drew the thin face a little closer and used the other hand to wipe the long strands of hair to the side and examined the bandage.

It was dirty and didn't stick properly anymore.

Carefully, he pulled at a loose corner and tried to look under it at the wound.

It looked like a cut, not very big but quite deep. It seemed as if it had bled for some time and had now scabbed with reddened skin all around. "What did you hurt yourself on?"

Justin still had his mouth wide open and tried to peer up at Brian's fingers at his bandage.

"Justin." Brian let go of the bandage and looked at the boy directly. "Did it hurt?"

Did it? Yes, the mirror was rather bad and had...

"...of course bitten."

"What bit you?"

"Yes. Certainly the mirror." Justin looked at where the mirror was placed on the wall. Now it was gone.

"The mirror bit you?"

"Yes. Of course always bites Justin...Justin Taylor."

"Hmm. It's called cutting. Mirrors don't bite."

"Yes."

Brian looked around the room. It was dirty, it smelled and he was beginning to wonder who was responsible for the room's daily care. "When was the last time somebody came to clean your room?" When he didn't get an answer, he looked at Justin, waiting.

Justin stared back. With big, blue innocent eyes.

"You don't know?"

Justin blinked twice. He thought the prince was so beautiful.

Slowly, Brian was becoming slightly irritated by the boy's position, kneeling on the floor between his legs. So he looked away in anger. "Get up. People don't sit on the floor."

"Yes." Justin got up clumsily and stood in front of the prince.

Brian tapped his thigh. "Come here."

Justin looked up. "Yes. Of course no...no free chair." He said and rubbed his nose. "Sit on Brian." Stiffly, he sat down on Brian's lap.

The older man looked at him in amusement and put an arm loosely around slim hips. "Hey."



Justin looked blankly up to the ceiling. "Hello." He liked to sit on Prian's legs. The prince was so warm and smelled of almonds and held him tightly and tightly. He wanted to sit here for ever and let out a little sigh before putting his head on Prian's shoulder.

For a moment, Brian didn't know how to react, but then forgot about his 'Mister Kinney doesn't cuddle' rule before bringing a hand casually to the back of Justin's head.

And when the boy put one clumsy arm around him, he decided that it felt absolutely not lesbionic to sit with somebody like this.

So he simply remained sitting with Justin's arm around his stomach, Justin's head on his shoulder and Justin's warm breath on his neck.

Sometime his fingers began to stroke through blond hair and his own head tipped over a little to connect with the boys forehead.

Justin was glad that the prince came to his tower and had broken down the thick wall door.

He liked Prian so much. He tried to be quiet and not move because he could hear the even ba-bam ba-bam of Prian's heart. And when the prince began to speak quiet words, it rumbled lovely in Prian's throat and Justin thought of big purring cats, with brown silk fur and tickle-tongues.

"You forgot your frog in my garden."

Justin smiled. He liked the frog and the blue well water.

Brian felt the boy grin against his neck and started to caress the soft hairs on Justin's neck. "You like that, do you? Do you have any idea of the horrible noise the fucking toad makes all night? Some people need their beauty rest, you know?"

As if testing, Justin poked his tongue against the nice smelling skin in the crook of Prian's neck. It tasted like prince and sugar.

Brian's eyes closed unconsciously for almost three seconds. "Fucking frog." Then he tore them up again and clapped Justin on the bottom. "Come on, get your jacket. We have to go outside for a little while."

"Yes." Justin didn't move one millimetre. "Of course going for a walk. Many stones."

Brian nevertheless shoved him off his lap. "Come on, where's the jacket I've given to you?"

"Yes." Justin didn't want to stand. "Certainly very warm."

"Hmm." Brian opened two closet doors, found what he was looking for and helped the kid to put it on. He closed the zipper, checked his own jacket for all his important things and pointed to a couple of old gym shoes under the shelf. "Put them on."

"Yes. Of course into the castle. White beet with toast." The blond needed almost three minutes to put his shoes on.

Brian waited patiently, took the plate with the tuna sandwich in one hand and held the other one out for Justin. "Press the button."

"No." Of course Justin didn't like the bell button and looked up to the ceiling uninterestedly.

"If you don't push it, we can't go out."

They couldn't? Justin looked nervously to the window, then to the door and finally pressed the little button without looking at it.

Brian squeezed Justin's hand. "Good boy."

"Yeah." Justin's belly got quite warm. "Justin."

"Here I am." A voice could be heard, the tinkling of a key, and then the door was open and Nurse Schmidt stood broadly smiling in the corridor. "You want to go Mister Kinney?"

"For a short walk." Brian explained, pushed the plate into the nurse's hand and left the room with Justin in tow. "We'll remain in the area and be back in fifteen minutes."

"Okay." A little perplexed, Nurse Schmidt looked from his favorite visitor to the sandwich plate and back again. "No Problem."

"Great. And who knows maybe you'll even find someone who'll clean Mister Taylor's room in the meantime and pick up the dirty laundry."

Theodore blinked. "Well..."

"Oh and..." Brian turned around a last time and raised his finger in warning. "Nobody touches the book as long as we're gone."

"Yes." Justin smiled blissfully as he held Prian's strong hand and wound his hair around his finger with the other. He liked his book.

"Of course Mister Kinney." Nurse Schmidt said slightly guilty and disappeared to find Isabella with the cleaning cart.

\*\*\*\*\*

The prince had walked down the stairs with Justin, over the long court entry and through the high iron gate. But right behind it they had stopped. On the sidewalk with the slit-stones.

Justin wailed a bit and pulled on Prian's hand. He really would've preferred to go...

"...across the street."

Brian lit a cigarette, took a long drag and shook his head as he blew the smoke out again.

"Not today. We're waiting here."

Justin wailed louder and tugged even harder at the prince's fingers. But they drew themselves only tighter around his hand.

"Are you hungry?"

Was he? Justin stopped wailing and looked down at his belly. It was hidden behind the thick silver jacket but he could feel it nevertheless. It was empty and rumbled and he really would've preferred to have...

"...white beet." He looked at the prince with big eyes.

Brian blew the smoke aside and pointed with the cigarette in his hand to a car in the distance.

"Yes. Your meal is being delivered by a car."

It was? "Oooh." Fascinated, Justin watched as the little red car got closer and stopped rattling exactly in front of the tower.

"This is Kazuo." The older one stuck his cigarette between his lips and used his free hand to pull his wallet out of his jacket.

A slim man with black hair and thin eyes got out and held a bag up. "Kong Paow chicken? It's twelve dolla' and sixty cent, please."

"Ha!" Justin laughed enthusiastically and grabbed for the bag. He knew exactly what was in it. White beet and meat in boxes. He liked box food!

Brian nodded while paying and giving a generous tip before he let Justin carry the bag back into the tower.

"Watch out, it's hot."

"Yes." Justin held the rustling bag very carefully and walked the whole way in a bent position, holding Prian's hand because he wanted to sniff at the wonderful boxes somehow.

"If you don't look forwards, you'll fall down the stairs." Brian pushed the glassy ward door open, walked with Justin through the long corridor and stopped in front of the nurses room.

Immediately Nurse Schmidt appeared. "Mister Kinney! How was your walk? Isabella just finished Justin's roo-"

"Hmm." Brian grumbled and waved impatiently with his hand. "We need the jailer."

"Jailer-Ah!" The nurse laughed and took the key off the board. "Always at your service, Mister Kinney!"

"Great." Brian presented a fake smile and followed the nurse while rolling his eyes.

Justin toddled away behind him, his full attention turned towards the bag.

"There you go." Schmidt held the door open with a big smile. "Please let me know if there is anything else I can do for you, sir."

Brian pushed Justin into the room and took the bag away from him. "You can have the food when you're done taking off your jacket and shoes."

The boy looked shocked for a moment, but then bent down to untie his shoes.

Brian addressed the male nurse with his best business tone. "Are you authorized to change bandages, Theodore?"

Full of pride, the nurse grew up two sizes. "Yes, of course Sir. That is one of my many jobs here."

"Good. Then you'll surely agree with me that Mister Taylor's bandage should be changed."

Schmidt looked from his favorite visitor to Justin's forehead and back again. "Absolutely, sir. I'll arrange that immediately."

"Not immediately. Mister Taylor will eat first. You can do it afterwards." Brian decided and turned his attention back to Justin to help the boy with the zipper of his jacket. "And leave the door open. I'm on my way home."

This wasn't Mr Schmidt's favorite thing to hear but he nodded anyways and pulled the door shut only halfway when he left the room. "Of course, Sir."

"Into the closet." Brian held the jacket out for Justin, pointed to the wardrobe and started to unpack the plastic bag on the table.

Justin needed two minutes to put the big silver jacket on the hanger and close the wardrobe doors. Then he stopped uneasily next to the table.

Three white boxes stood there and smelled like wonderful prince food. Full of hope, he looked up to Prian.

Brian pointed at the chair. "Sit down. You want to use the chop sticks?"

"Of course. Certainly wood." Justin really didn't want to eat with wood sticks and put a finger into an open box. "Ooh." The food was soft and all warm. He licked his finger and smacked his lips noisily.

Brian smiled. "Good?"

Justin dug excitedly for a white beet, fished it out and carefully licked the brown sauce off while looking at the prince attentively.

Brian nodded and pointed to Justin's bedside table where he had put the noodle box. "See what I've brought?"

The boy followed with his eyes. "Ha!" He laughed happily. "Butterflies!" It was so nice in the tower today! The prince was there and so many boxes! Food in boxes and butterflies in boxes. He wanted to go and look whether all of them were yellow or not.

"Sit down and eat." Brian held him by the shoulder. "Tomorrow I'll come back and bring cord."

Justin said nothing. He only looked up to Prian, held a white beet in front of the prince's mouth and poked his own tongue out in expectation.

Mister Kinney looked down at the greasy soy sprout, critically. "It's unhygienic to eat with your fingers." But opened his mouth anyways and ate out of the boy's hand.

Justin stared at Prian's mouth fascinated and tried to push his finger between the closed lips. He wanted to see where Prian's tongue was.

Brian turned his head away. "Your necklace is gone, Justin. You know where it is?"

"Yes." Justin concentrated on his boxes again and found a piece of meat. Of Course his beautiful treasured jewellery was...

"...not under the pillow anymore."

"Yes, it's in the trash because it was wet and disgusting. You puked all over it."

"Hh!" The boy's head jerked up alarmed.

"I'll bring cord tomorrow. Then you can make a new one."

Could he? Justin looked at the prince suspiciously. Of course it was very...

"...very difficult."

Brian bent down and whispered in Justin's ear. "If you promise not to tell, I'll help you."

Attentively Justin listened to what the prince said to him. "Yes." And nodded then seriously.

Brian kissed his temple and whispered once again. "That's my boy."

"Yeah." Justin leaned proudly into Prian's touch. "Justin."

"Look at me."

The boy turned his head and looked at Prian with big, blue eyes.

Brian smiled "Later." Before kissing Justin directly on the mouth and walking away.

Justin looked after him, surprised and a bit frightened. He didn't want the prince to go.

He would've preferred to...

"...sleep with Prian."

Brian stopped in the doorframe and turned around. "No sleeping. Eat."

"Eat with Prian?"

Brian really hated the innocent hopeful eyes that stared at him and looked down to the floor, before he shook his head. "I have to go. Eat your white turnips."

"Yes. Certainly white beet."

"What ever." Brian rubbed his neck. "When's visiting time?"

"Yes. Of course two...two pm."

Brian nodded. "I'll be back tomorrow at 2 pm."

Justin looked a little worried from Prian to his blue magic alarm clock. Of course it was a very long time until tomorrow.

When he looked back to the door again, the beautiful prince had disappeared.

...and all that was left was a thick, cold wall.

Chapter 17

On Sunday morning Justin abandoned his fruit salad and ate his waffles at the window. There wasn't a table and also no chair, but the view of a lovely castle.

It was still six hours till visiting time.

Then the prince would come across the street on his horse and with his shiny silver sword in his hand.

Hmm. Justin licked the sugar off a waffle and then pressed his forehead against the cold window pane. Of course Prian never came on a horse. And he never had a sword in his hand, either. Only fire sticks and Justin's fingers. Justin smiled behind the plate. He liked holding hands with Prian.

-----

One would have thought every average American household would comply with a general standard and be equipped with a couple of basic necessities like a can opener, coffee filters, matches, flower fertilizer, and: customary string.

But far from it, because "Fuck"!

Even after a two-hour marathon search operation in every single corner of Brighton, including the damp cellar and the disgustingly dusty attic, the closet thing to a string Mister Kinney could find, was the tear-proof 3 feet long bondage rope from his toy box.

So much for the topic of 'noodle knotting with princess Taylor'.

Frustrated, Brian threw the black rope into the box again, slumped back on his bed and three minutes and one Marlboro later decided to ask for external help.

Blindly he reached for the telephone on his bedside table, sighed deeply and pushed speed dial number 4.

"Hey Deb, It's me." He paused, sighed once again wearing an expression of disdain, because he really couldn't bear this disgrace. "So...do you still have your sewing machine and all these colourful...strings?"

-----

Daphne puffed her cheeks out and folded her arms in front of her chest. Justin was really boring today. "You are really boring today, Justin!" She looked grimly at the boy, but didn't receive any reaction. "You never look at me, only at the stupid clock!"

Tic-tic-tic. Justin blinked and wondered how Alice could come through the thick wall door. He didn't like for Alice to be in his room. Alice smelled of flowers and had a far too thick chest. He really would've preferred to be alone so he could count the tic-tic-tic until visiting time.

Daphne gave Justin a shove into the arm. "Look at me now!"

Justin rubbed the hurting spot on his upper arm and continued staring at the face of his alarm clock.

"You are stupid!" Daphne explained and pushed Justin again, before stomping away and pressing the alarm button next to the door.

"Yes." Justin rubbed his arm once again. It stung and stung but he didn't stop his counting and did it now even more loudly. "Tic. tic, tic."

Nurse Sherman came with the tinkling key and opened the thick wall door.

"Justin is stupid today!" And Alice stomped with heavy steps out of the room.

Then everything was all closed and quiet again and Justin continued counting but without a sound.

Only four hours until visiting time. Huh. He rubbed his aching arm and really wished time would not be so terribly slow.

-----

"What the hell for, why do you of all people need a whole fucking wool ball from me?!" Debbie pushed her hands into her hips and Brian felt really uncomfortable under her piercing x-ray eyes.

"I just need it!" He really had no idea why he was forced to justify his motives here. Didn't this women harbor seven truckloads of wool in this big basket under her sewing table? What difference would it make if one goddamn single ball was missed?

"Brian Kinney," she began to stick her evil forefinger in his direction, "Don't be under the false impression that I know nothing about the perverted small bondage games you host in your bedroom on a regular basis! My Michael tells me everything and-"

"Since when has Michael anything to do with my goddamn fucking bedroom?!" Brian knew he had no real reason for reacting so furiously but he really hated to be treated like that. After all not everything in his life was about sex. "And I need the stupid wool because I promised a brat who lives in the fucking lunatic asylum next to my house, that I'd make him a new noodle necklace, okay?!" Okay... and he hated it even more, if in the critical state of pure rage, he accidentally let slip some delicate information, which under normal circumstances he would've only dared to think about. Privately in his bedroom. Under the blanket with loud music on.

Debbie stared at him, with her finger three inches from his right eye, the other hand on her hip and a deadly 'Don't you dare be telling me any bullshit!' look in the painted eyes. And she kept this exact position for 45 silent seconds before a proud smile illuminated her face completely and her warm fingers patted over Brian's cheek.

"Aww, this is probably the sweetest thing I've ever heard come from your mouth, kiddo!"

-----

The kitchen staff had decided not to cook lamb on Sundays anymore, but instead to serve duck with orange sauce and Justin ignored the male nurse who sat with a raised fork next to him.

"Aren't you hungry?"

Male nurse Max was only the temporary help on this ward and actually found it quite interesting so far, even if some patients had to be handled a little extravagantly.

"I'm sure it's good."

Justin pressed his lips tightly together and tried to look past the male nurse at his alarm clock. It was six minutes past twelve. Only one more hour and forty-five minutes till Brian came. He smiled and then turned his head away. He really didn't like fried bird with fruit salad.

-----

Brian felt nauseated. Of himself, this whole situation, the lipstick on his face and the damn blue wool ball, that he had banished angrily into his glove compartment.

It had been a lousy idea from the beginning and he really didn't know what it was that had brought him to visit the boy at all. He felt shitty with this whole little game and no one would receive anything positive out of it in the end.

"Shit." Mumbling something undefined, he changed gears after the traffic lights, stepped on the gas and turned left in the direction of the 'public bath house', because he really didn't feel like thinking of blue eyes and white beet anymore.

-----

13.58 pm. Justin's belly tickled and he could hardly keep his eyes on the clock anymore, because no way did he want to miss it when the door finally opened.

He quickly got up from his chair, went to fetch the box with the yellow butterflies and stood with it next to the table. 13.59 pm. Justin was so happy to see Prian and wanted to sleep in bed with him for a very long time, although it wasn't night and of course he would leave his eyes wide open so he would be able to see the beautiful prince all the time.

"Tick...tick...tick...tick."

Justin counted the last seconds loudly, held his breath and pressed the butterfly box tightly against his chest as the big clockhand switched from the small line up to the 12.

"Ha!"

He laughed and bounced on the balls of his feet a bit and everything buzzed and whirled in his stomach. He batted his long eyelashes at the thick wall door, smiled broadly and listened for Prian's feet and the bunch of tinkling keys ... but all that came was just the next 'tic' as the long clockhand wandered on 14.01 pm.

And Justin stayed put and didn't move and stared at the door and then again at the magic clock. It ticked and ticked and everything remained quiet and closed.

At 14.08 pm the blue alarm clock had lost all its magic power and was broken in one hundred pieces, laying on the freshly cleaned floor in the middle of the room.

-----

It was 14.12 pm and Brian moaned louder than the mediocre trick at his feet deserved, before he closed his eyes and leaned himself back against the cold wall.

He thought about how amazed Debbie had seemed that he wanted to do something nice for the little twat. She'd probably get a kick out of knowing that she'd been right about him all along.

It was just too bad that Michael wasn't here to witness this so he could tell his mother...

-----

Justin didn't want to see the good night greeting today. He also didn't want to eat his supper or brush his teeth. He simply wanted to lie in his bed and watch as the sky became dark in front of the window.

He hated how quiet it was in the room without the clock ticking and he tried to imagine everything that sounded beautifully. Music, mummies voice, Frog croaking... and the ba-bam ba-bam in Prian's chest. Then he heard his own sobbing, hated that too and crawled off the mattress and deep under his white bed, so he wouldn't have to hear it anymore.

He heard it anyway and covered his eyes with his hands, because all he really wanted was to be gone.

-----

It was nearly 5 am as Brian stumbled out of a stinking bar and by the time he found his car keys and unlocking the door of his jeep, one could already see the first weak sunbeams in the grey October sky. He hated October. Why, he couldn't remember, but he was sure that he hated it.

He hated October, he hated the grey sky, and he hated the pounding pain in his head, as he tried to drive home, preferably without crossing the median strip.

He parked the car almost noiselessly and got out and the air was cold and he didn't look over at the high grey tower on the other side of the street before he disappeared in his \$500,000 Playboy mansion; never thinking of the blue wool ball in his glove compartment.

At 6.12 am Brian stood in the rain under the spray of his hot shower and washed himself with foamy soap.

At 6.34 am he put himself in his big, comfortable prince bed. He was unbelievably tired.

At 7.08 am his eyes were aching from the tiredness but no matter how often he closed them, he simply wouldn't fall asleep.

At 7.17 am Brian got up again and went into the kitchen.

At 7.45 am he sat with a cup of hot coffee at the window and it was so quiet that one could hear the twittering of the birds outside. He almost liked it.

At 8.02 am an empty coffee cup stood in the basin and Brian Kinney went into the bathroom to shave. He stared at the little lettered substitute toothbrush all the time.

At 8.25 am Brian sat in his jeep again, on his way to the office. He opened the glove compartment only to search for the silver lighter he'd been missing for days. The blue wool was in the way and he put the ball on the passenger seat after a brief respite.

The first meeting was appointed for 9.15 am and even the women of Eyeconic-Optics blinked disapprovingly over her polished lenses, as she examined Mister Kinney's tired condition. Neither font nor picture choice met with her approval this morning and Brian slammed the door to his office with a loud bang, before shouting through the intercom system for Cynthia to bring him more coffee and aspirin.

He left the company at 12.21 pm for a short lunch break. Cynthia suggested that he not bother coming back in today unless he was well rested. Brian bitched at her at first, but then agreed with her anyway, as he looked at the dark circles under his eyes in the side mirror of his jeep.

He drove home. And he got out and it was cold and he already was almost half way through his house door before he turned around and looked at the big grey tower on the other side of the street. He stopped for a moment and looked up at the little window on the fifth floor. Then he pinched his nose, rummaged for his car keys in the pockets of his coat, fetched the blue wool ball off the passenger seat and walked across the street; exactly 248 steps up through a reeking stairwell. The pane of the ward door was studded with greasy fingerprints, the long corridor smelled of overcooked cauliflower and Brian walked faster as he saw that the door of 411 stood open a crack.

"No!" Justin beat the fork against the table before smacking his forehead hard with his hand.

"Shit!" Male nurse Max bent under the table to collect the gooey vegetables and then tried to push the fork back into Justin's tense fingers. "Come on you have to eat this!"

"No!" The boy's voice got hysterical.

"Hey!" Brian threw the wool ball on the bedside table. "Obviously he doesn't want to eat!"

Max looked at the strange man dumbfounded. "Who...are you a visitor? It's not yet-"

Brian took the fork away from Justin's cramped hand. "Take this away. Mister Taylor will not eat tonight."

"But Dr. Bruckner said he must-"

"Mister Taylor isn't hungry!" Brian threw the cutlery on the plate and pushed the tray into male nurse Max 's hands. "Take it with you. I'll let you know when I plan to leave."

And Max left the room without saying anything else.

"Certainly. Of course lasagne. Always on Mondays. " Justin pulled at the long hair strand behind his ear and bobbed up and down on his chair. "Certainly always on Mondays."

Brian took five thin fingers out of the fair hair and held them tightly in his own. "That was cauliflower and rice."

"Yes. Of course always Monday. Lasagne with cheese. Much cheese." Justin looked up at the ceiling, rocking softly.

"You wanted lasagne?"

"Yes." Justin's fingers slowly relaxed in Brian's hand. "Always on Mondays."

"Hmm." Brian looked out the window. For a couple of minutes, while he was rubbing one of Justin's smooth fingernails with his fingertip. "I didn't come yesterday."

Justin looked at the door and then again up at the ceiling. "Of course the prince hadn't come to see him at..."

"...visiting time."

"Hmm." Brian pressed his lips together and squinted his eyes a little, although it wasn't very bright outside. And he saw thick grey clouds in front of the window and a big black bird and "Hhhfuck." He was really fucking tired. "Justin?"

"Yes."

"Can we do this thing with the cord later? I am tired."

"Yes." Justin's blue eyes flickered from left to right. "Of course. Certainly sleep with Prian."

Brian rubbed the point between his eyes and pulled on Justin's hand. "Yeah. Come on, take off your shoes."

"Yes." Justin remained where he was.

Brian took off his jacket, put it on the table together with his tie, stepped calmly out of his expensive shoes and smiled to some extent when he opened his belt and got the boy's attention.

"Yes." Justin curled long hairs around his finger nervously. Of course the prince took all his beautiful ...

"...clothes off."

"Hmm." Brian quickly unzipped his trousers, took them off, put them on the table with his other things and then opened the buttons of his shirt. "People don't sleep with a suit on."

"Yes." Justin tried to keep his gaze up, however he peeked at Brian every few seconds. The white shirt opened and opened and underneath was a lovely prince belly. Justin really wanted to sniff at ...

"... Brian's belly button."

Brian took his shirt off, put it aside and in respect of his surroundings decided to leave his underwear on. Tiredly, he looked around in the room. "Do you have an alarm clock?"

"Yes." Justin looked at his shelf where his alarm clock no longer stood. Of course his blue magic alarm clock had broken into...

"...one thousand shards."

"Hmm." Brian rummaged in his jacket for his cell phone, pressed a few buttons, it beeped once, and he put it next to a red cup on the bedside table, "You coming?" he asked before he slid under the thin blanket on Justin's bed. It wasn't very comfortable but in his current condition he could've probably slept in Emmett's broom closet.

"Yes." Justin looked at his bed and then irritably in the direction of his window. Of course the prince lay in his bed and had his eyes closed. And all the beautiful prince clothes lay on the table. He was very sure that this had never happened before.

"Justin." Brian's voice sounded tired and he didn't make the effort to open his eyes. "Take off your shoes and come here."

"Yes." Justin looked outside. Of course it was very bright and...

"...certainly not bed time."

Brian sighed weakly. "It is midday. We'll take a midday nap." Blindly, he extended his arm. "Come here."

"Yes." The boy got up, walked in the wrong direction first, and then with small steps and a look up at the ceiling made his way over to the bed.

"Take your shoes off."

"Yes." Justin sat down awkwardly on the floor and needed one and a half minutes to place his slippers correctly under the bed and to get up again.

Brian moved back a little, lifted the blanket without saying a word and in the next moment got a clumsy elbow into the ribs when the blonde tried to crawl onto the mattress with him.

"Stop wriggling around." He carefully covered the small body and let his arm lie tiredly over Justin's chest.

Justin was so excited and grew quite stiff. It was so warm under the blanket today and the prince held him tightly and everything smelled of Brian's soft skin.

His belly began to tickle and his heart pounded so fast that he had to breathe deeply.

Brian could feel Justin's hammering heartbeat through the thin covers and soothingly rubbed his extended thumb over the old linen cloth. "Sleep."

"Yes." Justin breathed noisily once again, squeezed his eyes shut and then scratched his forehead frustrated because they opened up again all on their own. He had never had a midday nap before and wasn't sure how it should work. It was of course...

"...certainly not dark."

Brian heard the boy's voice as if it came from a distance and took his time answering.

"You can sleep in daylight, too."



He could? Justin wasn't sure whether the prince was right or not, closed his eyes again and rubbed (with) his butt over the mattress a bit to lie more comfortably.

"Justin." Brian growled annoyed, "You're wriggling again." and in a fast movement he pulled Justin flush against his chest. Back to belly.

"Huh!" Justin was startled and stiffened motionlessly. The prince held him so tight and everything was warm and he could feel Prian's legs against his and Prian's belly at his back and Prian's breath on his neck, together with whispered words.

"Sleep now, brat." Brian pushed his nose into the blond hairs and kept it exactly in this place, while he pulled the boy a little closer.

Justin whimpered a little. He didn't want to sleep. The prince was all naked and the strong arms around him pushed him so tightly against Prian's stomach. And it was so beautiful that his own belly began to flutter.

He tried to turn his head because he wanted to see Prian's face and Prian's navel and all the little hairs on Prian's legs. But the arms held him tighter and tighter and then he trembled strongly as he felt the prince's mouth. With kisses at his neck and on his shoulders. And he whimpered once again and squeezed his eyes shut very tightly because it suddenly tickled in his fingertips and his toes and everywhere else in his body.

Brian smiled against Justin's neck and licked a little circle with the tip of his tongue, while the boy first stretched out to his full length, then curled into a little ball and finally pushed his butt firmly back.

He began to rub gently over Justin's belly with one hand and stilled the thin hips with the other one. "No more wriggling." He kissed the warm neck in front of him one last time. "Close your eyes."

"Yes. Sleep with Prian" Justin liked to lie here and tried again to rub his bottom against Prian's penis. But the prince held him tightly and tightly so he began to count the blue flowers mommy always had on her apron, wrapped a couple of long hairs around his finger, talked a little of frogs and poisoned apples and didn't even notice as his eyes slowly became heavy like stones.

-----

Brian woke up again 64 minutes later. But not by the alarm tone of his cell phone, no he was pulled out of sleep by a small, warm body which was wrapped around him tightly.

Something wet tickled at his chest, little smacking sounds penetrated his sleepy thoughts and when he moved his left leg slightly, it pushed against a notably hard manhood. "Justin?" He grabbed for Justin's head, someplace on his chest, and tried to open his heavy eyes.

Justin liked Prian so much. His skin tasted of beautiful prince and sweet and like sugar. And he imagined him to be a little cat with shiny silk fur and licked every inch of Prian's body very conscientiously. He had started at Prian's arm, had licked a bit at Prian's neck, and now he cleaned the beautiful broad prince chest with his tongue, even if Prian was already rather clean. He licked over Prian's topmost rib bone three times, listened for a moment attentively to an even heartbeat and then licked exactly at the point where it made the beautiful ba-bam sound. Fascinated he watched as the little dark nipple contracted and got harder. Harder and harder, the more he licked it. He also pushed with his nose against it, sniffed and found the prince nipple to be so beautiful that he wanted to kiss it with his whole mouth and started to suckle at it like a really small baby cat. And it felt so nice that he tried to lay even closer to Prian and to climb on top of him a bit.

He noticed that the butterflies came back to his belly and his penis got very hard. He liked it when this happened and squeezed his legs tightly together, before pressing firmly against Prian's thigh. Then he suckled a little more forcefully at Prian's nipple and whimpered quietly when he could feel Prian's hand on his head. He liked it when the prince petted him. His beautiful velvet fur. And he nestled in Prian's big palm and purred for an extra long time while he was licking the wonderful nipple with a broad tongue like a really good cat.

"Justin" Tiredly, Brian peered down on himself, watched the pink tip of a tongue touching his nipple and "Fuck!" in the heat of the moment pushed the blond head further down, until he had the chance to collect himself and find a better choice of words. "Justin!" He put his hand to Justin's cheek and guided the head up a little. "What the hell are you doing?"

The boy licked his lips and blinked innocently up through long blond hair strands. Perhaps the prince would give him a little milk, too. After all he was a really...

"...good cat."

Brian's fingers stiffened to some extent on Justin's warm, soft neck. "What?"

"Yes." Justin batted his long eyelashes, nestled up in Prian's hand again and purred a little because he really would've preferred to...

"...lick Prian."

Brian raised his eyebrows in amusement as he actually heard the boy purring like a fucking cat. "You can't just lick on other people."

He couldn't? Justin turned his head to the side in an attempt to reach Prian's wrist with his mouth. It worked and he licked it twice. He then smacked his lips appreciatively and found that prince arms tasted just as good as prince nipples. Only not so red.

Brian wanted to grin, but decided in favor of an annoyed face. "You're fucking rude." He took his hand away from the kid's tongue reach, but instead put it under the thin blanket to caress Justin's side. With three fingers. Very gently, at the soft point just above a thin hip bone. "Now I smell like your spit."

"Yes." Justin liked the prince fingers on his side and for a moment looked blankly to the side. His belly tickled very much and he really wanted to...

"...lick Prian's lips."

Brian looked at the boy in silence for a moment, then put his second hand under the covers, gripped Justin at the waist and pulled him up completely on top of himself. Belly to belly.

Justin's blue eyes flickered nervously when he could feel Prian's hardness against his own. Blindly, he reached for Prian's brown hair and sighed heavily because the prince was so beautiful and he really wanted with him to...

"...kiss."

Brian's fingers dug deeply into blond hair. "Good boy." He only whispered the words and guided Justin's face a little more down, closer to his. "That is the right word."

"Yes." Justin panted and felt his heartbeat in his throat. "Justin."

"Hmm." Brian touched Justin's warm mouth lightly with his lips. "You want me to kiss you, Justin?"

"Yes." The blue eyes stared frantically aside because the prince's words tickled everywhere. "My Prian."

Mister Kinney had a clear 'yes' for an answer on the tip his tongue and was so irritated about it that he suffocated the small word quickly with a kiss before it could come out.

And this time it wasn't an innocent kiss, to feel and test out. This time, it was a Brian Kinney kiss with hands, lips, tongue and one hundred per cent passion. He combed his fingers through the silky hair at the back of Justin's head, pushed his tongue deep and even deeper into the sweetness of a warm mouth and responded to every overwhelmed sigh and whimper with a consenting growl from the deepest part of his soul.

Justin felt so dizzy, the whole world was upside down. The prince held him so tightly and nevertheless he had the feeling he was falling and clung with all strength to Prian's arm and neck. He squeezed his eyes tightly shut and everything smelled of almonds and golden skin. And he rubbed himself restlessly on top of Prian's big, strong body and mewed really loudly as the prince took hold of his head and growled and pushed his tongue deeply into his mouth. He loved Prian's tongue. It was hot and wet and tasted exciting. He wanted to have more of it and suckled on it until Prian growled again and put a big, firm hand on his butt.

Brian's thoughts ran amok every moment, as the little one began to grind against him, mewed like a kitten and clawed with his small fingers feverishly into everything he could reach. He put a secure hand in the boy's neck, rubbed Justin's back with the other one and then let it slip onto a perfectly formed ass.

Justin couldn't kiss anymore. Many little lightning's shot through his chest and his belly and he squirmed, gasped loudly and pressed his face deep into Prian's neck, while he tried to rub his middle with more pressure against the prince's hard penis.

Brian ran his fingers through Justin's hair while he expertly massaged the boy's bottom and every once in a while raised his pelvis a little upwards. "Does it feel good?"

Justin wanted to answer the prince, but he couldn't remember any words and began to lick and suck at Prian's neck in frustration.

"Have you done this with anyone before?" Brian pushed Justin's butt down and turned his head a little to the side whispering into a warm ear. "Have you ever come?"

Justin felt Prian's lips at his ear, Prian's strong fingers on his bottom and Prian's hard penis at his own and felt as if he had to cry a little from all the butterflies jittering in his belly.

"Justin." Brian stroked the blond hair strands, "Come here." and nudged his nose softly against the boy's. And he smiled a bit at the desperate look in Justin's eyes, kissed the bandage on his forehead and his cheek and then gently licked over pink lips. "Kiss me, okay?" He said it quietly and didn't wait for Justin to respond to his request, before he wound his tongue slowly into a whimpering mouth. Very calmly this time, he caressed Justin's tongue with his, investigated the innocent mouth for characteristic features that had escaped his notice until now and enjoyed the kid's clumsy attempts to imitate his kissing technique.

Justin, after a few minutes, began anew to unconsciously rub his middle against the prince, who took hold of Justin's ass, massaged a bit, raised and pushed his erection upwards a good five times until the small body cramped above him and the boy tore his head up in shock.

A thunderstorm in his belly! Justin opened his mouth as far as he could but the scream he wanted to make didn't come out. Everything was spinning and knocking and bumping like the loud air in the prince castle but Justin couldn't hear anything. He thought his penis hurt and writhed in alarm but as he grabbed between his legs there was no pain at all and warm water ran through his whole body like a coloured rainbow. He felt Prian's hand in his hair and Prian's mouth everywhere on his face and heard the prince whispering words, "Sssh...Justin, you have to breathe." And all of sudden his body became so tired and weak that he couldn't even hold his head up anymore and he wailed quietly and cried a little and pushed his nose as tightly as he could into Prian's neck.

Brian felt a strange small ache start someplace in his stomach as the boy curled up wailing on top of him, sobbing quietly into his neck.

He could feel the damp result of Justin's orgasm soak through the trouser fabric and a little uneasily rubbed with his hand over Justin's back. He really wanted to say something. Anything. But in the end he only pressed a small kiss against Justin's temple, tightened his arms around the boy and let his gaze randomly wander around the little sterile room.

(And) after four and a half silent minutes the only thing he came up with was, "I really hate your fucking tower."

"Yes." Justin's eyes were open although he was very tired. He liked to speak so close to Prian's neck that his lips had to touch the warm skin there with every word. "Certainly into the castle. Sleep with Prian."

Brian wrapped a blond hair strand around his finger. "You can sleep with me now." And his finger stiffened for a moment at the back of Justin's head as he became aware of his bad choice of words.

"Yes." The boy poked the tip of his tongue against Prian's neck. He liked kitty midday naps with the prince. "Certainly a cat."

"You're a cat?"

Was he? Justin blinked against Prian's neck twice and then purred quietly, for testing.

Brian smiled slightly. "Your frog croaking is more convincing."

"Yes." Justin licked at Prian's neck once again and smacked his lips. He liked the frog. "Of course under the tree. Certainly a pear."

"Hmm. He sits in the water."

"Yes. Of course in the well."

"It's a pool. With chlorine water. Frogs do not swim in chlorine water."

"Yes." Justin liked the blue well water and really would've preferred to stop with the kitty nap now to go...

"...visit the frog at the castle."

Brian kissed Justin's forehead. "It's not a castle. It's a house. It's called Brighton."

"Yes." Justin licked behind Prian's earlobe a bit, then wrinkled his forehead and "Ha!" laughed. He raised his head and looked at the prince happily. Of course the beautiful castle was called exactly like Prian and Justin!

"What?" Brian contracted his eyebrows and looked at the blonde critically.

Justin giggled. "Certainly Pritin!"

And Mister Kinney squinted his eyes, wrinkled his forehead suspiciously into deep folds and then tousled Justin's hair, as the realization hit him. "Pri-Tin. You think this is brilliant, don't you?!"

Justin smiled broadly.

"Hff." Brian reached on the nightstand, looked at his cell phone, switched off the set alarm and smacked Justin on the butt. "Come on, twat. Get up."

"Yes." Justin moved a bit around on the prince and "Huh!" grabbed a bit startled between his legs. "Certainly wee-wee!" Horrified he held his wet hand in front of Prian's face.

Brian gripped the thin wrist and looked at the boy sternly. "Stop using that word! What's it called correctly?"

"Yes. Certainly pissing. Prian says."

"Hmm." Brian led the small hand to his mouth and licked briefly over one finger. "And you haven't pissed. This is sperm. You had an orgasm."

He did? Justin sniffed at his fingers curiously, then poked out his pink tongue to have a little taste himself.

Brian suddenly needed to break off their cosy midday nap as quickly as possible. "Come on, fetch the fucking wool already if you want to knot your damn noodles. I don't have all day."

-----

Brian Kinney stayed in room 411 to fabricate an almost perfect treasure jewellery prince necklace of 32 farfalle noodles and blue Novotny wool; looked then with Justin out of the tower window for 21 minutes to admire Pri-Tin; helped him afterwards to exchange the yucky Monday-supper-tinned-meat for one very tasty cream cheese toast provided by male nurse Schmidt, and escorted the boy at 8.00 pm to the community room to watch the good night greeting on channel 4.

After that, Justin really wanted to sleep with Prian, however, he only got a kiss on the nose and the order to close his eyes, because it was really bedtime for little twats.

At half past eight in the evening Brian sat in front of the institution director's desk.

"Mister Kinney," Doctor Marcus stared at the man in her office critically. "What's the problem this time? Should a guard be stationed in front of Justin's door?"

Brian didn't have any intentions of holding a longer than necessary conversation with this arrogant bitch, therefore got right to the point. "What do I have to do so that Mister Taylor receives permission to leave the institution periodically?"

#### Chapter 18 – Prian's Kingdom

Miss Eterson thought to get in the right mood for the holidays, everybody should draw a big turkey on his paper sheet.

Justin started with the mashed chestnuts and really made every effort to get it right, however, Miss Eterson said "Don't worry, sweetie. Just try it again, okay?" and handed him a new piece of paper.

Justin threw it off the table and looked uninterestedly up to the ceiling. He really didn't like Miss Eterson.

-----

Brian had called Cynthia twice and checked his personal organizer seven times, but as much as he searched, he couldn't find a 'sorry but I already have other plans' appointment, that would've been a splendid excuse to blow off the appointment on the other side of the street.

That was enough reason, to sweep his 320 dollar leather organizer defiantly off the table and stomp angrily into the kitchen to consume an entire pot of coffee. Stupid bitch Melanie Marcus. 'I'm sorry Mister Kinney but I'm afraid such an application must contain a medical estimate of an attending therapist'. Brian dumped the remaining contents of the sugar into the coffee-pot, as he thought of Doctor Marcus' malicious intonation. He really didn't like that cow.

-----

Justin wrapped a long hair strand around his finger.

Everyone painted and painted and Miss Eterson stood in front of his table and jabbered and he just wanted to go into his room and listen to the radio. „Piii-pliine to Paa-ra-diiise..." Justin liked his radio and Pu'ukani with the terrific voice. "Your iiiisland muuuusic co-nnnn-ectio!"

"Justin?" Miss Peterson looked at her patient in amusement. "Shall we draw a new turkey now? With the brown crayon?" She held the pen in front of Justin's face.

Justin turned his head away and started to bob up and down on his chair. He really didn't want to listen to Miss Eterson any more.

The therapist sighed, "Justin, don't you want to-" and turned then around as the door opened. "Brian?"

Disgusted Brian looked around from behind his Armani sunglasses.

It smelled like art lessons with Miss Appelby and (for his liking) there were too many people here who stared at him strangely.

"Brian!" Lindsay put the brown wax crayon on Justin's table and went towards the unexpected visitor. "Is everything all right? What are you doing here?"

Brian preferred to leave this question unanswered for the moment and walked along the patients' tables with a straight face. Past an older man with thick glasses, who gaped at him open mouthed; a girl with wild curly hair who grinned at him infatuated, and a guy with an orange-coloured sweater who talked something about cheese and ivy.

Justin sat at a separate table on the left side and Brian caressed the back of his head as he passed by. "Hey brat."

"Yes." Justin didn't look at the prince but nestled into his big hand. "Justin." He smiled brightly. It was so nice that the prince was here and the whole room smelled of silver sword and almond cake.

"Brian!" Lindsay tripped a little panic-stricken after the man. "Brian. You can't just-" She grinned at her patients and changed her voice then into a discreet whisper. "You make my patients uncomfortable. We're in the middle of therapy here."

"Hm." Mister Kinney picked up a piece of blue chalk then put it down again after three seconds and decided then to speak without really looking at Lindsay. "Are you Justin Taylor's therapist?"

"What?" Miss Peterson looked at the boy in question briefly. "Yes, of course I am one of his therapists. Why do you want to know?" She smiled a little uneasy again. "Brian?"

Brian found a white and red stress squeeze ball on Lindsay's desk, squished it five times and then sat down on the uncomfortable desk chair. "I need a report from one of his Therapists."

Lindsay blinked not understanding. "What for?"

"Your boss demands it, otherwise she won't give her approval to let him leave the institution in my company." Brian grinned now, too, but rather artificially and only with the protection of his sunglasses.

"Why do you want-" Miss Peterson's forehead wrinkled in deep folds. "Where do you know Justin from?"

Brian looked in the kid's direction. "We're...friends."

"What? Since when? I didn't know that you have contact with-"

"A couple of weeks now." Brian sighed and got up off the cheap piece of furniture. "Listen, can you write out such a report to support my petition, so I can take him out from time to time, or not?!"

Twenty minutes later sat one slightly bewildered looking Miss Peterson in the art room together with her patient Justin Taylor and the father of her child.

"So..." She tried to smile somewhat friendly but failed miserably. "Brian. You've known Justin for a while now?"

"Few weeks." Mister Kinney laid his right leg on top of his left and looked clearly bored at the dark spot on the wall, behind Lindsay's desk.

"Ah." She nodded, deliberated briefly and then turned to her patient. "Good. And Justin....you get along well with Brian?"

"Yes." Justin scratched his forehead as a little black fly flew past him and landed on the red paint tube. "Of course no brush."

"Of course no...ah." Miss Peterson blinked and sat up straight. "Okay Brian, why..." She looked at him seriously. "Why are you interested in spending time with a boy like Justin?"

Brian stared back blankly. "Well, he is not as irritating as I thought he would be in the beginning."

"Brian! I'm serious!"

Brian grinned briefly and then looked to the side where Justin chattered quietly with himself and curled a thin hair strand around his finger. "He needs new shoes. Right, brat?"

"Yeah. Justin."

"How old are your shoes? Seven hundred days?"

"Yes." Justin looked up to the ceiling while he was wiggling his toes in his shoes. "Seven...sevenhundredthirty...thirty three."

"Hm." Brian leaned back, relaxed, and folded his hands in front of his chest. "You heard it. They're seven hundred and thirty-three days old. A new pair of shoes is required urgently."

Lindsay got a slightly pitying expression. "Brian. You can't just go shopping with him. Justin is not a normal boy."

Brian blinked four times before his face darkened. "Justin is a young man who has a right to see more of the world than the two square meters of living space he is provided with in here."

Miss Peterson shook her head. "It's not your concern to look after Justin's interests."

"No. You're absolutely right. It's not." Brian looked at her directly. "Will you do it then?"

"What? Brian I-"

"One of the incompetent nurses? The non-existent cleaning lady? Your boss?"

"It is not-"

"Who of these people gives a flying fuck about what Justin wants and or needs?!"

"Everybody gives his best in here, Brian. Everything is done for the patient's health and well-being."

"Oh. Then in here it is expected that the patients feel good about being locked up in stinking rooms with unpalatable food and shabby clothing!"

"Justin's room was not always locked. It is a new arrangement!"

"Right. Before he could stay away all night without anybody even noticing. That's what I call exemplary care!"

"Brian!" Lindsay got up from her chair. "The staff here tries to create a pleasant and safe environment for Justin! And you are-" She shook her head again and looked at the man seriously. "You're simply not the right person to be in regular contact with a boy with his medical history. To care for his needs and concerns. I'm truly sorry."

Brian drew his lips inside and stared at her for a moment. Then he nodded once and got up. "Yes, I'm sure you are." And he turned to Justin and leaned down to plant a kiss on his pale forehead. "Later."

"Yeah." Justin didn't want the prince to leave and he didn't like for Miss Eterson to speak with Brian so...

"...very loud."

Brian whispered in Justin's ear. "It will be quiet now." And he left the stinking art room without a backward glance.

-----

At 10 p.m. in evening Brian had already sat alone on the sofa for three hours, consumed half a bottle of Jim Beam and stared pointlessly into the emptiness, while outside in front of the terrace door, an irritating frog croaked along... as someplace next to him the phone rang.

He ignored it for almost a minute. Then his head started to hurt and he reached blindly after the receiver. "Kinney."

"Brian, It's me, Lindz. Did I wake you?"

"Yes."

"That's not true."

"Why did you ask then?!" Brian took another sip from the half empty bottle. "What do you want."

"To ask you a question."

He didn't respond.

"I've talked with Justin. After you left this afternoon."

Brian remained silent.

"And I really would like to know... Brian, what is the real reason. Why are you interested in this boy of all people?"

Brian played with his middle finger at the bottle opening and stared to the opposite wall. "He needs... he deserves more than he has at the moment."

"Why haven't you ever told me that you know him? The nurses on his ward even told me that you visit him."

"There was nothing to tell."

It was quiet for a while before Lindsay said something again. "He likes you."

"I know."

"He says you are his Brian."

"We've introduced each other." Brian raised the bottle and took another gulp.

"Brian, you know I love you. But I know you very well, too. And I really don't know whether you are the right contact for this boy. He needs stability and safety more than anything else."

Brian said nothing and looked down.

"And I will revoke my report immediately if Justin's condition changes negatively."

Brian looked up to the wall again.

"But I really hope that it will never be necessary."

"What does your boss say about all this."

"I'll talk to Doctor Marcus tomorrow morning. You'll hear from her."

She waited unavailingly for an answer. "You know, you never cease to amaze me, Brian Kinney."

-----

On Saturday morning Justin was busy impaling baked bean number 12 on his fork when the thick wall door opened and the beautiful prince suddenly stood in his tower room.

"Finish your bacon, brat. There is only one acceptable shoe shop in this damned town and it closes in four hours."

Thirty minutes later, Justin had a thick silver jacket, walked down a stinking stairwell on Prian's hand and was so excited about it that his whole belly was full of fluttering butterflies. He wanted to go onto the other side of the street so badly, to see the castle with the beautiful name and the frog in the blue well water.

But then, the fast car vehicle stood directly in front of the tower and the prince opened the door with a little key.

"Come on, get in."

"Yes." Justin turned around to look at the wonderful castle. "Certainly watch TV with Prian."

"Not today." Brian took the boy by the arm and led him in the direction of the passenger seat. "We go shopping."

"Yes." Justin crawled awkwardly on the high seat. "Shopping with Prian. Certainly at Wal-Mart."

Brian closed Justin's seat belt, "Surely not." and went to the other side of the car to sit down behind the steering wheel.

"We want to buy shoes. There are no real shoes at Wal-Mart."

"Yes. Certainly glass slippers." Justin smiled blissfully.

Brian started the car. "I wouldn't be surprised."

The car drove off and Justin looked with big eyes out of the side window. Everything was so fast and he was sure that soon they would be again in...

"...Harrisburg."

"Pittsburgh. We're not driving very far." Brian changed gears at traffic lights and then turned right. "Were you ever in downtown before?"

"Ha!" Justin pressed his nose against the cold plate and laughed. Everything was so beautiful here. And everywhere were people and houses and trees. He liked Prian's kingdom so much.

Brian smiled briefly in the direction of the passenger seat and then remained silent till he parked the car two streets over from Haley's shoe paradise. He removed the key, opened Justin's seat belt and got out.

Justin didn't move, with his nose at the windowpane, looking fascinated to the outside.

Everything had stopped now. Hmm. He poked the tip of his tongue against the car window and then squeaked in alarm as the prince opened the door.

"You can't lick everything you see. It's unhygienic. Don't do it again."

"Yes." A little clumsily the boy slipped off the seat and looked up to the sky. "Of course lick...lick Prian's mouth."

Brian locked the car, put on his sunglasses and took Justin by the hand. "That's different."

"Yes. Certainly kiss Prian." Justin toddled a little stiffly beside the prince. It didn't look like Harrisburg and he didn't know whether he liked the air-smell here or not. Everything was quite loud and he didn't know the way stones at all. They were smooth and black and black and completely without slits.

Brian rubbed Justin's thin knuckles with his thumb. "Maybe later."

„Yes. Sleep with Prian."

"Shopping."

"Yes. Of course at Wal-Mart." Justin saw a fantastic little fire stick lying on the ground and bent down to pick it up.

Brian pulled at Justin's hand. "What are you doing?"

"Yes." The boy held the thrown away cigarette-end up and looked at the prince with innocent blue eyes. "Certainly for Prian."

Brian snatched the cigarette butt out from his fingers and threw it on the street. "Don't touch dirt!"

"Oh oh." Justin retracted his neck as the prince pulled him further along the sidewalk and a big white car vehicle drove over the beautiful fire stick. "Certainly broken. Thousand...one thousand shards."

Brian stopped and pushed open a shop door.

"Ha!" Somewhere rang a bell and Justin laughed. Then he made big eyes as he looked around in the strange house. "Oooh!" Everywhere were shoes and shoes and everything smelled like the wonderful prince jacket.

"Hello." An older man with white hair and a kind face appeared behind the shop counter. "May I help?"

"You may." Brian removed his sunglasses and looked around searchingly. "Mister Taylor here is in urgent need of a new pair of shoes."

The shoe seller looked a little critically at Justin's worn down gym shoes. "I see. If you please would follow me? I would like to take your measurements first."

Justin extended his fingers after a pair of red shiny ball shoes with very high heels but the prince only held his hand firmer and dragged him away.

"Justin. Sit down."

"Yes." Justin looked up to the ceiling.

"Here." Brian guided him on a blue chair. "Take off your shoes."

"No." Justin wrapped a hair strand around his finger. He really would've preferred not to take his shoes off. Of course it was...

"...not bedtime."

"Excuse me, Sir?" The seller approached his customer with a confused look.

And Brian fell sighing on his knees, to untie Justin's shoes.

The older man came with a pre-war leather measuring tape and a little clumsily got in a squatting position too.

Justin blinked nervously when he felt strange fingers on his feet. It tickled and he wriggled his toes. He really would've preferred to...

"...put on the shoes again."

"Later. Keep still." Brian went and stood behind Justin's chair to observe things with eagle eyes.

The seller noted down a couple of measures on his memo pad. "You have exceptionally slender feet, Sir." He smiled at Justin.

And the boy's eyes flickered restlessly from left to the right. He certainly didn't know this man on the ground and he really wanted to have his...

"...book."

Brian put a hand in Justin's neck. "You've put it under your pillow. We're buying shoes now. You do not need a book to buy shoes."



He didn't? Justin tipped his head a little aside as he felt the gentle fingers stroking his head. He liked Prian's hands.

"So." The shoe seller got up and smiled friendly again. "Which shoes do you have in mind, Sir? Something casual or rather for the formal affair? You are welcome to look around and I'll bring the suitable size from the stock."

"Two pairs. Something warm and sturdy for the winter and a pair of every day shoes." Brian raised his eyebrow in a subliminal warning. "But in style."

"Of course, Sir. I'll fetch a couple of our newest designs." The seller disappeared through the thick curtain and came back with a stack of boxes some minutes later.

"Yes." Justin found the boxes terrific. Probably there were many way stones in them or leave munching...

"...caterpillars."

Quite tensely, he watched as the salesman sat down in front of him and raised the first box lid. "Ha!" It was...

"...seven league boots!"

The seller smiled. "They certainly are, Sir. It is our newest laced boot model. Smooth leather in Moccasin optics, non-slip sole and textile comfort lining. Would you like to try them on?" He began to undo one of the high shoes to make room for Justin's foot, while Brian was watching the scene critically.

"Tommy Hilfiger? I believe I said in style!"

The older man remained calm and took the liberty to wink at his sceptical customer. "Now, I thought something a little fresh and youthful would be more to Mister Taylor's liking."

Pfft. Fresh and youthful. Brian folded his arms, sulking. After all, it wasn't as if Justin were still in High School or anything...

"Oooh!" Justin watched fascinated as the salesman carefully put the long boot on his right foot. It felt so nice and he knew exactly that he would be able to run faster than the wind.

The shoe seller moved a step back after putting the first shoe properly on his young customer's foot, to give him some space to get up.

But Justin only stretched the second foot forward, too, and looked at the man expectantly.

"You're completely right, Sir. It is always the best to try on both shoes. I mean there is no foot like the other."

"Yes." Justin looked apathetically up to the ceiling as the second boot was put on his left foot and Mister Kinney rolled his eyes enervated. The boy really was worse than the pasha of South Arabia...

"So." This time the seller got up. "If you would like to walk for a couple of steps now?"

"Yes." Justin kept his seated position and wriggled his toes in the boots.

"Justin." Brian smacked the boy's arm lightly. "Stand up."

"Yes." A little awkwardly the kid climbed out of his chair and stood stiffly in front of it. The shoes were very big and he didn't know how one should walk like that.

"Please, Sir. Go ahead. Just a couple of steps through the store."

"Justin." Brian pointed to a stand mirror at the other end of the salesroom. "Walk over there to the mirror."

"Yes." With large, awkward steps Justin stalked over the noble shop floor, his gaze highly concentrated on his feet.

The seller blinked a little irritated and turned to Brian. "Well, perhaps it's not the right size after all."

Brian watched the boy's stilt walk in slight amusement. "I'm sure they fit perfectly."

Justin arrived in front of the big mirror and stared into it. Then he felt his hair with one finger. It was really beautiful and also very long.

"Justin." Brian raised his voice. "Come back. You have to try another pair."

Justin heard the prince very well, but however, ignored the words and went with his nose very close to the mirror glass. He breathed noisily against it three times and touched the slippery surface with his tongue, while he was trying to watch himself.

The old salesman cleared his throat and fumbled embarrassed with a shoe box.

And Brian rubbed his forehead, before he went to collect the blonde. "Hey. Didn't we just have a conversation about licking things?"

Justin said nothing. He had never seen himself with the beautiful silver jacket in a mirror and found he looked really wonderful. So shiny.

Brian shook his head as he saw the kid's narcissistic expressions and stood close behind the boy to whisper into his ear. "Do you like the shoes?"

"Yeah." Justin looked away from the mirror and up to the ceiling. The prince was so close and said beautiful whispering words.

"Justin." Brian nudged with his nose against the boy's neck. "Look into the mirror."

"Yes." Justin looked at the reflection. It was like a picture with a frame. Justin and Brian.

Brian nodded down to the new boots. "You want to buy them? Are they good?"

Were they? Justin looked on his feet and wiggled his toes in the shoes. Yes, he liked the beautiful boots. They were big and warm and also...

"...very fast."

"Hmm." Brian took Justin's hand and led him back to the blue fitting chair. "Sit down."

The seller came back and smiled friendly again. "So then we'll try on the other shoes, too. A beautiful pair. Very light, slender Sneakers, high-quality Nubuk leather." He pointed at a pair of flat shoes and started to unlace Justin's boots.

"Naaah!" Justin yelled and looked up to the ceiling.

The seller pulled his hand back, alarmed. "Is anything wrong, Sir?"

"Everything's fine." explained Brian and put both hands on Justin's shoulders.

The older man took hold of the shoelace once more and Justin immediately yelled again in protest.

"Naah!"

"Justin!" Brian's fingers squeezed in warning. "Cut it out!"

"Naah!" Justin began to bob up and down and pulled firmly at the long strand behind his ear.

The old seller got up uneasily. "Perhaps you would prefer to do it by yourself?"

"Naaah-naaah!" Justin rocked back and forth so strongly that the chair began to sway dangerously.

"Justin!" Mister Kinney went and stood directly in front of the boy and took hold of the thin chin. "What the fuck are you doing?! You have to take off your shoes!"

"Yes!" Justin tried to escape from the prince's solid grip. "Certainly seven...seven league boots!" He pulled at his hair once again. "Of course for Justin Taylor!"

"We'll buy the damn boots. But you have to put on another pair, first!"

Justin squinted his eyes. "Naaah!"

"Fuck!" Brian let go of Justin's chin, kicked an empty shoe carton and then snatched the disdained Sneakers to slam them in front of the seller's nose on the shop counter. "We take these and the ones on his feet! And those-" he gripped Justin's old Wal-Mart gym shoes, "you can dispose!"

"Yes, Sir." The old man typed slightly anxious into his till, while Justin on his chair changed into soft rocking motions, quietly counting the rubber boots on the shelf.

He really would've preferred to never take off his beautiful new boots again.

-----

Brian dragged the boy with the big bag in his hand a little roughly over the sidewalk. "340 fucking dollars for two pairs of fucking Tommy Hilfiger shoes! I Swear you will wear these stupid sneakers every day even if you get splayfeet, got it?"

"Yes." Justin looked up into the sky, while stumbling a bit stiffly behind the prince in his new boots. The bag was very big and Prian's fingers held his hand tight and tight. He really would've preferred to...

"...drink water?"

Brian's cell phone rang and he rummaged around in the pockets of his jacket a while until he found it. "Yes. Kinney. Hmm. Hmm. Why? Yes."

Justin didn't know with whom the prince talked and really wanted to ...

"...drink water?"

"No. He will do it the way we discussed it. Hmm." Brian stopped in front of a bakery's shop window and let go of Justin's hand to cover his free ear in the noise of the street. "What? What the fuck has that to do with it?"

"Yes." Justin rocked back and forth a little, while he was looking at the expenses behind the pane. There was pie with cherries and cake with fluffy white cream and little round chocolate balls in colourful wrappings. "Oooh!" He let go of the bag and put both hands flatly to the polished window glass. He wanted to have a little cake too.

"Well then tell him he takes it that way or gets nothing!" Mister Kinney gesticulated outraged with his free hand. "I don't have time for this bullshit!"

"Yes." Justin licked at the pane. "Certainly a cookie."

"Hmm. Hmm." Brian saw it from the corner of his eye, stuck the little cell phone between chin and shoulder and pulled Justin one step back from the bakery window. "Of course I'm fucking serious. And tell him I want the files on my desk, first thing Monday morning."

Justin looked at the prince with big blue eyes. "Of course a cookie."

Brian held his extended forefinger over Justin's lips. "Yes. Just fax it."

Justin blinked innocently to Prian and licked a little at the long prince finger.

Brian grinned briefly, "Yes. Ok, bye.", snapped his phone shut, put it away and shook his head. "What is this with you and your tongue, hu?"

"Yes." Justin batted his eyelashes in Prian's direction. "Certainly drink lots...lots of water."

"Hff..." Brian patted his jacket after cigarettes and lighter and lit one a moment later. "Are you hungry, too?" He took a deep drag and blew the smoke aside.

"Yes." Justin reached for Prian's lips. He wanted to eat a fire stick, too. "Certainly toast."

"Hmm." Brian caught Justin's wrist and held it tight. "Take your bag."

"Yes." The boy grabbed the bag at the wrong end and the shoe carton fell on the street. "Oh oh. Of course all broken."

The older man took the cigarette between his lips, collected the carton off the asphalt, stuck the bag under his arm and took Justin by the hand. "Have you ever been to a Diner?"

"Yes." Justin trudged a bit gawkily next to the prince and watched his feet at every step. He really liked his new boots.

-----

It smelled of fried bird and noodle sauce and Justin felt a bit shy. All the people chattered and ate and looked at him and he didn't like it.

"Sit down here." Brian directed Justin to an available booth in the back of the room and sat down beside him. "What do you want to drink? Water?"

Justin stared at a man with black hair at a near table, who grinned like the big bad wolf.

"Look at your fucking plate!" Brian growled at the stranger and then held the menu card in front of Justin's nose.

"Here. Read what you can get to drink here."

"Yes." It rattled and clattered from the side and Justin looked around concerned. "Of course many people."

"Don't look at the other people, read the menu." Brian put a hand on Justin's thigh. "What do you want to drink?"

"I just wanted to ask the same question!" A man with bright colored clothing and red hair stopped in front of the table and chewed and chewed without having food in his mouth.

"Hey Deb. Two waters with lemon. No ice." Brian ordered without looking up and then gazed at Justin. "What do you want to eat, brat?"

"Yes." Justin looked up to the ceiling. "Of course Saturday. Pea... pea soup with bread. Always on Saturday."

"And you like pea soup?"

"Yes." The boy rocked a bit back and forth and wrapped blond hair around his finger. There were many dirty spots on the ceiling and he counted them all. "Five...fifteen."

Without further comment, Brian held the menu card out towards Debbie. "Two turkey on whole wheat, no mayo."

Debbie grinned as if she had seen the Easter bunny itself and didn't even think to write something on her memo pad. "Who's the little one?! He's fucking gorgeous!"

"We bought shoes together."

"Shoes, hm?" Without losing her grin Debbie disappeared in the direction of the kitchen and yelled the order through the serving hatch. Barely two minutes later she came back to serve two glasses of mineral water with lemon slices and a huge caramel-vanilla-chocolate sundae with whipped cream, coloured sprinkles, a candied cherry and a pink paper umbrella, which she put, together with a bright smile, in front of Justin's nose. "For you sweetie. Enjoy!"

Brian's head shot up with a nauseated look. "What the fuck is that?! I didn't order this crap!"

"I know." Debbie smacked her gum happily and stuck the empty tray under her arm. "This one's on the house."

"Justin is not a pre-schooler!"

"Justin, hu?" Debbie grinned contently, "Well, enjoy your meal, gorgeous Justin." and then disappeared again.

Brian gesticulated in pure disgust to the monstrous mass of calories. "You don't have to eat this."

"Yes." Justin bobbed from the left butt cheek to the right. He had never seen such a little umbrella before. "Certainly no rain."

Brian smiled briefly. "Why are you all fidgety again? Do you have to take a piss?"

Justin looked down and touched himself between the legs. "No."

"You want to drink now?"

Did he? Yes, he was very thirsty and looked first longingly at the waterglass, then at the prince.

Brian took the glass and held it in front of the boy's nose. "Then drink."

"Thank you!" He said it wrongly emphatic and eagerly grabbed for the glass with both hands, before he drank with large gulps; watching Brian the whole time over the brim.

Brian didn't look away and grinned as Justin, a moment later, let out a pleased sigh and put an empty glass back on the table.

"Good?"

"Na." Justin licked his lips. "Certainly puddle water."

A little spark of pure pride fluttered through Mister Kinney's luxury spoiled heart, which encouraged him to pat Justin's thigh in reward. "Good boy."

"Yes. Justin."

-----

45 minutes later Justin sat on the passenger seat of a fast car vehicle with an ice cream smeared face and nibbled at one of five lemon bars that the man with the curly hair had given to him.

Brian changed gears at the crossroad and looked at his blond companion in deep disapproval. "If you puke in my car, you can walk the rest of the way, understood?"

Two blue eyes looked at the beautiful prince, while it was tested how much of the wonderful cake one could put into the mouth at once.

Only a half fitted and the rest was generously held out for Prian.

"Uh." Brian turned his head away. "You're not serious, are you?!"

"Certainly a cookie." Explained Justin with full cheeks and held his hand even closer to Prian's mouth.

And after ten seconds of a half-hearted fight Brian actually ate a half, salivated, lemon bar out of the boy's fingers. "It's a lemon bar."

It was? Justin looked at the remaining cake slices in the styrofoam box. Hmm. He liked fruit salad cookies.

"So." Brian turned around the corner and drove in the direction of Pri-Tin/tower. "You have one hour left. Do you want to go back to your room, anyway?"

"Yes." Justin looked at the big tower as it came in sight in front of the car window. "Of course into the castle. Sleep with Prian."

Brian didn't want to smile at this statement and even if he did, it was only very briefly.

-----

Justin had Cognac-colored Tommy Hilfiger seven league laced boots on, a freshly washed face and sat a bit sluggish on the white prince sofa because his belly was very full.

Brian leaned relaxed in the couch cushions and followed the silly kids show on television only with half an eye while he was drawing little circles on Justin's back with two fingers.

Justin watched attentively as the gray rabbit disappeared with three big carrots and a picnic basket in his rabbit hole.

But after four minutes he scratched himself at the ear, yawned after seven minutes, and in the eleventh minute got up to wander around for a couple of steps, before he finally came back to crawl on Prian's lap without any comment.

He still looked silently on the television and needed a while to find a comfortable position, but then, he yawned once again and put his head tiredly on Prian's chest.

Brian didn't know what to think about it, and after a moment decided that there was nothing to think about.

He moved a bit deeper into the sofa, wrapped an arm loosely around Justin's small frame and rubbed his chin evenly over soft blond hair.

"Are you going to sleep now?" He asked it quietly and then kissed a warm temple.

"Yeah." Five dainty fingers found their way in Brian's neck. "With Prian."

And after five minutes, or perhaps twenty-five, there was nothing more to hear of Justin Taylor than quiet wheezing sounds. And Brian combed his fingers through long fair princess hair and didn't smile because of Bugs Bunny...

## Chapter 19 – Christmas Prelude

On Friday, Justin woke up and decided that he wanted to eat the wonderful cream cake which he'd seen behind the big window pane in Prian's kingdom.

But at 8.00 a.m. Plake nevertheless brought yoghurt with fruits and Justin made an angry face, said Blake and then made his radio extra loud.

"Hey, don't you want your yoghurt today? There are strawberries." Male nurse Blake held the little spoon once more in front of Justin's lips but the boy turned his head away and instead looked at the shining buttons on his radio set.

Blake sighed, put the spoon into his own mouth and then listened for the next two minutes to the weather report of the radio programme.

'...in the night to Saturday a cold front will end the mild autumn weather and will bring first snowfalls to the higher areas of the Pennsylvania...'

"Ah, the first snow!" Blake got up and put the breakfast equipment back on his tray. "Well, then Christmas can come, don't you think?"

Could it? Justin looked up from his radio to the ceiling and then over to his tower window. He liked snow. It was white and flew around and smelled like his beautiful blue gloves.

He got up fast and went with his radio to look out of the pane. Hmm. He peered up into the clouds and then to the black street ground but the terrific white flakes were nowhere to be seen. Also not on the little tower roof, over at the prince castle.

"It will take a little 'til you can see the snow," Blake explained and stood next to the young patient at the window. "First, more of the cold air has to come to Pennsylvania before it starts snowing."

"Yes." Justin felt quite excited. Of course it was almost...

"...Christmas."

Blake smiled. "Yes. Only 26 more days. I'll have to go shopping for Christmas presents."

"Yes." Justin curled a blond hair strand around his finger and thought of the wonderful boots in his wardrobe. "Of course at Wal-Mart. Shopping with Prian."

"Yes, I've heard of it. He took you shopping, right? Did you have fun?"

Justin smiled brightly. He liked shopping with the prince so much and really would've preferred to have much more of the tasty...

"...ice cream."

"Ah!" Blake put one hand to his belly and sighed theatrically. "He bought ice cream for you? I am so jealous! I love ice cream! Did you have whipped cream and these little colored sprinkles, too?"

Did he? Yes, he had much cream, a red cherry without stalk and...

"...one... sixty-one sprinkles."

Blake's forehead wrinkled in surprise. "You had exactly sixty-one sprinkles on your ice-cream?"

"Yes." The boy rocked a bit back and forth. "One fell... fell on the floor."

"One has fallen to the floor?"

"Yes. Certainly not eat any more. Prian says."

The male nurse smiled. "Brian is very clever, huh? Is he your friend?"

"Yeah." Justin looked up to the clouds again and wished the cold air really would hurry because he wanted to see the white Christmas snow preferably now. "My prince."

-----

Seven bags in his right hand, a lively four-year old at the left and the urgent desire for a cigarette. -It was safe to say that Brian Kinney wasn't a very happy man on this Saturday morning in Pittsburgh's largest shopping mall on the last day of November.

"Daddy, I want Manticore Megazord!" called Gus and dragged his father desperately in the direction of the toy department. "He is the bestest Power Ranger in the whole world!"

"Says who?!" grumbled Mister Kinney, highly irritated, when a woman with a twin baby stroller drove over his right foot and punished him with a reproachful look.

"Timmy Gershwin." explained the child and was then briefly distracted by the strategically well built up Leap Frog test console, right next to the children's musical instruments. "Can we buy a blue violin for me, Daddy?"

"What for?!" Brian made a nauseated face.

"So that I can play lovely music!"

"One can not play lovely music with a violin."

"But I want one!" Gus tugged on his father's hand as his eyes filled with unshed tears.

"Real men do not play the violin. Violins are for girls and people who live on the street. Didn't you just say you want a Power Ranger?"

"Yes!" bounced Gus, "Manticore Megazord!" tore himself from his father's hand and ran down the aisle that displayed all the extremely butch action figures.

Brian rolled his eyes and trotted along, full of deeply felt trepidation. He fucking hated toys since he was in fourth grade.

-----

One hour and three more bags later, Mister Kinney stood with Sonny Boy in front of a gigantic DVD shelf in the Media department.

"I want this one!" pointed Gus at the 4 disc Pirates of the Caribbean Collectors Edition.

"This doesn't count as a Disney movie," Brian decided. "I meant something like the elephant with the big ears, or the movie with the aardvark."

"But Pumba is a wild boar, Daddy."

"Whatever." Brian reached for a DVD with an attractive cover. "What's with this one? The guy has spur boots." Movies with a cowboy in the leading role couldn't be wrong.

"But mommy already bought Toy Story for me," explained the boy and bounced two steps further to a shelf with an alarming pastel-colored presentation. "Oh yes, please this one, Daddy!"

Brian turned up his nose. "This is for girls! Do you remember the conversation with the violin?"

"Then we buy it for Justin!"

Brian raised his eyebrow. "Justin isn't a girl either." Even if these eyelashes and fair hair could be really misleading.

"But Justin is Rapunzel, just like Barbie!" Gus protested and held the pink DVD up. "See? They look exactly the same!"

"That's not true!" hissed Brian, looked around panic-stricken and took the hot object of evidence away from his son's fingers. "Go fetch the damn pirate movie already and let's go pay, I don't have time to spend the whole day in this rat hole, got it?!"

-----

On Saturday after lunch was change of shifts at ward four, and Blake entered room 4.11 with a hand behind the back and a friendly smile on his face.

"Hey frog, what are you doing?"

Justin was at the window, with his nose at the pane, his gaze riveted to the view outside. He hated it really very much to wait for the Christmas snow.

"Are you still waiting for the first snow? It won't take long anymore. I was just shopping and it's already damned cold outside."

It was? Justin looked from the left to the right, then up into the clouds and found they looked actually a bit whiter.

"Hey, come here, okay? I've brought you something."

"Yes." Justin turned around after 32 seconds and toddled with small steps to where the male nurse stood.

"See?" Blake drew his hand out behind his back and, broadly smiling, held a flat Christmas calendar up.

"Yes." Justin looked blankly aside and bobbed softly up and down.

"It's an Advent calendar! There are 25 little doors in the picture and you have to open one every day. When you open the last door it's Christmas."

It was? Justin wasn't sure whether Blake was right or not and reached a little sceptically for the strange drawing.

Blake shook it carefully. "Do you hear that? It has chocolate in it. One piece behind every door."

"Oooh." Justin couldn't see the chocolate but he found the picture with the red man and the beautiful glittering tree really very pretty.

"We'll hang it here on the wall. And every morning you open up one door. Every day until Christmas."

"Yes." Justin smiled. He liked Christmas.

-----

At 14.45 p.m. Brian unloaded a tired, sticky child and many bags at the Peterson residence, smoked an urgently necessary stress cigarette even before he was back in the car and raced home in record time, because he really needed half a bottle of Jim Beam and 20 grams out of his herb can.

Although he felt slightly disturbed in his Saturday afternoon peace when he first found a horrifying green pine wreath on his house door, then unlocked it, and was welcomed by the most abominable stench and an off key Christmas carols singing housemaid.

"What the hell are you doing?!" Brian went into the kitchen and greeted Emmett with a nauseated look.

The domestic help looked up from his dough bowl and smiled merrily. "Cinnamon stars! It's only 25 days until Christmas and the recipe is from my grandmother. In Hazelhurst we've always started with the Christmas bakery in early November." And with this explanation he took the egg-beater out to beat the egg whites.

Brian gesticulated, outraged. "You have an apartment of your own, why do you have to cook this shit here of all places?! Now the whole house reeks!"

Emmett looked up without interrupting his stirring movements. "Cinnamon stars are baked and the whole house smells like cinnamon. Did you know that cinnamon is one of the oldest aphrodisiacs? Even the old Chinese used cinnamon as-"

"Do I look like fucking Bruce Lee?!" Brian got goose bumps as Emmett blindly squeezed out a lemon over the bowl and poured what looked like approximately ten cups of white sugar into the whole mixture. "Bring this shit out of here!" As if his kitchen were asbestos contaminated he held his jacket sleeve in front of his mouth and nose and cursing unfriendly things, marched in the direction of the exit, because he really felt very uncomfortable with such an amount of Christmas spirit all around beautiful Brighton.

Afterwards he smoked two cigarettes on the doormat with his mind fighting an internal battle 'baths vs. Woody's'. And after cigarette number 3, he decided to go across the street for a couple of minutes, even if the smell there wasn't really any better than in his own four walls.

As Brian Kinney entered ward 4 on the fifth floor five minutes later, the nurse's station was unoccupied and shattering screams came from room number 4.11.

He ran a little faster and found an open door and four nurses who all were busy with bringing a raging blond boy under control.

Justin beat his head against the wall and thick tears rolled over his chocolate smeared face. Everything stung and stung and was loud and nowhere was Christmas. There were no fried bird, no pudding with money treasure and the prince hadn't climbed through the tower window either. And he shouted loudly and kicked nurse Sherman in the belly and he hated the stupid Christmas door picture so much.

Blake lifted the torn Advent calendar off the ground. "Justin, have you eaten all the chocolate?"

Justin tore himself away from male nurse Schmidt's firm grip, then fell down and beat his forehead against the hard ground twice. "Aaah!"

A third male nurse pulled a syringe up and Brian broke loose from the doorframe and rushed in the room. "Hey! What's going on here?"

Justin wailed more loudly and beat himself on the head with his hands.

"Teddy hold his arm!" Male nurse Ethan Gold fell to his knees and, using his teeth, pulled the plastic hull off the needle.

"Hey!" Brian took hold of the male nurse's shoulder from behind. "What the hell are you giving him?"

"Brian," Blake went to his side and spoke friendly. "Why don't you wait outside? Justin is very upset at the moment."

"Oh yeah?! Me too!" Brian screamed at the nurse furiously and extended his arm provocatively. "Why don't you dope me up on drugs, too?"

"Brian please." Blake touched the man's back. "Simply wait in the corridor for a moment. Teddy will bring you a coffee."

Nurse Sherman gripped Justin by the neck, while male nurse Ethan stuck a thin arm under his knee to make it immovable.

Justin yelled out hysterically, turned up his head and two wet blue eyes looked helplessly in a lovely prince face... while thousands of brown and green evil vines wrapped themselves around his body, so he was trapped in the tower forever and ever.

Brian felt his stomach contract painfully. And he pushed the male nurse with the syringe forcibly aside and shot the nurse with the iron hand on Justin's neck a cold death stare. "If you don't want to have a prosecution because of bodily injury on your table tomorrow, you should take your fucking hands off of him!"

"Sir, I really must ask you to-"



Brian didn't listen to her as he got into a squatting position and leaned deeply over Justin's ear. "Hey brat." He whispered and stroked gently through the fair tousled hair. "Are you playing the drama princess again?"

Justin whimpered and rubbed his nose weakly over the cold floor. Whispering words were in his ear and they were so much louder as all the evil screaming. And the air smelled of almond cake and silver sword.

"Justin," Brian's lips brushed a warm earlobe. "You want me to throw these assholes out, hm?"

Ten minutes later, a sniffling Justin Taylor sat with red rimmed eyes at the window to see castle Pri-Tin, while Mister Kinney was leading a business discussion at the nurse's station.

"...and instead of perhaps enquiring what his problem is, the mobile death squad storms into his room to deaden him with a blowpipe, as if he were a fucking rabid bush elephant!"

"Mister Kinney, I can assure you that this method has proven itself in dealing with such situations." Blake smiled patiently. "Nobody here has the intention to hurt Justin."

"Hh." Brian cast a frosty glance at nurse Sherman. "From where I was standing it seemed definitely different and I can assure you that Mister Taylor's lawyer will take care of this occurrence."

Male nurse Gold folded his arms. "Justin doesn't have a lawyer."

"He has one now." Brian got up, scribbled his phone number on a memo pad, ripped the sheet off and banged it in front of Blake on the table. "I'll take Mister Taylor with me for a couple of hours. Here is my number, you know my address." And with that he left the little nurse's room on the 4th ward to help brat Taylor with tying up his seven league boots.

-----

Justin still sniffled at regular intervals and his eyes were red, but he smiled as he climbed, holding the prince's hand, down the many steps in his tower. Because even though the door calendar with the glittering tree hadn't worked and Christmas hadn't come, the prince was here now nevertheless to save him. With loud big bad wolf growling to fight off the evil vines.

"I really don't know why you have to bring all this crap along," Brian mumbled as he lost Justin's blue pajama trousers on step 125, and in the process of collecting the boys clothes the heavy book of fairytales, almost slipped out of his hand.

"Yes." Another unintentional snuffle came from Justin's mouth. "Certainly into the castle."

"Wonderful." Brian stuffed the boy's baggage under the other arm, took Justin by the hand again, and went on downstairs. "Now you are already starting to spread your stuff at my place. What's next? Partner coffee cups? Your initials on my fucking towels?!" He pushed open the heavy door and Justin blinked a bit against the cold air.

He looked up to the sky and still no Christmas snow fell from the clouds, but the prince led him through the high iron gate, on the stones with the many slits, seven steps across the street, and on straight way to the court entry of the castle.

"Oooh." A piece of glittering tree hung on the house door, and as Brian opened it with the little silver key, the most wonderful smell flew around Justin's nose.

"Take off your jacket." Brian disappeared with Justin's things in the living room and then shouted for Emmett to discuss the unasked-for redesign of the interiors. "Emmett!"

"Yes." And Justin looked around with big eyes. The castle was so lovely today! There were velvet bows and red flowers and colored shiny balls everywhere. He laughed and really wanted to never go back into the grey tower again. He was so glad to be in the castle and really would have preferred to eat a bit of ...

"...fried bird." He sniffed into the air and padded with small steps in the direction of the prince-kitchen.

"Baby! How nice to see you!" Emmett pecked Justin's cheek and then held a cinnamon star in front of his mouth. "Look at this, I've baked cookies for Christmas! Come on you have to try a cinnamon star!"

A little cake star! Justin extended his fingers toward it, touched it carefully and then looked hopefully at the servant.

"Not so timidly sweetbuns, it's really good!" Emmett shoved the pastries between Justin's lips and then watched contently as the boy chewed with full cheeks.

"Stop feeding him this dung." Brian wrinkled his nose as he discovered a mistletoe over the kitchen bar and pulled it down disgusted. "And for Christ's sake, fucking stop hanging all this shit around my damn house! What the hell will people think?!"

Emmett fed Justin with another cookie and raised his eyebrow in Brian's direction. "That Mister Kinney is in jolly Christmas mood?"

"Hu-fucking-ray." Brian stomped away, kicked a little reindeer figure behind the sideboard as he passed by and shouted over his shoulder. "Justin! Stop eating that garbage and come up into the bathroom, your face is covered with fucking chocolate!"

"Yes!" Justin chewed fast and licked his lips enthusiastically as the servant stuck cinnamon star number 3 into his mouth. He liked garbage cookies.

-----

Justin liked the warm washcloth at his face. It was wet and smelled like Prian's pullover.

"Where did you get all the chocolate from?" Brian held Justin's head with one hand in position, while he made the rag wet again to remove the last brown spot on Justin's right cheek.

"Yes." Justin looked at the prince and poked his tongue against the soft washcloth. "Certainly from Plake."

"Hmm." Brian wiped three times more than necessary over Justin's mouth before he threw the cloth back into the basin. "Chocolate isn't good for you. Don't eat so much of it again."

"Yes." Justin looked up to the ceiling and rocked a bit back and forth. "Of course fried... fried bird."

"Which bird? Chicken? Turkey?"

"Yes. Without head."

"Do you want Emmett to make chicken for you? With vegetables?"

"Yes. Certainly pudding." Justin smiled. He liked the money treasure in the pudding.

"No pudding." Brian went to the door and turned off the light. "You've had enough sugar for one day."

"Yes." Justin toddled afterwards in the direction of the stairs. He really would've preferred to eat a bit more of the tasty...

"... garbage cookies."

-----

After an hour, a tasty roast smell had covered the cinnamon star vaporizations in the former Playboy mansion, and Mister Kinney relaxed noticeably at his place behind the computer. On one hand because of the far more pleasant atmosphere, and on the other because it was really nice to watch Justin.

... even if the boy didn't do much more than stand at the terrace door, talking quietly to himself and licking the pane with his tongue now and then.

Ahem. Brian cleared his throat at the fourth lick and gripped himself between the legs to organize his trouser contents anew. Damned brat.

Justin put both hands flat on the glass pane. A new little pond was in the castle gardens! Directly under the tree with the pear and there were stones and long grass and right in the middle certainly sat...

"...the frog." Justin pressed his nose against the cold door. "Ribbit-ribbit."

Brian smirked slightly, took his hands off the keyboard and moved a bit back with his chair. "Justin. Come here."

"Yes." Justin looked after a little bird that flew over the bald pear tree and remained where he was.

Brian didn't repeat his request but got up and went over to the terrace door himself. He stood close behind the boy and put both arms around a flat belly. "No cat today?"

"Yes." Justin smiled with red cheeks. „Certainly a kitty nap with Prian." He giggled.

"Hmm." Brian rubbed his nose against Justin's neck. „It's already too late for an afternoon nap."

"Yes." Justin leaned his forehead against the pane and stretched his tongue to the glass. It was almost...

"...dark outside."

Brian closed his eyes, drew his arms more tightly around the kid and kissed Justin's ear. "Do you want to go back to your room?"

Justin shook his head.

"Watch TV?"

Justin snickered quietly but however said a clearly understandable, "No."

Brian grinned. "Then what?"

"Yes." The boy rubbed his hair against Prian's cheek. He liked the prince. "Of course take a... take a shower."

Brian's eyes flew open at the suggestion. "You want to take a shower?"

Did he? Yes, with much foam soap and also...

"...rain water."

"You can take a shower later, when you're back... home."

"Yes. Take a shower with Prian."

Brian smiled, kissed the crook of Justin's neck and shook his head. "No, alone."

"Yes. Sleep with Prian."

"Are you tired?"

Was he? Hmm. He closed his eyes and waited. They opened again. No, he was...

"...not tired." Justin sighed and pouted against the pane.

This made Brian grin widely and he pressed his lips frantically together to suppress it. "Do you want to go to sleep, Justin? Upstairs in my bed?"

Justin turned to be able to see the prince and made big eyes. He wanted to lie in Prian's bed so much, with his book and the blue...

"...pajamas."

Brian bit his lip while scrutinizing the blonde. "It's on the sofa. Change, go upstairs and lie down. I'll wake you up when you have to go. Okay?" He raised one eyebrow.

"Okay." Justin repeated wrongly emphatically. "Sleep with Prian."

"No. You sleep alone. Pr-Brian has to work."

-----

Justin needed six minutes to go upstairs with his book and his pajamas, because all the pictures on Prian's wall were really pretty, particularly the one with the naked guy without hair. "Yes. Certainly no trousers."

After that he sat down on the terrific white cat fur carpet in front of Prian's bed and it took eleven minutes 'til he had undone and taken off his boots. Then he also took off his socks and stroked his naked feet over the soft carpet. "Oooh." He liked cats.

"Justin! Do you have your pajamas on?"

Justin heard the prince call and looked down on himself. Hmm. No, he didn't have his pajamas on yet.

He toddled with naked feet into the bathroom and found the lovely toothbrush with his name on the basin. He used far too much tooth paste and brushed 'til he had his whole mouth full of minty foam. He then took off his pullover, combed his hair a while in front of the mirror and, "Ooh!" finally grabbed for a wonderful white tube with blue letters. There wasn't a big P but the lid opened very easily and Justin pushed a little and sniffed curiously at the slippery contents. It looked like pudding without color. Water pudding. Hmm. Justin extended his tongue and licked it. He smacked noisily twice and then squeezed a large portion into the basin. And again and again until nothing more came out of the tube. He still squeezed for test a few times, tried to look in it and then threw the empty thing away. "Of course into the trash can." He found a bucket next to the toilet, put the tube in and gripped himself between the legs as he saw the closed toilet lid. "Certainly wee-wee." Awkwardly he climbed out from his pants, moved his underwear down until it fell around his ankles, opened the toilet and sat down. He remained in his position a little stiffly, looked around and waited for the- "Ah!" He slapped himself against the forehead and sighed. "Of course pissing. Prian says." Hff. Sometimes he really was stupid.

After a couple of minutes a quiet splashing could be heard, Justin flushed, closed the toilet again and toddled with his pants around his naked feet over to the towel shelf. He put his head on the stack in the middle shelf, closed his eyes briefly because it was really soft and smelled like prince almond cake, and then wandered a couple of aimless steps around on the shiny tiled floor until he stood in front of the basin again.

He looked at himself in the mirror, at his naked belly and his long hair. He couldn't see his legs in the mirror, even if he stood on his tip toes. But the water pudding still lay in the basin and he pushed his entire hand into it, jerked back a bit because it was really cold and slippery and after a short time decided to smear it a little around. First on the smooth edge of the washing basin, then over the big mirror, and as a little bit from his hand dripped onto his belly he smeared it around there, too. In his belly button and a little more on his chest and on his arm and with one finger on his penis. It was cold and he blinked and toddled with small steps out of the bathroom and back to the white cat fur carpet.

His book lay on the bed and he crawled clumsily on the big mattress, lost his underwear in the process, and finally sat in the middle of the bed. Naked, on his knees, softly bobbing up and down, while he leafed through his book and spoke quietly of the beautiful prince who fought through the big thorny hedge to kiss Sleeping Beauty.

Justin noticed as his face became all warm as he looked at the picture of the kiss and he stopped rocking and remained completely still. "Yes. Kiss... kiss Prian." He said it only quietly, licked his lips and then looked a long time up at the ceiling, before he awkwardly got up from the bed, and went with small steps, his body covered lightly with goose bumps, out in the corridor, down the dark stairs and over the black smooth stones on the warm wooden floor.

The prince sat at his desk and only a little lamp was on. Justin felt a bit shy and touched himself nervously between the legs.

Brian looked up from his computer and squinted his eyes when he saw a naked boy standing in the living room door. "Hey."

Justin said nothing and looked up fast to the ceiling, but he drew his hand more tightly around his penis.

Brian combed through his hair with his fingers. "What's the matter? Why haven't you changed into your pajamas?" He got up, walked over to Justin and cupped his hand under a thin chin. "Didn't you want to sleep?" He smiled.

"Yes." Justin blinked and rocked back and forth a bit. It was cold and he really would've preferred to...

"... kiss with Prian."

Brian pulled his hand away, made a step back and scrutinized the boy's small frame. He got stuck in the middle, averted his gaze quickly and automatically padded on his pants in the search for a cigarette. "Hff..." He didn't find any, went back to his desk, lit one there and took two deep drags before he looked back in Justin's direction again. "It's half past five. You have to hurry if you still want to sleep."

Justin turned a long hair strand around his finger and looked blankly aside. He didn't want to sleep. He wanted to kiss...

"... with Prian."

Brian sighed and gesticulated with his cigarette. "I've already told you, I have to work."

"Yes. Lick... lick Prian's mouth."

Brian inhaled noisily one last time, stubbed the cigarette out in the ashtray, and without a comment took Justin by the hand, to bring him out of the room and up the stairs.

Justin stumbled a little reluctantly behind the prince. Prian walked too fast and he wanted to look at the man without pants a bit longer.

Brian brought Justin into the bedroom, ran around to collect the scattered clothes, stopped to pick up a piece of white underwear and held it in front of the boy's nose. "Put this on."

"No." Justin looked uninterested toward the ceiling.

Brian stared at the boy for a moment. "Put. It. On."

Justin shook his head and began to count the clouds he couldn't see in here. "Two... twenty-three."

"Justin!" Brian growled. "You have to go back home now. Get dressed!"

And Justin made his legs stiff and noticed as his chest became all hot. His lips began to tremble and his throat started to tickle because he really didn't want to go away from the prince castle. And he shook his head and desperately tried to keep his gaze up, but his eyes got quite blurred.

Brian stared in Justin's face. Then looked away, sighed, rubbed his neck, threw the underwear carelessly to the side and reached for a thin wrist. He dragged the boy closer and wrapped one arm a little clumsily around him. But when he had the cold, naked body this near, he automatically fetched him closer and squeezed a little more tightly. "What do you want from me, Justin?" He spoke with his nose in Justin's neck and knew he wouldn't receive an answer to his question.

At least not a direct one. But nevertheless Justin said something after a moment. Quietly and timidly against the prince's broad shoulder. "Sleep with Prian."

And Brian closed his eyes and really wished that Justin knew it wasn't sleep he was asking for. He wished the fucking tower on the other side of the street didn't exist.  
... he wished for the first time that Justin could be alright.

And he squinted his eyes more tightly as he became aware that he'd just worried more over this boy than any other man he'd ever took home. Here in his bedroom.

And for this reason he hugged Justin to his chest, then released him completely and drew the blanket back on his bed.  
And he stood there, four feet away, looked at Justin for a long time before walking back and taking the boy's cheek into his hand.  
He said nothing, smiled only slightly as he stroked Justin's soft skin with his thumb, and in the end bent forward to lay his lips on the raspberry-colored mouth.

He felt Justin's erratic breathing and loved the little clumsy fingers that clawed themselves into his T-shirt one second later.  
He took a moment to taste Justin's tongue, smell Justin's skin, feel Justin's hair and whispered softly against damp lips. "Lie down, Justin."

Justin did nothing at all, however. Brian held him at the hip, directed him backwards to the edge of the bed and smiled as Justin bumped against it. He then turned the boy around and smacked his naked bottom lightly. "Go to bed, Justin."

"Yes." Justin climbed on all fours over the big mattress, found his book halfway up the bed, took it along with him, put it under the soft prince pillow, and stretched out stiffly on the left bed side with an expectant look.

"Don't you want to cover up?" Brian raised his eyebrow.

Justin blinked and didn't move a finger.

Brian sighed, drew the blanket over the pale body and leaned close over Justin's face. "You read too much in this funny book, princess."

"Yes." Justin smiled brightly and took hold of the prince's neck. Brian was so beautiful.

Brian smiled and kissed the boy with a closed mouth. "Sleep. I'll wake you up in an hour."

"Yes." Justin yawned. "Shopping with Brian. Certainly at Wal-Mart."

Brian wrinkled his forehead. "Certainly go home and sleep some more in the tower room."

Justin blinked tiredly and turned his head aside on the pillow. "Of course eating ice cream. Certainly a cherry."

"Hff." Brian turned off the light on the bed side table and went in the direction of the bathroom. "Think again, twat."

"Yes." The boy only spoke quietly now. "Certainly take a shower... with Brian."

Brian opened his mouth to fight off the last suggestion from the bedroom and, "What the fuck?!" stopped then perplexed at the sight of his lube smeared bathroom. "Justin!"

## Chapter 20 – The Need In Me

Just to see what would happen, Brian waited until 8:35 pm which was thirty minutes past Justin's normal bedtime. He was sure he had given this Flake-guy his number, and everybody over there in the fucking institution had his exact address. So, how come nobody had called to ask where Justin was?! He could've kidnapped the boy, smuggled him across the border to Mexico, but it seemed nobody at St. James worried enough about the kid to at least check.

"Hff." He went upstairs.

It was still dark in the bedroom and even breathing sounds came from the blond boy spread out across his bed.

God, Justin looked gorgeous lying there like that.

He always was extraordinarily beautiful, but shit... like that, completely naked and sleeping all relaxed, pale skin on dark sheets... he looked like the sweetest temptation out of Gay-heaven, fresh and hot and innocent.

Brian closed the door quietly, went downstairs again and dialled the number of the St. James Sanatorium.

"Ward 4, Miller speaking," came the bored answer after more than two minutes.

"Yes, Kinney here. I'm sure you're wondering why Mister Taylor hasn't returned yet."

"Who?"

Brian listened as nurse Miller smacked her gum noisily and scrunched up his nose in disgust. "Mister Taylor. Your patient in room 4.11."

"Ah, yes of course. The little one, right? Justin."

"Right." Brian forced himself to maintain a calm intonation. "I've taken him with me this afternoon, but he's fallen asleep while watching TV, and I would hate to wake him up now. So please make sure to inform your colleagues at shift change that Justin will be back after breakfast."

"Okay." The nurse wrote something down. "...back...after...breakfast." She put the pen aside. "Hey, are you authorized to have the little one with ya?"

"Yes. Write down my name. Brian Kinney. I left my phone number and they know my address."

"Okay."

"Fine." Brian ended the call cursing as he threw the phone on the couch. Fucking incompetent people! He poured himself a glass of Bourbon and knocked it down quickly before fixing another, then walked over to the terrace door and inhaled on a cigarette. He wondered briefly if he could leave the boy alone for a short excursion to Babylon but quickly decided against it. Pouring a third glass of Bourbon, he decided to spend a couple of hours on his computer.

Around midnight he felt surprisingly exhausted for a Saturday night, turned off the lights and went upstairs. Just outside of the bedroom door he briefly thought of the possibility of sleeping on the sofa. The thought vanished and he wasn't even very quiet as he pushed open the door, undressed in front of the bed and made his way to the bathroom.

When he came back, Justin sat with sleepy eyes in the middle of the bed, yawned and almost looked frightened when he saw the prince. He shook his head.

Brian stopped and raised an eyebrow. "What?"

Justin looked up to the ceiling. "One...sixty-one."

Brian smiled, went to his wardrobe to put on a pair of underwear, sat down on the bed and leaned over to whisper into Justin's ear. "You trying to ignore me again?"

Justin shook his head once more and tried to crawl away. He really didn't want to go back to the tower.

"Hey." Brian held him by the shoulder. "Where are you going?"

"Ah!" Justin jerked his head back and stiffened.

"Justin." Brian took his hand away and spoke sternly. "Look at me."

The boy shook his head 'no', but turned around after a minute anyway.

Brian smiled. "Good boy."

"Yes." Justin looked up to the ceiling. "Justin."

"Hm." The older man gripped the boy's chin to create visual contact. "You want to go back, Justin? Home to your room?"

Justin squeezed his eyes tightly shut.

Brian's handle on Justin's chin became a trace more firm. "Justin! Do you want to sleep in your own bed? You want me to take you home?"

"No!" The boy tried to escape the strong fingers. "Sleep with... sleep with Prian!" He took hold of his hair to pull it, but Brian beat him to it and held the thin wrist tightly.

"You want to sleep here? With me?"

"Yes." Justin rocked on his heels. "Justin."

"Hmm." Brian released him, stroked Justin's cheek once with his thumb, then laid down and turned his back to the boy. "Well, then lie down and go to sleep again. It's late."

"Yes." Justin looked up, bobbed a bit up and down for a while and then began to count anew. "One...sixty-one. One fell...one fell down."

Brian sighed. "What's with the noise again?! I said go to sleep!"

"Yes. One...of course one cherry. One fell down. Prian says."

"Hff." Brian blinked twice irritated, sat up and stared at his guest coldly. "Justin. I want to sleep. I cannot sleep as long as you're talking, so be quiet, okay?"

"Yes."

"Yes?"

"Yes. Be quiet."

"Hmm." Brian eyed the boy mistrustfully for a moment longer, then lay down again and turned around.

Justin sat still and said nothing. But his eyes just wouldn't shut. So he crawled over the mattress a bit, found his book under the pillow and started to leaf through it.

For now he liked the story of Little Red Riding Hood the most, so he read a couple of lines from it, then got hungry when he saw the terrific cake and the green bottle in the basket, and crawled to the edge of the bed to open the drawer of the nightstand.

"Oooh."

The prince had the most wonderful things hidden in the little cabinet and Justin reached after one very pretty silver arm-jewelry and tried to put it on his wrist. It wouldn't fit, so he put it aside and instead began to count the many little money treasure coins, which Prian had collected from his Christmas Puddings. He counted exactly forty-three shiny, different looking coins, and almost couldn't believe how rich the prince was.

He touched a lovely big silver coin with an extended forefinger, and "Ha!" smiled brightly as he discovered a terrific blue plastic stick, that looked exactly like his...

"...penis!"

He took it into his hand, felt it and sniffed at it. But although it had the same color as the blue well water, it didn't smell like frog at all.

Irritated, Brian opened one eye when he heard the word 'penis' out of the boy's mouth, but however, didn't feel like that was reason enough to give up his comfortable position under the covers.

Justin poked the tip of his tongue to the wonderful penis stick, smacked twice noisily because he found the taste not very approving and then let it fall completely ignored on the mattress, as he saw right behind the small pile of money treasure a fantastic tube of water pudding.

He squeezed it a bit, opened up the lid with a small 'click' and immediately a large, slippery drop fell on the blanket, another in front of the bed on the cat fur carpet and then a smaller one directly on Justin's naked thigh.

"Hh!"

It was cold and wet, and after a moment of hesitancy, the boy smeared it around generously with three fingers liking the noise that the pudding made. Then he licked his whole hand carefully clean, really not knowing why water pudding had to taste so horrible.

When his hand was clean he squeezed another portion on his extended forefinger and watched as most of it ran down on the pillow, before he touched his slippery hand, fascinated, to Prian's naked backside.

Shocked, Brian arched his back and turned around within half a second. He grabbed for Justin's wrist, giving the boy his death stare. "What the hell do you think you're doing?!"

"Ah-oh." Justin's heart hammered in his chest and he tried to pull his hand out of the strong fingers.

Brian sat up and took the open KY tube from Justin's firm grasp. "Where do you-" His look fell on the open drawer first and then on the handcuffs and his favourite vibrator, scattered across the bed. "Shit!" He let go of the kid, got up and went to the other bed side to gather his things and hold them under the younger one's nose, accusingly.

"Who the fuck told you to touch my private belongings?!"

Justin stared at the prince anxiously and then quickly looked up to the ceiling to count the wonderful money treasure coins again.

"One...forty-one. Two... forty-two. Forty-three."

Furiously, Brian threw his stuff back into the drawer and grabbed the boy hard by the shoulder. "And fucking stop trying to ignore me!"

"Ahh." Justin got confused with the numbers and his shoulder stung and stung and the prince was...

"...certainly very angry."

"God!" Brian released him, stepped with his naked foot into a cold lube spot on the carpet and stormed out of the room, slamming the door.

When he came back a couple of minutes later, he had a cigarette in the corner of his mouth and stood quietly at the foot of the bed eyeing the slender person on the mattress, who was rocking irritated from left to the right.

"Yes... certainly angry. Prian says...says not over...over the street."

Justin curled a long blond hair strand around his finger and bounced up and down nervously on the bed, while he was desperately trying to keep his gaze up.

Brian took a deep drag of his cigarette, blew the smoke out in a long trail and then spoke in a quiet voice. "Justin."

"Of course not... no more biting. Prian says."

"Don't be a drama princess. I didn't bite you."

"Yes. Of course no more...no more biting."

Brian drew his lips inside, looked at the floor and then took another drag from his cigarette, when he looked up again. "The things in the drawer are not-"

"Yes, certainly a penis."

Brian blinked. "Well, the penis is none of your business. You've made everything wet with the fucking lube."

"Yes." Justin stopped to wrap his hair around his finger and looked at the prince with big innocent eyes. "Certainly all slimy."

A little bit of the colorless gel still stuck to Justin's chin and the corners of his mouth and a tiny, gentle smile curled around Mister Kinney's lips. With one hand he reached for the boy and wiped with his thumb over the pale skin. "Have you eaten my lube?"

"Yes." Justin liked Prian's fingers on his face and kept very still.

Brian blew his smoke to the side, while carefully rubbing over Justin's lips. "Are you hungry?"

"Yes. Certainly white beet." Justin poked his tongue against Prian's fingertip.

"Hmm." And without a further comment, the older one went to his wardrobe, got a long white shirt out and threw it in front of his guest on the mattress. "Put this on, then we'll go to the kitchen."

-----

Justin had put on the shirt although, it wasn't his, and had walked down the stairs holding Prian's hand, even though it was very dark and his feet were cold.

The prince had turned on a little light in the kitchen and opened the fridge door, asking Justin what he wanted to eat.

Justin didn't know whether it was already eight a.m., but he was sure they would have...

"...waffles and fruit salad. Of course on Sunday."

Brian took a last drag on his cigarette, stubbed it out in the ashtray next to the coffee maker, closed the refrigerator again and fetched the peanut butter from the cupboard. "We aren't eating breakfast. It's a midnight snack."

"Oooh." Justin watched fascinated as Prian peeled a banana, cut it into slices and spread them evenly on a peanut butter bread.

"Here." Brian placed the plate on the bar. "Sit down."

Justin felt a little funny when he crawled on the high seat, because he didn't have on underwear, and the t-shirt always slipped off his butt, but after he'd wriggled around four times he found it comfortable enough and reached for the bread without asking for permission first.

He bit off a large piece and munched happily along while he watched the prince attentively filling a glass of milk.

"Good?" Brian put the glass next to the plate and caressed Justin's hair briefly. "Drin



"Yes."

Brian snatched a half empty carton of yogurt ice-cream from the freezer, rummaged in the cutlery drawer for a large spoon and took both into the living room, to sit on the couch.

Of course there wasn't anything worth watching on television at this time of the night, but even the 103rd Loveboat rerun was better than watching Justin's evil pink tongue, licking peanut butter like a fucking kitten.

Fifteen minutes later, Justin carefully collected the last bread crumb off his plate, ate it and drank the whole glass of milk. Then he licked his lips and put one hand on his belly because he suddenly felt not so well anymore.

Brian raised his head and looked over the back of the sofa. "Justin, are you done?"

The boy didn't give an answer, licked his lips once again and then climbed awkwardly down from the big bar chair. His stomach pinched and he was a little tired. He really would've preferred to speak to Plake now.

He wandered around the kitchen a little disoriented and then went into the living room. The floor was made of wood and much warmer and he wiggled his toes and looked up to the white ceiling.

"Justin. Come here." Brian ate another spoonful of ice cream.

"Yes."

When Mister Kinney looked up two minutes later, Justin really stood next to the couch. Rocking softly back and forth, one hand between his naked legs and his eyes captivated by the events on the television.

Another three minutes passed, before he patted closer, with naked feet and clumsy steps, to sit down in Brian's lap.

His butt was naked and cold, causing Brian to almost forgot to swallow his ice cream, and when a big Captain's dinner was shown on T.V., Justin opened his mouth eagerly towards the prince-ice spoon.

"Can't you say please?" Brian's voice sounded annoyed, but at the same time he shoved a generously spoon full of ice cream between Justin's lips. "You are fucking rude, you know."

Justin said nothing, only sucked his ice cream and watched the presentation of the dessert buffet on television. Soon afterwards, when he opened his mouth once more for another bite, he said a clearly understandable "Please.", even though it was emphasized wrongly, and he didn't bother to take his eyes off the screen.

Brian smiled slightly, "That's better." and fed the next spoon.

"Yes." Justin licked his lips.

Another fourteen polite ice spoons later, Justin's face was smeared whitely and Brian felt a little dizzy from this sight and the feeling of a naked ass sitting on his own only scantily dressed lap.

A woman with a huge pink hat ran across the television screen and Justin laughed loudly and looked at the prince happily. "Like a bowl!"

"Hmm. Wouldn't make a difference." Brian smiled back, scooped the rest of the half melted ice cream from the container and, "Justin..." held the spoon in Justin's direction, until he had the boy's attention. "The last spoon. You want it?"

Did he? Yes. The ice cream was so good and he wanted very much of it. So he said a serious "Please.", looked at the prince with big eyes and opened his mouth in anticipation.

But Brian however, just grinned, raised his left eyebrow and in slow motion, stuck the spoon between his own lips. "Mmmh." He put the empty container aside and his grin became amused laughter when the boy's face changed into an image of pure shock.

Justin stared at Brian's mouth dumbstruck, reached for it with one finger and somehow tried to get in there; where the wonderful ice cream had disappeared.

Brian held his wrist tightly, waited a few seconds for a hardly noticeable moment of respite, and then pulled the kid closer. Without a word. And when he could feel warm breath on his face, he shut his eyes demonstratively, tipped his head a little to the side and waited.

"Yes." Justin looked nervously aside and then back to Brian's beautiful mouth. "Certainly licking..." He moved closer and rubbed his nose over the prince's cheek. "Kiss Brian." And even though he kept his own eyes wide open, he didn't dare to look as he extended his tongue and found a warm mouth with it.

It tasted so good, like Prian and ice cream, and he was all excited and started to rock around a little on Prian's lap. But two big, strong hands held him still and then the warm lips opened for him and it got cold and sweet and very hot. Everything at the same time. And he whimpered a bit and closed his eyes anyway. Very tightly. His fingers fumbled for hold at Prian's bare chest and his whole body tried to get closer and closer. His tongue licked eagerly every exquisite millimetre of Prian's mouth and Brian smiled in the devouring kiss as he heard a mumbled, "Certainly ice cream ...".

He pulled back a little and kissed Justin on the lips. "Good?"

Justin giggled quietly and put his finger in Prian's mouth. "Certainly a cherry."

And Brian didn't know why, but suddenly he had the urgent need to eat this half-naked boy in his lap completely and in one piece.

...since this plan was a bit difficult to realize, though, he confined himself to another kiss. More calmly this time, deeper and safely controlled by him. With stroking hands in soft blond hair and professional tongue work, to elicit these wonderful little sounds of Justin's, full of hunger and unconscious longing.

He could feel the boy's hardness pressing against him and saw the need in the blue eyes. He understood that need all too well, having experienced it on numerous occasions. This kid had no one to turn to and no one to teach him anything about sex or his body's needs. How fucking unfair was that? It was obvious the boy was horny as hell, so why should he have to suffer.

He caressed Justin's warm back with his broad palm, pulled the soft shirt up and kneaded the most perfect butt he'd ever put his hands on.

Justin felt like he would melt, pushed his bottom whimpering in Prian's hand and then pressed himself against the half-naked body as tightly as possible. He liked kissing with Prian so much and he sighed hoarsely because his penis got really hard and he had to rub his crotch even stronger against the beautiful prince.

Brian felt a few drops of warm wetness and Justin's obvious erection against his stomach, slid his tongue groaning deeper between dark pink lips and moved into a better position on the sofa, before he instinctively pumped his hips a few times towards the boy's middle.

Justin moaned loudly and buried his face deep into Brian's neck while he was clumsily trying to bring his hands between his legs.

Brian panted against Justin's ear and closed his eyes, as he noticed five amazingly strong fingers, desperately trying to reach between their two bodies. "You like that?" He whispered and followed the curve of Justin's ear with his tongue, while his middle finger did the same between Justin's ass cheeks. "You want to touch yourself?" He reached for Justin's hand and led it directly to an impressive manhood. "Do you touch yourself when you're alone in your room, hmm?" With his own hand over Justin's fingers he stroked the hard length twice gently up and down and the boy squirmed and whimpered loudly. "Do you think of me when you're doing this, Justin? You think of Prian?"

"Hhh." With his eyes shut tightly, Justin tried to raise his head but everything was upside down and turned around and in the end he only pressed his nose weakly against Prian's throat. "Dream of...Prian...Prian's tongue."

The words were quiet and unemphatic, but Brian grinned and squeezed Justin's thin fingers tightly around the hard shaft. "Hmm...you like my tongue, do you? When I kiss you?" He licked Justin's warm ear once more and the boy trembled and imitating extended his own tongue to taste Prian's skin.

"Come here .." He kissed Justin's temple and took him by the shoulders to push him up. "Let me get up, brat." He said it quietly, threw a pillow on the floor and manoeuvred the light body with a couple of secure grips into a kneeling position in front of the sofa, so Justin's knees were on the soft pillow. Then he knelt down behind the boy and pushed his upper body gently onto the warm seat of the sofa. "Stay like this, okay?" He kissed Justin's red cheek, and for a moment, nestled his face into soft, blond hair, while he was stroking Justin's sides soothingly with both hands. "Close your eyes."

Justin tried to think about why he wasn't sitting correctly on the beautiful white sofa, but all the thoughts flying around in his head were full of almonds, glittering silver swords, ice cream kisses and wonderful prince whispering words. And he opened his eyes and tried to turn his head, but the prince only smiled and kissed his nose, saying "Ah ah. No looking." And then Prian's large hands were everywhere. Gentle and so strong and soft like clouds. Justin turned his face into the thick couch cushion and hummed and sighed and noticed as his legs started to tremble and shake when the prince pushed them apart and began to caress his bottom.

"Sssh." Brian put a hand to Justin's hips and kept it there for support; rubbing his own hardness through his damp underwear, while he frantically gritted his teeth so he wouldn't swear out loud as the boy stretched his ass still an inch higher, wiggling it around expectantly.

Justin felt little warm kisses on his back and his butt and was so excited and everything tickled and buzzed and "Hh!" then he jerked away startled as something hot and wet snaked between his butt cheeks. From top to bottom and back again. And he wailed out loud and his heart beat in his throat and then he couldn't even breathe anymore, as he looked over his shoulder and saw the big prince cat, sitting behind him, licking him all over with the most wonderful tongue.

Blindly, Brian put a secure hand on Justin's back to keep him still, before he stiffened his tongue and pushed it carefully into a tiny pink opening. He had to fight intense resistance and growled low in his throat at the almost desperately mewling sounds coming from

Justin's mouth. But he took his time and rubbed his tongue with smooth, even movements again and again through the hard ring of muscle until he was rewarded with sweet surrender and three tiny drops of pre cum on his Milan wood floor.

Justin bit into the white cushion fabric and wanted to laugh and yell and to fly away but then he only squeaked a bit and shoved his bottom further and further against Prian's lips, because he wanted to have more and more of the damp breath and the long tongue and the hundreds and thousands of butterflies flying around everywhere in his body, as the prince withdrew for a moment and then came back to lick him everywhere with a broad, soft tongue. Between his legs, on his butt cheeks and so very deep inside, like a big tiger cat, who was hungry and thirsty and growled because it couldn't find enough to eat.

Brian sat back on his heels for a moment to admire his spit shiny work, kneaded the soft globes then roughly with both hands and bent down again, to sank his tongue back into the virgin tight tunnel for a last time, „Ah Fuck, Justin..." before he wasn't able to stand it any longer and laid down heavy on Justin's back, wrapped his long arms around him, kissed a warm, scented neck and moved his own painfully hard erection, moaning and panting heavily, against the boys firm ass. Again and again, while he reached with practiced fingers between Justin's legs to bring him over the edge with a couple of last strokes.

Justin tore his eyes open and then squeezed them tightly shut. The prince was in him and on him and all around him and white stars and small blue flying dots and loud water brawling came and made him as light as a feather and the butterflies whirled through the air and wrapped around him to make everything dark and far away. And then there was only Prian and nothing more. Prian's smell, Prian's fast heartbeat, Prian's intense panting on his neck, Prian's small kisses at his shoulders and Prian's wonderful whispering words close to his ear. He couldn't understand them but they sounded more beautiful than everything else in the world.

Even after three minutes Brian felt no desire to move, however, as the blurry curtain lifted a little from his foggy brain, he figured that he was probably a little too heavy with his full weight on the slim boy under him. „Hhh" He began to move his limbs, dug his nose into Justin's neck and then screwed up his face in disgust, when he was confronted with the fact that he had ejaculated in his underwear like a thirteen-year-old. „Shit." Rather ungracefully he stood up, felt his wet shorts, looked at the half-naked boy who knelt on all fours over a very impressive puddle, and decided that he didn't regret the experience even if he'd embarrassed himself by shooting in his briefs.

"Hey." He tousled through the small pile of blond hair strands, wildly spread out on his sinfully expensive couch cushion. „You okay?"

Two blue eyes opened and looked up a little dazed. Justin felt a bit cold and limp and would've preferred for an hour to just...

"...sleep."

He lowered his naked butt to the floor, rubbed with the ball of his hand over his nose and closed his eyes again.

"Ah ah." Brian grinned and patted the kid on the shoulder. "Don't even think of it. Off to the shower."

"Yes." Justin pressed his face into the cushion and sighed.

Brian took him by the arm and dragged him on his feet. "Come on, princess. Get up."

"Yes." Justin looked at the prince pleading. He really wanted to ...

"...go to bed?"

Brian took him by the hand. "Go into the shower."

"Yes." The boy plodded awkwardly after the prince and turned around once again half way out, pointing to the clearly wet spot in front of the sofa. "Certainly wee-wee."

"Pissing."

"Yes." The prince dragged him out of the room and upstairs. "Of course Prian pissed...pissed on the floor." He said it in slight disapproval.

Brian squeezed Justin's hand a bit too tightly and the blond squeaked in alarm. "I did not!" He growled his observation while entering the bedroom and switching on the light. "...little twat."

"Yes." Justin wiggled his toes on the soft cat fur carpet, thought of Prian's beautiful tongue and smiled brightly as the door to the bathroom opened. "Of course lick...lick Prian in the shower." He liked puddle water.

-----

Brian Kinney was definitely a fan of long fair princess hair, although he would've denied it in front of every court in the country with a hand over his very manly heart.

But here in the peaceful private atmosphere of his bedroom in the half-dark, with a freshly showered, stark-naked Justin at his side, the long damp strands virtually wrapped all by themselves around his fingers.

First he watched Justin's tired eyes and then a particularly long hair strand, which he could knot eight times around his index finger. "Your hair is long."

"Yes." Justin sighed tiredly and fought with all his power to hold his heavy eyes open. The prince just looked so beautiful.

"Why do you have such long hair?"

"Yes." The boy yawned, smacked his lips quietly and extended his hand to touch Prian's eyebrow. "Certainly to climb."

The right corner of Brian's mouth lifted in amusement while he was wrapping two fingers synchronously in blond hair. "People don't climb on hair."

They didn't? Justin looked at the prince a little confused. He was really terribly tired.

"Nobody climbs on hair." Brian spoke softly and moved a little closer. "People climb on a rope."

"Yes." Justin yawned again and blinked twice before his eyes closed.

Brian planted a kiss on still damp hair and shoved every thought of cuddling with damned brats away, before he too didn't want to hold his eyes open any longer and fell asleep with three fingers twisted in blond hair.

## Chapter 21 – Wonderful Things

Justin knew it was a Sunday morning as he woke up and he lay in the wonderful prince bed and was naked and felt so comfortably warm and nice-smelling.

He blinked with his long eyelashes under a curtain of tousled hair strands and then buried his face deep into the pillow. He liked to sleep with Prian.

"Hmm." Brian hadn't the intention to open his eyes, as he felt undefined movements on the other side of the bed. He stretched out an arm, sighed tiredly, turned on his back and then on the side. It was definitely too early to be awake.

Justin found it funny to lie in bed, all still and quiet, although no one was asleep anymore. And after two minutes, he began to snicker quietly.

As his giggles grew a little louder, Brian half-opened his eyes in irritation. The boy was covered with the heavy blanket up to his chin, with rosy cheeks and dishevelled blond hair. And he smiled and had a disturbingly happy expression in his eyes for such an early hour.

"Hhm." He grumbled and closed his eyes again. "What's so funny?"

Justin only giggled and said nothing.

And Brian growled as his body protested strongly against any slight movements in its deep sleep modus, but in the end managed to slide a sluggish hand on Justin's pillow. "Sleep, twat."

"Yes." Justin immediately squeezed his eyes shut and had to laugh as they opened again a second later. The prince was so funny.

The right corner of Brian's mouth lifted, although it was safe to say that he found nothing funny in this situation. He felt a couple of soft fingers at his face and opened his eyes only to see that his own hand had wandered towards Justin's chin. "Don't you know that you have to sleep till noon on Sundays? That's why this day was invented."

Justin pressed his forefinger into Prian's cheek and touched then fascinated the dark stubble.

Brian noticed the change from happy sparkling, to highest concentration in the blue eyes and smiled while he was stroking over the smooth skin on Justin's chin. "Have you ever shaved?"

"Yes." Justin said it without creating visual contact and put his full palm on the rough cheek.

"H-hm." Brian did the same on Justin's face and grinned. "Will you go back to sleep now?" His hand remained where it was as he closed his eyes again. "Wake up again at noon."

Loud giggling was the answer and Justin touched the closed eyelids. The prince made fun with him. Of course now they had to ...

"...eat breakfast!"

Weakly, Brian raised a pointing finger. "There is some more lube in the drawer."

"Yes. Certainly waffles and fruit salad. Always on Sunday."

"Maybe later."

"Yes. Certainly eight a.m."

"Hff." One eye opened slightly to look at the alarm clock on the bedside table. It was seven minutes till 8 a.m. On a Sunday morning. "Shit" Someone really should inform the boy about a couple of generally known basic principles to the sleeping behaviour of working people.

-----  
After joint tooth brushing, a short discussion about today's clothing and half a gallon of consumed caffeine, Mister Kinney sat with his fourth cup of coffee, tired eyes and completely powerless at the kitchen bar in front of a blond haired young man. "Eat your toast. You said you wanted breakfast."

"Yes." Justin looked up uninterestedly to the ceiling. "Certainly waffles and fruit salad."

Brian pushed the plate forwards. "Buttered toast."

"Yes. Always...of course always on Tuesday. Toast and raspberry jelly."

Unaffected, Brian took another sip of his coffee. "You can eat toast on Sunday, too."

Twenty minutes later, he buckled a boy with neatly combed hair and a content face into the passenger seat of his jeep, and couldn't believe that he was about to drive to the fucking Diner on a damned Sunday morning, just to buy damn fruit salad for a little twat who thought he should be treated like a fucking princess.

-----  
Colored pictures stuck to the door and it rang a little as it was opened. Justin laughed. He liked ice cream and fruit salad cookies!

Brian held the boys arm on the way to an available table in the back area and directed him to one of the seats, before he sat down on the opposite side.

"Here. Read what you want to drink." He shoved the shrink-wrapped menu across the table.

"Yes." Justin looked up at the ceiling. It was of course very loud and everyone chattered and chattered and he was sure that his wonderful book lay still in the castle under this ...

"...pillow." He rocked back and forth softly and wrapped a finger into his hair.

Brian put his own menu aside. "What?"

"Yes. Certainly no book."

"You don't need the book now. Read the menu."

"Yes." Justin didn't find the menu very nice. It was full of stains and quite greasy. But he began to read nevertheless. "Farmers breakfast with...with potatoes, bacon, green onions and eggs. Six dollars...six dollars fifty cent."

"Justin. Read the part with the drinks." Brian pointed to the right area of the menu.

"Yes." For a moment Justin's eyes moved unfocused over the printed words, before he began to read again. "Orange juice. Amount...amount of pure fruit five ...fifteen per cent."

Mister Kinney's facial expression turned incredulous at this information and looked up this bold thesis on his own menu. Eww. So much for healthy breakfast.

"Well look who's here." Debbie stood with her memo pad at the table and put a hand on her hip. "What the fuck brings you here at such an early hour?"

"Surely not the juice," Brian stated and looked over the table. "Justin, what do you want to drink? Water?"

"Yes." Justin's eyes remained on the menu. "Coffee and milk." He liked milk. Preferably with cookies. "Ninety...ninety-five cents."

Brian wrinkled his forehead into sceptical folds. "Coffee."

"Yes." The boy looked up at the ceiling. There were even more stains than on the menu. "With milk."

Brian raised his right eyebrow before he ordered. "Two coffees, one black with sugar, one with milk and the waffles." He looked at Debbie. "How much per cent fruit is in the fruit salad?"

Debbie blinked blankly. "What do you think?"

"Two coffee, waffles and fruit salad."

"Hmm." She scribbled the order down and then smiled at Justin. "Anything else, sweet buns?"

"Yes." Justin's gaze remained upwards. "Certainly ice cream and sprinkles."

"That's all." Brian explained clearly and half a tone louder, before Debbie had the chance to write down the customer's wish.

"Yes, of course sixty-one sprinkles. One fell...fell down."

"People don't eat ice cream for breakfast. She'll bring waffles for you."

"Yes." Justin smiled and curled a thin hair strand around his finger. He liked waffles.

Brian pointed to the menu. "What does it say about the turkey sandwich?"

"Yes." The boy kept his look on the stained ceiling. "Poultry...poultry form of meat."

Brian looked it up again on his own menu and then back to Justin. "You know this without looking?"

"Yes."

"Yes? What else did you read?"

"Yes. The menu."

"The whole menu?"

"Yes. Read...read the menu, Prian says."

"Hmm. What about the three cheese omelette?"

"Yes. With preservatives."

"Fresh spinach and mushroom burrito?"

"Yeah, certainly flavour ...flavour enhancers."

Brian lifted his right eyebrow challengingly over the top of the menu. "What's with the water?"

"Yeah." And even though Justin held his gaze still to the side, his lips formed into a little smile. "Of course. From the puddle."

Brian grinned for a moment in silence and then lightly kicked Justin's seven league boot under the table. "Who has the best water in the world?"

Justin's smile grew bigger, "Yeah...my Prian." and kicked back against a beautiful Prada shoe. He liked Evian.

Debbie brought the coffee and a plate full of waffles and fruit salad a few minutes later.

"Can I get you boys anything else?" She grinned happily from one to the other.

"Yes. A food inspector." Brian looked up at her with a false smile. "Justin just discovered that most of your food is unpalatable."

She stuck her evil finger in his face. "Don't use that tone on me, buddy!"

"Yes." Justin looked at his plate. Of course there were only three waffles and no...

"...powdered sugar."

"What was that, honey?" Debbie immediately changed back into her sweetest voice as she addressed her blond guest on the other side of the table. "You need the syrup?"

"Yeah. Of course no...no powdered sugar."

"Aww." She pinched his cheek. "That's no problem at all. I'll be right back."

She disappeared quickly and Brian grumbled into his coffee cup. "Christ, how old does she think you are? Twelve?!"

"Yeah." Justin forked a slice of banana into his mouth and chewed carefully. "Certainly eighteen."

"Damn right." Mister Kinney confirmed and used his coffee spoon to nick a piece of orange from Justin's plate.

"Yeah. Of course my... my fruit salad."

"Sue me."

-----

At 9.35 a.m., Brian had finished the longest breakfast experience of his whole life and led a stuffed blond brat back to the car.

"I really don't get it, what do you need this big pile of fucking powdered sugar for, when you blew it all off your damned waffles before you took it in your mouth, anyway." He unlocked the car door and helped Justin with the safety belt. "Twat."

"Yes." Justin really didn't like dust sugar on his waffles. It tickled his nose.

Brian went to the other side, climbed behind the wheel and started the car. "You're really weird sometimes, you know?" He changed gears and looked over to the passenger seat. "So. And did you like your coffee?"

Did he? Yes, Justin liked how the coffee had smelled. But the taste wasn't very good. It was all bitter on his tongue. He shuddered visibly at this thought.

Brian smiled slightly as the younger one shuddered in his seat and made a face as if he'd tasted something really foul. "Yeah, well...don't judge the wonders of coffee on this poor example."

They drove a few minutes in silence, before Brian looked at Justin again. "You want to take a walk before I take you back home?" He wasn't sure why he'd asked it and he felt a little weird afterwards. But he only looked back on the street and shifted a little in his seat, and didn't withdraw his question.

"Yeah." Justin wrapped a long hair strand around his right middle finger and blankly looked out of the side window. He liked going for a walk...

"...with Prian."

"Yeah." Brian drew his lips inwards, took his hand from the gear stick and blindly moved it over to the five pale fingers, resting on Justin's thigh.

"Yeah." Justin touched the prince's thumb with one fingertip. He liked the warm feeling in his belly, too.

-----

They left the black car-vehicle right beside a dark green trash can on Riverview Avenue and the air was dry and cold and a little windy when they passed the big wooden sign, marking the Riverview Park entry. There were many large trees and small bushes and little way stones everywhere. A big fountain stood in the distance and Justin loved how the water sounded, and wanted to smell it and to look for the frog, but the prince held his hand firmly and led him along the bordered way.

Justin saw three men with long coats, thick scarves and colourful caps and then there was a bench on the way side and another man sat on it, and everywhere around him were large grey birds. They flapped their wings and ate little dirty crumbs that the man threw on the ground for them.

"Hh!" A little startled Justin fluttered his eyelashes and wrapped his fingers tightly around Prian's hand. He didn't like the birds and found the man, with the white hair on the bench, looked rather scary.

"Christ!" Brian cursed in deep disapproval as he passed the doves in safe distance, with a stumbling blond in tow. "Here I am, paying thousands of dollars on taxes every year. One would think the town could afford proper pest control. Fucking incompetent people everywhere..."

"Yeah." After a few steps, Justin looked back over his shoulder to see the horrible large birds for a last time, before he snuggled closer to Prian's side. Lucky for him, the prince was very brave and dauntless.

"Yeah. And it's also fucking cold," said Brian more to himself and buried both of his hands deep into his jacket pockets, without letting go of Justin's fingers.

Justin watched fascinated as his and Prian's entwined hands disappeared in the jacket and wriggled his thumb inside the warm pocket. It was funny and he looked up at the prince and laughed.

Brian looked down at a happy face and couldn't help but show a little smirk, too. "What?! It's not my fault your fucking ice fingers are frozen to my hand. Don't you have a pair of decent gloves or something?"

"Yeah." Justin had beautiful gloves. Blue ones and they smelled like snow. But of course he couldn't wear them anymore because his hands had...

"...grown too big."

"Your hands are too large for your gloves?"

"Yes. Certainly too long fingers."

Inside the pocket Brian stroked over the boy's thin knuckles. "Your fingers are fine. You just need bigger gloves."

"Yeah. Of course at Wal Mart. Shopping...shopping with Prian."

"Hmm. I'll bring you new gloves tomorrow after work."

"Yeah." They walked down a strange looking path with water underneath. "Oooh." Justin stopped and stretched his neck to look down into the grey water.

Brian went with him closer to the bridge balustrade. "God, what a shit brew. I bet they're dumping their dead pets and wives in there."

"Yeah." Justin didn't really look into the water, but he liked the sound of it. "Certainly puddle...puddle water."

"Hh." Brian sniffed. "Certainly sewage."

"Yes." Justin found a fantastic blue chewing gum on the rail, picked at it with his fingers and then put it into his mouth. It was very cold and a little hard.

"What was that?" Brian looked at the boy, scrutinizing him.

Justin held his lips firmly closed and blinked silently at the prince.

Brian took his free hand out of the jacket and reached for Justin's mouth. "What did you just eat?" He forced one finger inside. "Open up."

The boy looked up to the dark-white sky and stuck his tongue out.

"What is-" Brian frowned as he discovered the old chewing gum and threw it away nauseated. "Shit, Justin! You can't just eat everything! That's fucking dirt that some junkie had in his mouth already!"

"Yeah." Justin looked aside and rocked slightly back and forth. Of course Prian was...

"...very angry."

"Damn fucking right I'm angry, you little shit..." The older one said without real anger in his voice. And he turned up his jacket collar against the cold and squinted up at the sky, as he felt barely noticeably wetness on his nose and cheeks. "Great." He drew his fingers around Justin's hand tighter in his pocket and marched with firm steps off the bridge. "Now it starts to fucking snow."

Justin plodded a little reluctantly along behind Prian. It snowed? He looked around and up at the sky and extended his free hand and, "Ha!" laughed then and felt his heart jump and he bounced on his feet for two steps because he felt so very happy! It snowed! Little white Christmas snowflakes fell from the clouds and down to the floor. And they landed on Prian's black jacket, and on a slightly red prince nose and got caught up in beautiful brown hair.

It was the most wonderful thing Justin could imagine. And he smiled brightly and felt his cheeks get warm and his belly underneath the silver jacket, too.

Brian noticed the quiet laughing coming from the blond, and after one more minute squeezed the smaller hand inside his pocket. "You seem remarkably happy for someone who just almost died from food poisoning."

Justin giggled and looked at the prince with soft blue eyes.

And Brian released Justin's hand in the pocket and pulled his own out, to place it in the boy's warm neck. "Brat." He bent down to kiss blond hair and couldn't smile when Justin laid his head against his cold leather jacket. His chest felt somewhat warm, though.

-----

It was almost noon when Brian walked seven steps across a black street. A blue pyjama and an old fairy tale book under his arm, and a yawning young man tugging on his right hand.



"Are you tired?" He entered the big iron gate and pushed the heavy entry door open.

"Yes." Justin was very tired and he really would've preferred to go over to the castle and sleep for a while in Prian's big, soft bed.

Brian brushed Justin's knuckles with his thumb on their way upstairs. "Well then you eat your lunch and then take a nap."

"Yes." Justin giggled. He liked to take a...

"...nap with Prian."

"No, I have to do something else. You sleep alone."

"Yes." Justin looked sideways and didn't like the color of the dirty tower walls.

Brian opened the greasy glass door of ward four and led Justin along the corridor. Male nurse Schmidt waved from behind the pane of the nurse's room.

"Hello Justin. Did you have fun with Mister Kinney?"

Justin padded with small steps holding onto Prian's hand and completely ignored the man.

Brian presented his fake grin. "We had a blast."

"That's really good to hear, Mister Kinney!" Nurse Schmidt waved after his favourite visitor and grinned merrily. "I hope you enjoy your Sunday afternoon, too, Mister Kinney!"

It smelled of cheap, cold food and stale air behind door 4.11 and Brian put the book and pyjamas on the nightstand, before he opened up the window to air the room.

On the little table stood a tray with a piece of what looked like chicken, together with sticky rice and a pile of indefinable green vegetables. Next to the food tray, in a watery reddish puddle, someone had put a big plastic pot with tea. But it was cold and one of the tea bags was broken and some of its content swam around in the red fluid as little black and brown crumbs.

Brian inspected Justin's 'lunch' with grim eyes, before he placed the tea pot on the tray and went with it towards the door. "Take off your boots and jacket, I'll be right back."

"Yes." Justin curled a thin blond hair strand around his finger and rocked softly back and forth, while gazing blankly out of his tower window. The snow looked so pretty on the small round castle roof tops.

When Brian came back fifteen minutes later, with a plate full of cream cheese toast and a bottle of water, Justin was still at the window, with his jacket and his boots on, almost as if he were only a temporary visitor in this place, waiting for his call to go home.

Brian closed the door quietly, put the plate down and then stood close behind Justin. He wrapped his arms loosely around a slim waist and laid his chin on the boy's shoulder. "What are you looking at?" He spoke in a calm voice and then sniffed at a warm neck.

Justin rubbed his temple against the prince's soft hair.

"You like the snow?"

Did he? Yes, Justin liked the snow very much, but he couldn't smell it here inside of his tower room. He didn't like the tower and he felt like he had to cry a little.

Brian closed his eyes for a moment and whispered in Justin's ear. "Come on, take your jacket off. I brought you toast." He reached for the little zipper at the front of the boy's jacket, opened it and guided the long arms out. "Sit down on your chair."

"Yes." Justin went over to the little table and sat down. There were three slices of cream cheese toast on the plate and Prian gave him his red cup and filled it up with water. "Yeah." He looked up to the ceiling. "No...no Evian."

Brian smiled, but not because it was funny. "Drink it anyway. I'll bring you Evian tomorrow."

"Yeah." Justin took the cup and drank. One little sip. Then he ate half a toast and found it wasn't very good. It tasted of evil vines and syringe water.

Brian bumped his shoulder. "What's up, brat? Not hungry anymore?"

"Yeah." Justin stood up and went over to his white bed. He was very tired.

Brian furrowed his brows, as he watched the boy, pulling off his boots clumsily and stripping out of his pants. Then he went over and held the blanket up for Justin. "Climb in."

Justin did and shoved his book silently under the pillow; his face blank.

Brian didn't like it. He combed his fingers through the soft blond hair strands and stroked his thumb up and down in the middle of Justin's forehead and down the length of the boy's nose. "Sleep now."

Justin looked up at him, tired but attentively.

Brian smiled slightly and Justin reached up with one hand to place it on the prince's cheek. He really would've preferred if Prian would come...

"... back tomorrow." He said it in a quiet voice but absolutely clear.

And Brian looked back down and took his time to observe every little inch of the young face. "You want me to?"

"Yeah." Justin's eyes began to flicker, "Be with my..." before finally the contact broke and he had to look aside. "My prince." He liked Prian so much.

Brian smiled gently. "I'm not your prince." His finger tipped the kid's chin up. "And now go to sleep."

"Yes. Dream of...dream of Prian."

"Yes." Brian bent down to peck the dark pink lips, but as he wanted to move back, he felt a second, slightly cool hand on the other side of his face. Ten thin, demanding fingers, pulled him back down for another peck and then a real kiss. Brian closed his eyes and breathed in deep as he smelled Justin's smooth skin.

Justin touched his tongue to Prian's lips and snickered. "Certainly...certainly ice cream kisses."

Brian hesitated for a moment, then whispered against Justin's lips. "Yes, dream of ice cream and tell me tomorrow what it tasted like." He gave the boy another quick kiss, and then went out of the door without looking back.

Justin blinked, rolled over on his side and sighed before he closed his eyes. He knew exactly what the ice cream would taste like...Christmas snow, almonds and sweet, warm prince lips.

-----

And Brian Kinney went to the gym, like he did on every Sunday afternoon. To meet the boys, check out some hot guys and have a little fun in the steam room.

But then he couldn't follow any conversation, found nothing funny about the way Emmett described his latest trick and thought of snow, sunshine and rainwater as he stood under the hot shower... way too soon and just because he didn't feel like fog and steam and strange body's today. And he went home and sat for hours at one of Pritin's large windows, to see the snowflakes fall on an old tower roof.

## Chapter 22 - Talk to me softly

It was 9:42 a.m. and Justin didn't want to draw blue flowers because his paper was so beautifully white, exactly like the Christmas snow in front of the tower window.

"Justin? What's the matter?!" Lindsay went over to her young patient's table and put a hand on his shoulder. "Don't you want to draw with us today? "

Justin turned his head away and looked at the wall.

Lindsay watched the blonde for a moment and then took the blue wax crayon to draw a pretty flower in the middle of Justin's paper. "See? We want to paint the spring today. Aren't you looking forward to springtime, Justin? With all the nice flowers and singing birds, hmm?" She smiled and gave the flower curved leaves and a long stalk with the green pen.

Blindly, Justin knocked the little pen basket from the table, got up from his chair with a loud screeching sound, and walked a couple of awkward steps through the room. Next to a big easel he stopped and pressed his forehead against the cold wall. He hated stinking flowers and horrible fluttering birds and every word Miss Eterson said.

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At lunchtime Mister Kinney left his luxurious office on the executive floor to take care of a couple of personal things.

He buttoned his coat and stopped briefly at Cynthia's desk. "This thing Gus wanted for Christmas...what's it called?"

"Nintendogs." She answered without looking up from the files and handed him a pink slip of paper. "This is the pick-up number. Toys R' Us, Century III Mall."

Brian blinked at the small paper. "Golden Retriever?"

Cynthia rolled with her chair from left to the right and stopped in front of her computer to type in a few things. "Yes, it's a bundle with the blue NDS." She took a sip of her lychee-tea without looking up. "I mean there was also the basset, but who would want something like that."

"Hh." With his eyes on the pick-up number Brian went in the direction of the lift. As if he had nothing better to do on his lunch break than to deal with a stupid wiener dog...

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Justin breathed against the window in his room and drew kong pao chicken with his finger on the fogged pane. But male nurse Gold brought a tray with tortellini and cheese sauce for lunch anyway.

Justin found it tasted like liver sausage and spat it back onto the plate.

After that, he drank a large gulp of puddle water from the red cup, kept it in his mouth for a moment and then watched with fascination as it ran through his lips and into the liver sausage- noodle mud. Hmm. It tasted even worse than coffee.

"What's your problem, dumbass?!" Male nurse Gold came at half past twelve to collect the tray and slapped his hand on the back of Justin's head. "Are you too dense to eat now? Fucking idiot." He slammed the thick wall door behind him as he left the room again.

"Yes." Justin blinked briefly at the loud bang and didn't like the pang in his head. Then he padded back to the window, put his hands and forehead to the cold pane and counted the snowflakes that fell on the beautiful wall in front of the castle. "Certainly toast...toast from Prian."

-----

After many years in a strictly Roman Catholic parental home, Brian knew one thing for sure: Whatever lay behind the gates of hell was nicer than the local Toys R Us store.

Everything here was Barbie pink and Blues Clues blue and full of huge balloons and fuzzy teddy bears and earlier, in the department for girls toys, one of the fucking dolls had talked to him. Inside of its damned box! It had fluttered with its way too big plastic eyes and twittered, "Let's have a tea party! You are my very best friend!" He'd almost puked in front of the shelf with the pink unicorns...

And now, he stood for like an eternity (or almost thirty minutes) in the media-department, to wait for 'Gwendolin' to look through every item in stock for his fucking poodle.

"So, here it is, Mister Kinney." In the thirty-fourth minute, she came back with a bright smile and a box that was easily big enough to gather her cut-off egghead in, Brian mused. "The blue NDS bundle with the Golden Retriever. It's a good thing you ordered it in advance. This late during the Christmas season, we only have the basset in stock."

"Hh." Brian took the box from her sweaty fingers and turned it around mistrustfully. "And how does this thing work?!" He surely had better things to do than to read a seventy page instruction manual under the damned Christmas tree. In Afrikaans or Mandarin.

"If you want, I can explain a couple of things to you on our test console!" Her braces blinked as brilliantly as her amorous eyes at this suggestion.

"Hh." Mister Kinney grumbled and followed her a couple of steps to be initiated into the wonders of the latest Videogame technology.

-----

"And you have to use the touchpen on this screen?" Twenty minutes later, the handsome man in the Armani suit was deeply concentrating on a game named, 'Animal Crossing'. He was a green elephant called Rocco and lived in a little, yellow house near the river. It was fascinating.

"Yep." Gwendolin moved a little closer to be able to enjoy the extremely stimulating aftershave of her hot customer to the fullest. "And all these games are compatible." She gestured proudly toward a six feet large shelf. "The Age of Kings, Kim Possible, New Super Mario Brothers, Pokemon's Mystery Dungeon team, Crash Boom Ba-"

"What's this?" Brian pointed to one of the flat boxes, took it from the shelf and read the imprint on the back.

"Oh, this is Brain Age. You have to do a number of games. Math, crossword puzzles, writing, reading. It trains the brain and you can test how fit you are intellectually."

"Hu." Brian wrinkled his forehead as he quickly read over the summary. Then he took a stack of the games he'd already selected, a couple of other accessories and one discreetly white light version of the handheld game console and piled everything in a big mountain in Gwendolin's scrawny arms. "I'll take this and a pack of Marlboros."

Gwendolin blinked through her stained lenses. "But this is a toyshop, sir, we don't sell cigarettes."

"Yeah well...you really should ..." Brian turned up his nose as a man in a brightly colored Clown costume passed by, trying to hand him a yellow Spongebob balloon, and disgusted he looked around for the nearest register. He really couldn't stand one more minute in this horror show.

-----

Mummy had always said, if it gets cold outside, the sun will set earlier.

And Mummy was right. Because although the man in the radio announced 'Lady's and Gentleman, its 5 p.m. welcome to the news.' it was already as dark outside as if it were midnight.

Justin liked it.

The castle looked pretty in the light of the streetlamps and the white snow glittered and sparkled and he breathed warm breath on his window until it became fogged and non-transparent and then wrote the most beautiful word on the cold glass with his finger. With a wonderful big P.

He smiled and turned around as he heard the tinkling silver key and the thick wall door opened.

"Just let me know when you would like to leave, Mister Kinney." Nurse Sherman smiled and disappeared.

And then the beautiful prince stood in the middle of his tower room. Just like that. Without a sword and crown but with a long coat and a big bag in his hand.

"Hello." Justin looked over to the wall.

Brian put the bag down on the bed, "God, it stinks." and opened three buttons on his coat before he pressed a kiss on Justin's forehead. "Hello." He put an arm around thin shoulders and buried his nose in the warm point behind Justin's ear. "And how come you always smell so good when you sit in this terrible stench the whole day..." He said it quietly, kissed the boy's neck and turned around to remove his coat completely.

"Yeah." Justin's belly felt warm and light and he didn't think that his room stank. Not anymore. It smelled like almonds and prince and dark red velvet and he breathed in deeply through his nose.

The prince wet two paper towels and wiped the little table with it. Then he threw them into the trash can and sat down on the table's edge with folded arms.

"And? Did you have a nice day? Honey?" He sent a fake smile in Justin's direction.

"Yes. Of course not." Justin looked blank up to the ceiling.

"Of course not? What have you done today?"

"Yes. Certainly...certainly paint no blue...blue flower."

"Hh. Blue flower."

"Yeah." Justin made an angry face. "Miss ...Miss Eterson says."

"Miss..." Brian frowned. "Miss Peterson? She said you have to paint blue flowers?"

"Yes." The boy changed into an emphatically bored intonation and looked uninterested to the wall. "Miss Eterson." He really didn't like Miss Eterson.

Brian grinned. "You don't like her?"

"Yeah." Of course Justin didn't like people with a...

"...thick chest."

"Yeah." Brian shook his head. "I know what you mean."

"Yes. Certainly stinks like...stinks like flowers."

Mister Kinney wrinkled his nose. Yes, most women smelled rather strange. But nevertheless... "Hey, it's not nice to insult other people. Lindsay is the mother of my child, you know?"

"Yes." Justin wrapped a hair strand around his finger. "Of course like...like Falcon Crest."

"No." Brian looked at the younger one with a horrified expression. "Surely not like fucking Falcon Crest!"

"Yeah." Justin sighed. "Certainly Denver...Denver Clan."

Brian tipped his head to the left. "You know an awful lot about eighties soap operas for a boy your age."

"Yes. Episode...episode two hundred and sixty...sixty-eight. The mother...mother of my child."

Brian blinked. "What ever. The damned mother of my child doesn't stink like flowers." He thought this over for a moment. "Well, no more than other women at least."

"Yes."

"Hmm. What have you eaten today?"

Justin's eyes flickered and he rubbed the back of his head, but didn't answer.

Brian got up and went over to look at the plan above Justin's bed. "Tortellini with cheese sauce. Was it good?"

Justin stared out of the window and rocked softly back and forth. "One...forty-one." Quite a lot snowflakes lay on the castle wall.

"Justin." Brian walked to him and put his arms around a slender body. "You don't like tortellini, huh?" He spoke softly and close to Justin's ear.

"Yeah." Blue eyes wandered restlessly from left to right. "Toast from...toast from Prian." He liked the prince and rubbed his hair against Prian's temple.

"Hmm. You can ask the nurses here to give you toast."

"Yes."

Brian closed his eyes and stroked a hand over Justin's stomach. "I'm bored. What do you want to do?"

"Yes. Kiss... kiss Prian."

Brian smiled and drew his arms a little tighter. "Actually I thought of playing cards or something like that."

"Yes. Certainly lick...lick Prian's belly."

"Scrabble."

"Yes." Justin smiled. He liked Prian's tongue. "Prian licks...licks Justin Taylor's butt." It was emphasized wrongly and he nodded and turned his head to look at the prince. "Like a cat."

Brian stared in Justin's face. For a long time. Then he kissed dark pink lips and whispered against them. "It's called rimming."

Justin said nothing. But he poked out his tongue and licked over the prince's soft mouth.

Brian combed his fingers through blond hair, turned around a little and found that playing Scrabble was overvalued anyway. With a small sigh he opened his lips and let Justin lead the kiss. Uncoordinated and accentuated by soft, mewling sounds.

Justin pushed up on his toes and dug his fingertips into broad prince shoulders and brown soft hair. He loved the taste of Prian's mouth and the warmth and the wetness and Prian's breath on his face and Prian's hands on his neck. He wanted to kiss the prince forever and really would have preferred for the prince to not wear all these clothes. A little awkwardly he pulled at Prian's shirt.

"Sssh." Brian kissed the boy gently on the lips and put his hand broadly over a glowing cheek. "No undressing."

Uncomprehending blue eyes looked up at him. "Without pants?"

Brian smiled and raised his eyebrows. "It's almost six o'clock. You want to eat dinner without your pants on?"

"Yes." Justin seemed relieved about this suggestion and stood on the tips of his toes again to continue the kissing.

Brian held him by the shoulders and pushed him back in amusement. "Think again, twat."

"Yes." Justin looked at the prince pleadingly. He wanted to see Prian's ...

"...bellybutton?"

Brian drew his lips inside and put his forehead against the boys. "No."

"Yes." Justin tried to look into the near face, while he tried to reach down with his hand. "Of course Prian...Prian's penis?"

Brian captured the five fingers at his crotch and purred darkly. "What is this with you, were you an Arabic carpet seller in your earlier life?" He kissed Justin's lips. "You are good with the haggling."

"Yes." Justin giggled. He liked the tale with the ...

"...magic carpet!"

Brian grinned and caressed the soft hair on Justin's neck. "I like this story. Read it when I was younger."

"Yes." Justin liked Prian's voice. It was warm and soft and dark.

"My parents weren't too fond of books and stuff. So I often went to the library after school. And there I saw this guy...Aladdin," Brian closed his eyes and took Justin's face into both hands. "He was on the cover of one book and he looked really hot."

"Yes." Aladdin had black hair and very dark eyes. And Justin liked the magic ...

"...bottle."

"Hmm." The older one massaged the warm points behind Justin's earlobes with both thumbs. "Who lived inside the bottle? The genie?"

"Yes." Justin smiled and nestled his forehead to Prian's.

"Hmm. So, you want to know what I have done today?"

"Yes. Certainly buys...buys new gloves for Justin Taylor."

"You think so?"

"Yes. Of course on Monday after...after work. Prian says."

"I said that?"

"Yes."

"Hmm." Brian placed a kiss on Justin's nose, released him and pointed to the bed. "They're in the bag."

"What is in the bag?" Male nurse Schmidt entered the room with a tray on his arm.

"A couple of porn magazines and a cake with file. I baked it myself." Brian grinned at the nurse artificially.

"Yes. Certainly gloves." Justin plodded to his bed. The bag looked really pretty.

"Oh. That's good, with all this beastly weather lately." Ted put the food on the table and theatrically shivering, rubbed his hands with a quick look out of the window. "I hate ice and snow. I am more the summer, sun, Miami type of guy." He said the last words with a slightly lascivious undertone in Mister Kinney's direction.

"Yeah." Brian examined the meal on the tray. "And I am a member of the 'A happy life without salmonellae poisoning' organisation." He pronged a grey, spongy something on the fork and held it up. "Theodore. What the fuck is this?"

Mister Schmidt scratched his head. "According to the meal plan it's pickled herring salad. Very exquisite."

Brian moved the fork in front of Ted's lips. "Bon appétit!"

"Oh well..." The male nurse held his hands up with red cheeks and laughed nervously. "I'm afraid I'm really allergic to fish of any kind. Too much ah...protein."

"Yeah. What ever." Brian threw the cutlery clattering back on the plate. "Take this shit away and bring something eatable for Mister Taylor. You know, something you would actually take into your own mouth."

Mister Schmidt squared his shoulders, "Of course, sir." and quickly left the room.

"Yes. Certainly sleeps." Justin didn't take his eyes off the bag and tugged a little frustrated at the zip-fastener.

"He doesn't go to sleep, he brings something to eat for you." Brian opened the bag.

"Ooooh." Justin watched as the prince unpacked three big bottles of Evian and put it on the bedside table. Then he reached into the bag again and got a couple of black gloves out. They were smooth and soft and ...

"...like Prian's jacket!"

"Leather. Keeps your hands warm." Brian put the first on Justin's fingers and pulled and picked at it until it fit correctly. "Comfortable?"

"Yes." Justin looked up to the ceiling and kept his fingers absolutely still. Of course it was rather tight and he wasn't sure how his hand should ever ...

"...get out of there again?"

"No. You must leave them on forever."

"Hh!" Justin looked at the prince alarmed, then at his black-dressed hand, and finally back to the ceiling, before he began to rock nervously back and forth.

Brian shook his head. "Justin. It was a joke."

"Yeah." Justin's eyes flickered unfocussed but he didn't dare to move his hand.

"Here." Brian took the thin fingers, led them to his mouth and smiled slightly. "Look at me." He took the thin leather at the tip of Justin's middle finger between his teeth and pulled.

"Yeah." It took a moment until the boy had focussed his gaze. And then he felt the warm prince mouth through the glove and the heat went straight to his belly.

Brian took his time to loosen every single finger and grinned briefly before he removed the complete glove in a smooth movement. "Better?" He said it quietly and kissed Justin's warm palm.

"Yeah." Justin looked aside. But he smiled and touched his forefinger to Prian's mouth.

"So! It wasn't easy but I could persuade the new cook to heat up the leftovers from lunch." Male nurse Schmidt entered the room again with a new tray on his arm and immediately the smell of cheese sauce filled the room. "Here, please. Tortellini." Smiling brightly, he put the food down on the table. "I even managed to get you a green bean salad."

"Yes." Justin rubbed the back of his head and made a couple of clumsy steps before he stopped with his face to the wall. "Of course dumb...dumbass. What is...what is your problem."

"Justin come here." Brian spoke in a calm voice.

"Yes, certainly too dense." The boy beat his forehead against the wall. "Dense to eat. Of course toast from Prian." He didn't like the sharp pain in his head and went with small steps towards the window to see the castle in the snow.

"Who says you are dense?" Brian frowned.

"Oh, surely no one." Mister Schmidt laughed. "Our patients tend to talk a little confused from time to time, Mister Kinney. It means nothing at all."

"Hmm. And the staff here tends to talk disrespectfully towards their patients. Mister Schmidt." He shot the male nurse an icy look. "I appreciate your efforts, but Mister Taylor doesn't like tortellini. Please, bring a buttered toast and cheese. Or at least some fruit."

"With pleasure, sir." Male nurse Schmidt cleared his throat, gathered his tray and disappeared without further comment or looking back.

"Yes, certainly sleeps." Justin was close by the window and followed a passing car with his eyes.

Brian stood behind him and stroked fair hair from a pale neck. "He doesn't go to sleep. He brings toast for you."

"Yes. Toast from Prian."

Brian kissed the crook of Justin's neck. "Hmm. Who said you were dense?"

"Yeah." Justin blinked lethargic out into the darkness. "Of course not...not Plake."

"Hmm. You like Blake?"

"Yes. Plake."

"Do you like the other nurses here, too?"

Did he? Justin wasn't sure and felt sad as he saw the beautiful castle in front of the window. It was very far away from his tower.

Brian remained quiet for a while and then put an arm around Justin's belly, before he spoke softly but clearly into a warm ear. "If somebody says you are dense or somebody touches you and you don't like it ..."

"Yes."

"Then simply say 'fuck off', okay?"

"Yes."

Brian closed his eyes and drew his arm tighter. "Say it for me."

"Yes."

"What do you say?"

"Yes. Fuck...fuck off. Prian says."

"Exactly." Brian smiled thinly and kissed a pink earlobe. "Good boy."

"Yes." Justin rubbed his ear against Prian's cheek. "Justin."

"Hmm." Brian put his chin on Justin's shoulder and pointed to the damp window. "What's this? My name?"

"Yeah." Justin smiled. "Prian."

"Hmm. Have you thought of me?"

Did he? Yes, he always thought of Prian. He was his prince and beautiful and very brave.

Brian didn't need words to know it and extended a finger to write his answer directly underneath. On a cold, fogged tower window on the fifth floor.

"Yeah." Justin read it and bobbed up and down nervously in Prian's arms and noticed as his belly became all hot and his throat a bit tight. "Justin."

"Yes."

"Yes." Justin looked aside and nestled his head to a broad, strong prince chest. "Of course think of...think of Justin."

"Way too often...little twat."

-----

Justin had eaten four buttered toast slices although it was Monday evening and not breakfast-time on Tuesday. He also had read all about good minerals that stood on the Evian bottle label and then drank two brimful cups. Afterwards, he had to go to the toilet and Prian had pushed the ugly alarm button next to the door for him.

It was the best Monday evening Justin could imagine.

And it got even better, because when he returned from the toilet, the prince stood in front of the bed and unpacked wonderful coloured boxes from the black bag.

"Justin." Brian called the younger one over and held the empty bag out for him. "Put it into your wardrobe."

"Yes." Justin looked up to the ceiling. "Of course not mine."

Brian raised his eyebrow. "Of course it's your damn bag. I've bought it for you, so I won't have to carry your embarrassing underwear across the whole fucking town if you decide that you have to sleep in my castle again. Brat."

"Yes."

"Hmm." Brian shoved the \$280 piece of luggage roughly in Justin's hands. "Into the wardrobe."

"Yes. Prian says."

"Damn fucking right he says so." Mister Kinney felt the urgent need for a cigarette.



"Yeah." Justin needed almost six minutes until the bag was tucked into his wardrobe, then he drank a large sip from his red cup and finally stopped after four aimless steps in the middle of the room.

"Justin." Brian sat down on the white clinic bed and began to open one of the boxes. "Come here, I want to show you something."

"Yes." Justin walked in the direction of the door, scratched his forehead and then went straight to his bed. A little awkwardly he crawled on the mattress and knelt between Prian's legs. The prince got beautiful things out of the colored box. Cords, paper, plastic bags and "Ha!" a tiny white television set!

Brian removed the packing material of the little handheld console, pressed a few buttons, opened it, snapped it shut and finally plugged the cable in. There was a beeping noise and the screen brightened. "Give me the game over there." He pointed to a flat box.

"Yes." Justin reached for the terrific television set. He wanted to see whether the good night greeting came on it.

Brian held his arm stretched out for a bit, before he finally reached past the boy and fetched the game himself. "The bitch with the braces said you can see how old your brain is if you play this." He fiddled with the way too big packing, only to get a tiny game out after a minute. "Which way do you have to put this in?!" He wrinkled his forehead and turned the little plastic chip around five times before he stuffed it brutally in the scheduled opening. "Motherfuckingpieceofshit ..." Nothing happened, so he opened up the screen, snapped it shut and in the end switched off the whole console and then on again. "It costs a damn fortune and then not even the fucking light go--" It made a 'bing', the screen became bright and coloured and a little, funny melody could be heard. "Hh." Brian grumbled and longed for his Marlboros.

"Yes. Certainly broken." Justin curled a blond hair strand around his finger and looked up to the ceiling. "Of course no...no good night greeting."

"Hmm." The older man swept a couple of bags and boxes on the floor, moved to the head of the bed and spread his legs. "Come here."

"Yes." Justin rocked on his heels. "Kiss...kiss Prian."

Brian didn't look up from his game and feverishly pressed around on the little buttons. "Well then come here."

"Yes."

It took nearly forty seconds for Justin to crawl closer, a whole minute until he leant a little stiffly across the little screen, and after another long moment, Brian received a damp, warm kiss. Directly on the lips.

Brian smiled and returned the kiss without comment. And he forgot his game and put a hand on the back of Justin's head to slide his tongue slowly deeper. And he closed his eyes and was enraptured by the five cool fingers on his neck and sweet butter toast taste.

"Hmm..." He ended the kiss slowly and had to lick his lips at the end. "What was that?"

"Yes. Kiss... kiss Prian." Justin looked to the wall and had red cheeks.

Brian wrapped his fingers in the blond hair strands on Justin's neck and whispered into a warm ear. "You're very good at that."

"Yes. Justin."

"Yes. Come here." Brian turned him around until the boy leant against his chest, and then held the little white handheld console in front of his face. "Here. Can you read this?"

Justin liked to sit so close to Prian. He could feel Prian's breath next to his ear and the strong arms were everywhere around him. It was very comfortable in his white bed today.

"Justin." Brian spoke louder and reached for Justin's hand to place it over the little buttons. "Read this."

"Yes." Blue eyes flickered around unfocussed for a moment, before they finally landed on the little screen. "How many...how many numbers in the left field are ...are divisible by three."

"Hm. Do you know what divide means?"

"Yeah." Justin looked to the ceiling. "Twelve, six, fifteen, thirty, nine, two...forty-two."

Brian blinked and stared confused at the bunch of mixed numbers on the screen. "Hh. Well don't be too smug. This was simple."

"Yes."

"What's with this?" He pointed to the screen with the touchpen. "How many vowels are in this sentence?"

"Yes. Five."

"Five?"

"Yes. Certainly five." Justin looked to the window.

"Hmm." Brian counted three u's, one i, one a, and moved over to the next task. "Do you know what a crossword puzzle is? What word could fit in this squar—"

"Yes. Administration."

Mister Kinney raised his eyebrows in silence, stared at the screen and then looked at the kid from the side. "You know all this, but you don't know when you can cross the street?"

"Yeah." Justin's gaze wandered up to the ceiling again and a long blond strand was curled around his forefinger, before he answered after 36 seconds. "Only if...only if Brian says."

And Brian remained quiet and closed his eyes and rubbed his nose against a pale cheek, because he really didn't know what to say.

-----

At 8 pm, Brian Kinney left room 4.11 with his hands in the coat pockets and the urgent desire for half a packet of nicotine.

"Brian?" Dr. Bruckner stuck some files under his arm and stopped.

Brian looked up and changed immediately from 'lost in thought' into fake kindness. "The good Professor."

"Brian." Ben smiled obviously surprised. "What are you doing here? Have you-" He looked around. "Did you want to see Lindsay? I'm sure she isn't here anymore."

"Hmm." Brian slid his hands deeper into the coat pockets and shrugged his shoulders. "I've visited someone. Tell Michael to call me." He nodded in Ben's direction and walked away without looking back.

"Okay ..." Ben frowned as he looked after the other man, shook his head and concentrated on his files again, while he entered room 4.11 with a polite knock on the door. "Justin, hello."

Justin sat on the edge of his bed with a straight back and pressed twice on the left and once on the upper button of the little console.

Doctor Bruckner smiled and got closer. "It's eight o'clock. I thought maybe we could go into the community room together."

Justin knew  $213 + 88$  were ...

"...three hundred and one."

He pushed the button and the little man said the result was right. The little man was really clever.

"Justin?" Ben put a hand on his patients shoulder. "The good night greeting will start in a few minutes. Don't you want to-" He furrowed his eyebrows. "Where did you get this game from?" He smiled and grabbed for the little device. "May I?"

Justin didn't look up from his screen and his answer sounded monotonously and wrongly emphatic. But the responsible doctor understood every syllable quite exactly.

"Yeah. Fuck off."

Chapter 23 – The way that I feel

'You think you're so misunderstood ... I'd explain if only I could...'

When Plake came through the thick wall door on Friday morning to bring breakfast, he pinned a new meal schedule over Justin's bed and said, "The new cook decided to change a few meals. You know, he's from France. His name is Guillaume."

"Yeah." Justin stood in front of the little basin to wash his hands. "Fried...fried bird and peas. Of course always...always on Friday."

"Not anymore." The male nurse tipped his finger to the plan and read. "Here it is. Lunch on Friday. Rabbit stew, white bread and Brussels sprouts. Wow. Wonder where they got the rabbit from."

"Yes." Justin padded over to the table and sat down. Of course Alice was always without the little white bunny. It was...

"...certainly in wonderland."

Blake turned around and smiled. "Well, then it was a long journey for them."

"Yes." Justin chewed the little pear pieces in his yogurt carefully. Alice always chattered and chattered and had a far too thick chest. He didn't like Alice very much.

-----

At ten o'clock, male nurse Schmidt entered room 4.11 and was a little disappointed that his favourite visitor wasn't there.

"Hello Justin."

Justin sat on the bed with his beautiful white handheld console and tipped the thin, black touchpen in concentration on the left screen.

"That's a really nice game. Did Mister Kinney give it to you?" Mister Schmidt stepped closer and peered at the monitor.

Justin ignored him. He didn't like for the sleeping nurse to be in his room.

"Okay, but I'm afraid you have to turn it off now. Doctor Cameron is waiting for you in the community room. They play tic-tac-toe today. Sounds fun, don't you think?" The nurse smiled encouraging at the young patient.

There was a house on the screen, four people went in, three came out, two more walked in, then another three and finally one came out alone. The little man wanted to know how many people were in the house now. Hff. Justin clicked his tongue and slapped his forehead with his hand. The little man was a little stupid. Of course there were...

"...certainly five." He wrote a crooked 5 with his pen on the screen and the man was very glad that Justin knew the right answer.

"Justin." Ted snapped his fingers in front of Justin's face to get his attention. "Come on, they want to start with the game."

Justin blinked and tried to look past the snapping fingers. He couldn't see the crossword puzzle.

"Justin!" Nurse Schmidt spoke louder and grabbed for the small console. "Give it to me, now. It's time for your Friday game fun!"

"Aaah." Justin drew his fingers tighter around the console and looked up to the ceiling.

"Come on, kid!" Ted got a slightly red face as he tried to pull the little device out of the boy's fingers. "Doctor Cameron is waiting!"

In the end the nurse won the battle and Justin knocked his hand hard against his forehead.

"Yeah of course...fuck...fuck off. Fuck off. Fuck off." He said it not very loud and held his gaze blank to the wall.

"What? Hey!" Ted put the device down on the nightstand and tried to touch the kid's shoulder. "Don't slap yourself, you know I have to give you a shot if you do that."

"Yeah." Justin stood up, with his eyes to the ceiling, "Fuck off." and walked with little steps to the window. "Fuck off, fuck off." The words were only whispered now.

And male nurse Schmidt watched him for a moment and after two minutes the thick wall door was closed and Justin was alone.

"Yeah." He lay his hands flat to the pane, "Fuck off." and looked over at the castle, with all the white snow on the roof. "Prian...my Prian says." He wanted for Prian to think of Justin Taylor in this moment, too.

-----

At Lunchtime, male nurse Blake brought a plate with rabbit stew, a cup with apple juice and pointed to the new schedule, saying, "Remember, it's rabbit and white bread on Fridays now. Not chicken."

"Yeah." Justin didn't like the juice, because he had wonderful prince water, but he found the cooked bunny smelled nice. He tipped the prongs of his fork into the brown bunny sauce and then licked it clean with his tongue. It tasted rather good. So he ate all the bunny slices, licked off the sauce and counted the Brussels sprouts but left them untouched on the plate. Then he stuck his finger through the soft inside of the white bread, lifted it up and "Oh oh." watched as it fell into the apple juice and got all soggy and like mud.

"Yeah." He looked uninvolved up to the ceiling and wrapped a hair strand around his index finger. "What a ...what a shit brew."

-----

At 3.15 in the afternoon, patient Taylor sat at the window in his room and watched as the servant, with a blue cap and a thick, orange colored jacket on, carried a big basket and two bags into the beautiful castle.

"Yes, certainly..." he looked aside and curled blond hairs around his finger. "...certainly toast and water...water pudding." He scrunched up his nose. Water pudding wasn't very good and really slimy.

"Frog?" It knocked on the thick wall door, the tinkling key came and Plake stuck his head into the room, with a friendly smile. "You want to come outside? Someone is on the phone for you."

"Yeah." Justin didn't blink. The servant came out again with a big shovel to clear away the snow in front of the castle.

"Justin?" Blake smirked, scratched his ear and entered the room. "Well come on, if you want to speak on the phone you have to go out on the corridor. The phone is in the nurse's station." He took the young man by the hand and led him outside.

"Yeah." Justin followed with small steps. The lights on the corridor were brighter and it smelled different. There were other men, and he looked up into the bright lights because he didn't like them.

"So, come in. You can sit here if you want." Blake guided the patient behind the big pane and showed him a chair, near the phone. Then he picked it up and spoke with a friendly look towards Justin. "Brian? Yeah, sorry it took a moment. He's here now. I'll pass you over, hang on." He handed Justin the phone. "You have to hold it close to your ear. It's your friend Brian."

"Yeah." Justin sat stiffly on the strange chair, looked up to the white ceiling and held the phone a little clumsily to his ear.

"Justin?"

It was Prian's voice and Justin's eyes flickered.

"You have to say something you know."

"Yeah." Justin sighed and wiggled the toes in his shoes.

On the other end of the line, Brian lifted one eyebrow. "Is this the first time you've spoken on the phone?"

Was it? No. He spoke on the phone with mommy. "Yes. March...march eleventh." He liked mommy's voice so much.

"You talked over the phone in march?"

"Yes, with mommy. Nineteen hundred...ninety two."

Brian sat in his expensive office at his desk, imported from Italy, and had to close his eyes for a moment, while his long fingers got cold around the receiver of his phone. Then he drew his lips inside, moved a little to the left with his chair and cleared his throat. "Have you any therapy lessons this afternoon?"

"Yeah." The boy rubbed his forehead. "No."

"No? You sure?"

"Yes."

"Good. You want to come and visit me for the weekend?"

Justin's eyes focussed on a postcard with palm trees that was pinned to the wall. He giggled happily. He liked the castle so much and wanted to go there to...

"...see the prince."

"Brian."

"Yes Prian..." Justin sighed as if something were really exhausting. "Prian Kinney."

Brian furrowed his brows. "You know my name?"

"Yeah." They introduced each other and Justin ate very much...

"...white beet."

"You remember that, huh?" Brian scratched his head.

"Yes." Justin smiled. He liked the prince so much.

"Hh. So you want to come?"

"Yeah. See...see Prian."

"Yes, at my home."

Justin wrapped a thick hair strand around his finger. He wanted to go over to the Pritin castle so badly but of course he could...

"...not...not walk over the street...street alone."

Brian smiled slightly. "You want me to pick you up?"

"Yeah." Justin rubbed his shoulder against his free ear. "Certainly...certainly holding hands."

"If it's unavoidable..." Brian busied himself with feeding his extra noise-reduced file shredder. "Emmett will make something with rice and chicken for dinner. Is that okay?"

"Yeah." Justin liked fried bird, but only...

"...without feathers."

"You are a spoiled brat you know."

"Yeah." Justin looked up to the ceiling again. "Justin."

"Hm. Go to your room and pack your bag."

"Yes, in the wardrobe. Prian...Prian says."

"Good. Pack your pyjama, socks, underwear, pants, a fresh shirt, your toothbr-"

"Yeah, of course in...in Prian's bathroom."

"Yes." Brian sighed. "Sure, but don't forget to pack your fucking book. I have better things to do than to listen to your whining about the damn thing for two days."

"Yeah. Certainly under the pillow." His book was always under the pillow where no one could take it.

"Hm. I'll pick you up around 5 pm. Be ready."

"Yeah. Go...go with Prian across the street."

"I'll give my best. Now pass the phone over to Blake, I have to talk to him."

"Yeah." Justin looked uninterestedly aside. He didn't want to give the phone to Plake. It was nice to hear Prian's voice.

Brian waited a minute and heard nothing but even breathing. "Well?"

"Hff." Justin blinked his eyes innocently and tugged at the long blond strand behind his ear.

Brian stood up behind his desk. "Justin, pass the damn phone over!"

"No."

"What do you mean, no?! Pass it over, I have to talk to Blake!"

"Yeah. Speak with...speak with Justin Taylor."

"Justin!" Mister Kinney growled low in his throat. He hated not having control over situations.

"Yeah. Certainly a good...good boy."

"No. Certainly a little twat. Pass over the phone immediately and go pack your bag or I won't come to pick you up, understood?!"

"Yes." Justin got up and without a comment held the phone out for no one in particular.

Brian waited another 61 highly frustrating seconds before a nurse's voice was to be heard.

"Hello, Brian? Sorry I was in the other room. Were you finished talking to Justin?" Blake smiled as he looked after the boy, who plodded with little steps in the direction of his room.

"Yes, I wanted to-"

"Hang on, I have to let him back into his room. I'll be right back." Blake put the receiver down and ran after the young patient with a tinkling key in his hand.

While Brian plopped down in his comfortable leather chair, rubbing his forehead, as he felt a headache coming. "Fucking tower people, never heard of the invention of damn fucking cordless phones goddamnit..."

-----

When Brian came home after work, he parked the car in front of his playboy mansion and jogged across the street and up through a stinking stairwell.

At ward four he stopped by the nurse's station and knocked on the pane. "Hey, anyone here?"

Blake appeared with a cup of coffee. "Brian, hello. Justin waits in his room."

"No, shit." Brian showed a big, fake smile.

The nurse put his coffee down and took a key from its place at the wall. "Here, just bring it back before you leave."

"Hh." Brian nodded slightly, shoved his fists into his jacket pockets and made his way to Justin's door.

It was locked three times and as he pushed the thick door open, Justin stared him straight in the eyes, from where he stood near the window, rubbing his crotch on the back of his old chair.

Justin whimpered quietly and blinked his heavy eyelids three times. The prince was so beautiful and his belly tickled and he felt hot all over. He really would've preferred to...

"...lick...Prian's-" He couldn't hold the visual contact any longer and had to look up to the ceiling, while he tried to press his hard penis tighter to the wooden back of the chair.

Brian stood still for moment, staring at the unexpected sight before him with a blank face. Then he turned around, closed the door and leant slowly against it with his back. "Stop doing that, Justin."

"Hh." Justin tried to look over to where Prian's voice came from, but couldn't concentrate. He felt dizzy and as if it were summer and the sun really warm. He thought of the first time the prince had licked his mouth. At night, on the street, with a soft, wet tongue and he had to whimper again and squirmed when his penis twitched almost painfully in his pants.

"Justin stop." Brian spoke softly. "Come over here."

This time the boy looked at him. Helplessly, with desperate blue eyes. He really would've preferred to...

"...lick...kiss Prian's...Prian's mouth."

Brian didn't say anything and simply held his hand out.

"Yeah." Justin looked up to the ceiling and pressed his fingers clumsily to the front of his tight pants. "My...my prince."

"Come here." The older man whispered almost soundless.

And Justin did. After half a minute, with small steps and rosy cheeks.

And as he felt Prian's warmth and could smell nothing but firesticks and almond skin, he stopped and buried his nose into a broad chest with a shuddering sigh.

"Hmm." Brian wrapped his arms around the smaller body and put his head down to speak in blond hair. "That's better."

"Yes."

"You thought of me again, didn't you?"

Did he? Yes he had to think of Prian since he heard his voice in Plake's phone. He liked Prian and wanted with him to...

"...go to the castle."

"Hm. Did you pack your things?"

"Yeah." Justin grabbed himself between his legs, because it was uncomfortable and his penis really...

"...hard."

Brian spoke close to Justin's ear, "I know." kissed it and released the blonde with a light slap on the butt. "Come on, Princess. Let's get out of this sinkhole."

"Yeah." Justin toddled off to his bed, where his new black bag stood. "Of course my book."

"Did you pack it?"

Did he? Yes, it was in the bag ...

"...under the...under the pyjama."

"Good. Let's go then." Brian went towards the door.

"Yes." Justin looked up to the ceiling and didn't move. "Of course my...my underwear."

Brian stopped and lifted one eyebrow. "Well, is it in the bag?"

Justin thought about it for a moment. "Yes. My white...white panties."

Brian blinked, "Don't say panites. They're called briefs." and showed an artificial smile. "Can we go now?"

"Yes. Certainly...certainly the treasure...treasure jewellery."

"Hff." Mister Kinney puffed out his cheeks and turned around. "Justin. I'm fucking bored to tears with this little game. Is everything you need in the damn bag now or not?!"

Justin blinked his long eyelashes and looked at the wall. "Yes."

"And you want to go now?"

"Yes. Holding...holding hands with Prian."

Brian sighed, rubbed his neck, went to grab the bag himself and held the other hand silently out for Justin.

"Yeah." The boy took it after nineteen seconds and smiled slightly.

Brian didn't. But he kissed Justin's temple, rubbed his thumb over the pale fingers and dropped the little tinkling silver key off at the nurse's station on their way out. He really hated this fucking tower-institution.

-----

The whole castle smelled like fried bird and chocolate cookies tonight and the sun was gone and all the lights and lamps shone beautifully. Justin liked to be in Pritin so much and really would've preferred to never go back to the tower.

"Baby!" Emmett had an apron with little trees and reindeers around his waist and smiled brightly as he hugged the young guest. "It's so nice to see you!" He kissed Justin's cheeks. "You have to tell me everything about your week and then we'll go and-"

"Justin." Interrupted Brian and held the kid's bag out for Emmett. "Why don't you go upstairs? I'm sure the servant will show you your room."

"If I were your servant, Mister Kinney," Emmett said, slightly pouting, "I would be clearly underpaid." He took the bag and linked his arm with Justin's. "Come on, baby. I'll show you the bridal suite."

-----

Justin liked the room. It was big and had valuable castle furniture and the cat fur carpet was dark blue like his pyjamas. He blinked and made a quiet purring sound. Then he got down on all fours a little awkwardly and peered under the big bed. There was blue carpet too and he really would've preferred to see the cat with the blue fur. Surely it was silky and wonderfully soft.

It knocked on the door and "Hh!" Justin bumped his head on the wooden bed frame. It hurt and he rubbed the sore spot with his hand.

"Hey." Brian entered the room and furrowed his brows. "What are you doing down there?"

Justin didn't say anything and looked at the prince in alarm. Certainly he broke his head ...

"...on the bed."

Brian went closer and inspected the blond head in silence. Then he tousled the longish strands, "It's okay. Just a little bump." and walked over to the window. The St. James institution looked like a huge, grey box in the dark. "Do you like the bed?" He turned around to look at the young man.

"Yes." Justin sat still on the floor, stroked the soft carpet with his left hand and wrapped the right into his hair, while gazing blankly up to the ceiling. "Sleep with...sleep with Prian."

"Everyone needs their own bed." Brian saw the bag near the wardrobe and nodded in its direction. "Why didn't you unpack your stuff? Put it in the drawers."

"Yeah." Justin stood up and rocked slightly back and forth.

Brian watched him for a moment and then got closer and wrapped his arms loosely around a small waist. "Are you okay? You want to go back ...home? To your room?"

"Yeah." Justin held his eyes steady towards the ceiling, but his left arm came slowly up to lay in Prian's back. "Be with...be with my prince."

"Hmm." Brian rubbed the tip of his nose against Justin's cheek and then kissed the warm crook of his neck. "Brian."

"Yeah." Justin's blue eyes flickered and five thin fingers started to pet a strong prince back clumsily. "Prian...Prian Kinney. One five two one nine Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA."

"Aren't you a clever devil..."

"Yes."

"Hmm." Brian nibbled at the smooth flesh behind Justin's ear for a little while and then lifted his head to look in the boy's face. "You want to unpack now?"

"Yes." Justin avoided the visual contact. "Certainly kiss...kiss Prian's mouth."

The older one smirked. "What if I want to kiss Justin's mouth?"

Justin didn't respond for a moment, but then heaved a deep sigh, while his fingers clung into the back of Prian's shirt and his cheeks became a nice shade of red. "Yeah." He pushed himself up on his toes.

Brian caressed the side of Justin's face, then slid his fingers behind the boy's ear into the blond hair and touched his lips slowly to a dark pink mouth.

Justin whimpered as he felt the prince's tongue snake between his lips and squeezed his eyes tightly shut because his stomach made a flip and his whole body tingled. Prian tasted like sugar and sweetness and blue sprinkles.

"Hmm." Brian pecked Justin's mouth for a last time and moved back a little, rubbing the boy's neck. "You taste good."

"Yes." Justin looked at the prince pleadingly. He wanted to kiss more and to...

"...lick Prian's belly?"

Brian smiled slightly but shook his head. "No. Go, unpack your stuff. I'll call you when dinner's ready." He kissed Justin's nose and left the room.

Justin blinked, licked his lips and pressed his fingers to the fly of his pants, as he looked at the closed door. Of course now his penis was all...

"...hard again."

-----

When the phone rang ten minutes later, Brian sat at his desk, doing research for his newest account. He didn't pick up.

That's what princes had their servants for after all.

"Good evening, the Kinney residence. Emmett Honeycutt speaking." Emmett twiddled in the phone with one hand in the hip. "Oh hi Michael! Yes, hold on a minute, he's right here." He covered the mouth piece of the receiver, while he talked to his boss. "It's Michael."

Brian reached for the phone, without taking his eyes off the screen. "Hey."

"Hey, Brian, Ben said you wanted me to call?"

Brian looked through a few files he had on his desk. "Hmm. Your professor is one of the fast kind, right? I told him that on Monday." ...evening. Three minutes past eight o'clock, with the smell of cheese sauce and antiseptic spray in his nose.

"I know." Michael laughed. "I'd have called earlier, you know? But you're never home. I mean, do you actually ever leave the office? You not even come to Babylon anymore."



"Hmm. Was busy."

Michael laughed again. "You're a fucking workaholic! Just like Richard Gere in this movie with the dental floss."

Brian frowned. "Pretty Woman?"

"Of course."

"Yeah. Right. The movie with Richard Gere and the dental floss, is the best description I've ever heard. God, sometimes you're so-"

"Pathetic. I know." Michael laughed a third time and Brian wondered why. "So, you think you can tear yourself away from work tonight and meet me at Babylon ? Ben has to stay in late."

"Hmm. I hope he's hot."

"Who?"

"The guy your Professor's fucking while he's staying in late."

"Brian! He has to take care of a few things at work. That's all."

"Hmm. I hope he fires the guy who delivers the water." And the cleaning lady.

"What?"

"Nothing. Listen, I can't go out tonight."

"Brian!" This time there was no laughing. "Why not?! We haven't gone out together for like an eternity!"

Brian shook his head and furrowed his brows because the layout for the new vermicelli campaign had to be a fucking joke. "Sorry Mikey. I promise we'll hook up sometime next week." He put down the phone and shouted for Emmett. "When's dinner?!"

"Fifteen minutes!" The domestic help called back and clapped happily as the timer for the chocolate cookies rang.

"Hmm." Brian closed his laptop and left his desk to go upstairs. "Justin?" He called from the corridor and then again, a little louder. "Justin?! Are you done? Dinner's almost ready-" He opened the door of the guest room and looked at a neat line of clothes and other stuff, set up carefully on the blue carpet, like a battalion of tin soldiers. A pair of white underwear next to an old fairy tale book, beside blue socks and a long noodle necklace, which lay right beside a brand new Nintendo DS and a blue pyjama. But Justin was nowhere to be seen.

Brian entered the room, looked around, bent down to peer under the bed, sighed, and went out again to a corridor with eleven different doors. All closed.

"Justin?" He got no answer and went back to the stairs to call down. "Emmett! Is Justin down there with you?"

"Noo-o." His servant sing-sang back.

"Hff." Brian rubbed his forehead in frustration, "Damned brat." and went to his own bedroom, where he kept such lovely things like lube and blue dildos. "Justin?" He opened the door, looked around and saw a small glimmer of light, coming from the bathroom. He pushed the door open and found an open toilet lit and a half naked Justin in front of the big mirror, with his pants around his feet. Rubbing himself against the smooth marble stone of the washing basin.

Perplexed, Brian stopped and brushed a hand through his hair. "What are you doing here?!" It was a question asked in surprise but it sounded angry.

And Justin looked at him with slightly parted, red lips and a desperate look in his blue eyes. "Think of..." He sounded like he might cry. "...think of Brian."

Brian stared back, no emotion on his face. And he looked in the mirror and his features softened. And he closed the door without a sound and went silently to stand right behind Justin. He took hold of the boy's wrists and pulled them up above his head, and in the next moment, an old grey sweater lay on the expensive tiles on the floor.

Brian kissed a naked shoulder. "You think of me?"

Justin blinked with heavy eyes in the mirror, watching the beautiful prince behind him.

"Do you feeling warm inside when you think of me, hm?" Brian kissed a pale neck and met the young man's gaze in the mirror. "You feel like you have to touch me?" He wrapped his arms around a naked body and caressed a flat belly. "You want me to touch you?"

Justin whimpered. His head felt dizzy and almost too heavy to hold it up any longer.

"You want me to kiss you?" Brian nipped at a pink earlobe and licked it then briefly. "To lick your skin?"

Prian's hot breath tickled Justin's ear and his knees felt soft like bird feathers. He sobbed and let his head fell back on the prince's shoulder.

"You feel like you might explode." Brian told him in a whispered voice and kissed the side of the boy's face gently. "Look into the mirror, Justin."

The blue eyes followed the quiet instruction after a moment and saw a smiling prince. Justin found he looked prettier than he ever had looked in the book.

Brian reached for Justin's hand and guided it to the hard manhood, standing up straight towards his belly button. "Wrap your fingers around it. Like that. It feels good if you hold it tightly."

Justin's eyes fluttered shut and Brian drew his arm around the small waist tighter to hold the blonde upright. He covered Justin's fingers with his own, and helped them to stroke slowly up and down.

"It's okay to stroke yourself, Justin." He whispered against Justin's flushed cheek. "If you think of me, the next time you're alone in your room...over in the tower..."

"Hhh." Justin's hand began to shake. He felt Prian's hardness at his butt and pressed back with a deep sob.

"...if you think of me and you want me to touch you and lick you," Brian said and squeezed his fingers around the smaller hand briefly. "When you think of me kissing you, then its okay to touch yourself like this."

Justin panted noisily and tried to push himself up on his toes, but his knees got week and he shuddered and sank whimpering against the taller man behind him.

"Stroke your dick, Justin." Brian spoke with wet lips into damp blond hair. "Do it for me." He pulled his own hand away and looked into the mirror. "Do it for Prian. Come on, stroke yourself."

"Hhh." Justin wanted to cry. His arm felt heavy and the whole world spun around him and everything smelled like Prian and his heart beat so fast.

"That's it. Don't stop." Brian pulled the young man flush against his body and got a tight throat as he stared into the mirror. At the beautiful man he held in his arms.

And then the blue eyes opened and looked at him in panic. "...certain...certainly..."

"Sssh." Brian held him securely up and placed a guiding hand over the shaking fingers again. "Look into the mirror, Justin."

And Justin did and cried out in alarm and surprise, when stream after stream of white fluid shot out of his penis and all over the magic mirror wall and the bottle with the prince foam soap and Prian's beautiful hand. And then his legs were gone and he fell and fell and everything was bright and soft and light. And when the clouds disappeared he was in Prian's arms and wonderful whispering words in his ear.

"Feeling good?" Brian kissed a hot earlobe and pulled it between his teeth for a second. "Look into the mirror, Justin." The boy did and Brian held a sperm covered finger in front of red lips. "Taste it."

"Yeah." Justin's eyes went up to the little lamps at the ceiling, but he poked his tongue against Prian's finger.

"It's not piss. It's sperm."

"Yeah."

Brian spoke quietly in Justin's ear. "If you touch yourself like this, it feels good and sperm comes out of your dick. It looks different than piss."

"Yeah. My...my dick." Justin felt hot and tired and wanted to sleep a little.

"Yes." Brian moved two steps forward and turned on the water to wash his and Justin's hands. "Your dick. It's another word for penis."

"Yeah." Justin looked still upwards, but he liked the warm water and foamy soap on his hands and the beautiful prince so close behind him. He wondered what Prian's...

"... Prian's penis is name...named."

Brian didn't flinch nor hesitate as he reached for a fresh towel and answered the question. "Prian's penis is called perfect nine Inch."

"Yes." Justin nodded.

"Hmm." Brian did too. "You want to eat dinner now?" He turned off the light.

"Yes." Justin tried to pull his pants up while he followed the prince with small steps. "Certainly fried bird and dirt...dirt cookies."

## Chapter 24 – Comfortable

Justin liked eating dinner in the castle so much.

He sat at a big table without comers and far away on the opposite end sat the prince and they had big glasses with Evian water and shiny silver cutlery and nice round plates.

"Yeah." Justin looked at the empty plate in front of him and then up to the ceiling. "Certainly no...no fried bird."

Brian didn't look up from his newspaper, "Patience, brat," then raised his voice to shout towards the kitchen. "Hey servant, where's the damn food?! Princess here is short from starving!"

Emmett called back cheerily, "Two more minutes baby, I'm carving the chicken," before his tone changed from friendly to accusing as he addressed his boss. "And call me servant one more time and I'm insisting on a black suit instead of this apron, Mister."

Brian didn't respond and Justin wrapped the blond hair strand behind his ear around his fingers. For three silent minutes. Then a loud rumbling noise was to be heard and Mister Kinney peered over the top of his newspaper, lifting one eyebrow. "Was that your stomach?"

Justin sighed and counted the tasty bunny slices he'd eaten for lunch. "Five, six, seven, ei...eight." He was really very hungry and would've preferred to eat the fried bird now.

"Well don't do it again." Brian disappeared behind his papers again. "It's rude."

"It's not!" Emmett scolded laughing as he entered the room, balancing a big tray on his hand. "It's impossible to control the noises your stomach makes."

"Yeah thank you, why don't you tell him it's okay to burp in public too." Brian grumbled and slid deeper in his chair. "You'll fuck up his manners."

Emmett smiled as he placed a bowl of rice and a carved chicken on the table. "Well in China it's common decency to burp after you enjoyed your meal."

"They also eat on the floor like fucking dogs. Doesn't mean I have to throw out my table, too." A bit roughly, Mister Kinney folded up his newspaper and leaned forwards to put some of the food on his plate. "Justin, take some chicken. I thought you were hungry."

"Yeah." Justin blinked and looked at the wall.

"And you have to try the asparagus, honey, it's imported from the Netherlands." Emmett pointed out and gestured to a platter of vegetables.

Justin only sighed and didn't react.

Brian watched him for a moment while chewing a piece of chicken and leaned then back in his chair with an evil smile. "Well servant, obviously Princess Taylor wants to get served. So do the job I'm paying you for."

Emmett lifted up his chin and grabbed a big polished silver spoon. "You're not paying me to serve your guests, but of course-" he smiled at Justin, "It's my pleasure to serve you, baby."

"Yeah." Justin's gaze remained uninterestedly towards the wall, while the servant put piles of food on his plate. He was really hungry.

The doorbell rang, and Brian wiped his mouth with his napkin, got up, "Give him some rice too," and went to answer the door.

He showed a fake little smile when he opened it. "And here I was thinking you're nailing nurse Schmidt tonight."

"Hello Brian." Ben smiled somewhat seriously in return and gestured inside. "May I come in? I wanted to talk to you for a moment, if that's okay. I know it's late."

Brian stared at him. "I have a guest. We just started to eat."

Ben nodded and looked at the floor for second. "I know. Your guest is the reason I'm here."

Brian said nothing, but after a minute, pushed the door fully open and without a comment went back to sit in his chair, laying the dark napkin out on his lap.

Ben followed and stopped with a surprised frown, when he saw the blond young man, sitting at the table.

"Ben!" Emmett came running and helped the guest out of his coat. "I didn't know you were coming! Please have a seat. I'll set another place."

"Thanks, I-" Ben shook his head, smiling, and got closer to the table. "Hello Justin. I can't believe that you're...how long have you-"

"Yeah." Justin blinked and looked in the other direction. Of course Dr. Pruckner had to be in the tower and not here in the beautiful castle.

"Ben." Brian spoke and shot the other man a gravely look. "You said you wanted to talk to me, so sit down and say what you have to. But let Justin finish his meal."

Ben drew his lips inwards and after short hesitation sat down.

"Yeah." Justin rocked softly back and forth, wrapping a thick blond strand around his finger. He really would've preferred for Dr. Pruckner to not be here at the wonderful table with all the...

"...fried...fried bird."

"Justin." Brian said firmly.

The kid didn't answer.

"Look at me, Justin."

"Yeah." The boy turned his head after 32 seconds.

Brian smiled slightly. "You're hungry. Eat your chicken."

"Yes." The blue eyes flickered back to the ceiling. "Eat with...eat with Prian."

"Yeah well, then hurry up. You won't eat all those carbs after seven, will you?" He forked some chicken and rice between his own lips.

"Yes." Justin picked up his fork and ate a piece of chicken.

"Hm." Brian looked back at Ben. "So, what did you want to talk about, Professor."

Ben looked back and forth between Brian and Justin, blinked and was obviously in search for the right words. "Well, I... I wanted to see Justin tonight, but the nurses told me he wasn't in his room. They said he's out visiting a friend for the weekend."

Brian took a sip of his water, "That's right." and looked over to Justin. "Quit counting the damn food. It gets cold."

"Yes." Justin looked uninvolved toward the wall and then ate fifteen more grains of rice.

Ben shook his head again in irritation. "Yeah, I can see that. Now. I mean..." He laughed a bit and gesticulated to the young blond man. "Is he always like this? When he's with you?"

Brian didn't look up from his plate. "Is he always like what?"

"Like...like this. He seems so calm and comfortable. Since when had you-" he gesticulated again, this time between Brian and Justin. "Since when are you able to communicate with him in this way?! Is he always so responsive with you?"

Brian blinked and then faked a smile. "Yeah well, we're still working on the trick where I throw a stick and he has to bring it back and lay it at my feet."

"Brian, I'm serious!" Ben stood up. "I can't believe you never told me-"

Brian put his fork noisily aside. "I'm serious, too. Sit down and let him eat his meal in peace, or come back tomorrow to continue this conversation." He stared at Ben unblinking.

And Professor Bruckner stared back and eventually nodded. "How about I leave you two alone until you're finished, and in the meantime, I'll take a tour of your house. Michael told me you have a wine cellar?"

"Hm. The second door downstairs."

"Good." Ben smiled and left the room.

"Yeah." Justin looked up to the ceiling and then back at his plate to eat more fried bird. "Fuck...fuck off."

Brian ate a spoonful of his rice, watched the boy for a moment in silence and finally showed a little smile. "I guess your manners are alright after all."

-----

After dinner the servant had put a huge bowl of peanut butter-chocolate chip cookies on the Mies van der Rohe coffee table and Justin sat on the floor in front of the beautiful white couch to watch TV, because he wasn't allowed to eat 'fucking crumbling cookies with triple fat chocolate' on an Italian designer sofa that had cost a 'goddamn fucking fortune'.

"Yeah." Justin nibbled on cookie number three and nodded towards the grey bunny on the television screen. "Certainly fuck...fucking finger...fingerprints. Prian says."

Stunned, Ben watched his patient and crossed his arms in front of his chest. "This is unbelievable. I've tried to talk to him since he became my patient and he hardly spoke three words, let alone got out of his routine."

"Yeah." Brian sat at his desk, checking his e-mails. "Fascinating."

"How'd you do it?" Ben went a step closer to Justin, squatting down.

"I didn't do anything except pay attention," Brian said, still looking at his computer screen.

"Justin?" The doctor spoke in friendly voice. "How do you like the cookies? Emmett made them for you, hm?"

Justin let out a strained sigh, never taking his eyes off the television.

Ben tried it again. "Are they good? They sure look tasty."

Justin blinked, rocking slightly in his kneeling position and taking another cookie into his mouth.

"Justin, do you think that-" Ben spoke again and was interrupted by Brian's firm voice.

"Justin, don't you think it's fucking annoying if someone's blabbering in your ear while you try to watch a decent TV show?!"

"Yes." The boy stared at the screen when Bugs Bunny ran down some dirt road, followed by a little man in dark green clothes.

Ben looked at Brian, smirking. "It was just a question."

Brian cleared away a couple of files. "An unnecessary one."

Ben frowned and got up from the floor. "Oh yes? And why's that?"

"Because he already answered."

"No he didn't."

"Yeah well, there we're back with the paying attention thing."

Ben shook his head. "Brian, I don't think you can-"

Loosing his patience, Brian rose from his chair, slamming some files back on his desk. "Justin?!"

"Yeah." The young man on the floor said in a monotonous voice, his blue eyes following the actions on the screen.

"How many cookies did you eat already?"

"Yes." It took him thirty-five seconds to answer. "Certainly four."

"Hmm. Don't eat too much, I don't want you to puke in the fucking bed tonight."

"Yes."

"Good."

Ben blinked back and forth between the two other men and then stared with a curious expression at the older one. "Uh I don't know what-"

Brian looked at him. "You saw him eating four cookies oh brilliant professor, so tell me why in hell would he eat four of them, eyeing the damn cookie bowl every few seconds, if he didn't like them?! He never eats stuff he doesn't like."

Ben blinked again. "Well I-"

Brian looked at his messy desk again, shifting some of his pencils from one side to the other. "Unnecessary question."

Ben stared at the man in silence for a while, then went closer and leant against the edge of the desk. "Why are you doing this?"

"I like my stuff organised. And I can't find my notes for the Collins account." Mister Kinney lifted some papers, frowning.

"I mean, Justin. How come you care about an autistic boy?"

Brian snorted. "How come Mikey cares about you, Aids-man?!"

"I'm not-"

Brian looked up. "Well, I don't care about an autistic boy. I care about a young man who happens to suffer from autism."

Ben stared back for a moment at a loss of words and then scratched his forehead. "I'm sorry, but that's just not you. It's so...out of character." He gesticulated to Justin. "He needs special treatment and I really don't think that you're able to understand his situation. The needs that he-"

"You're right. I don't know shit about autism."

"See? That's what I-"

"But I know, Justin." Brian looked blankly at the television and then back to Ben. "Because he wants me to."

"That's what you think. But believe me you don't really know him."

Brian shrugged and went into the kitchen. "I know the size of his gloves. I know he hates tuna-sandwiches. I know he's a fucking genius." He snorted again and got two beers out of the fridge. "I know he likes to be here and hates to go back in his tower room."

Ben followed him and sat at the bar, accepting one of the beers. "His tower room?"

Brian leant against one of his cupboards, staring at the label on his bottle. "Yeah. Where you capture him. Like damn fucking Rapunzel."

Ben took a sip of his beer. "Why do you say that?"

"He told me."

"He did? When?"

A barely visible smile wandered over Brian's lips. "That's a question you have to ask him."

Ben didn't say anything to that, just gazed at Brian and drank his beer, and after five minutes in silence, a young blond man entered the kitchen with small steps.

He padded around undecidedly and finally stopped next to Brian, his eyes towards the ceiling.

"Are you finished stuffing your brain with shallow entertainment?"

"Yeah." He swayed slightly from left to the right and wrapped a thin hair strand around his finger.

"Thirsty?"

Justin's eyes flickered for a second, "Yes." and then he grabbed for the wonderful green bottle in Brian's hands. It looked like the one Little Red Riding Hood had in the basket.

"It's beer."

"Yeah." Justin poked his tongue against the wet bottle opening and didn't like the smell of the beer. He looked at the wall uninterestedly. "Seven...seven-thirty."

Brian smirked and took the bottle back. "You want water?"

"Yes." Justin smiled pleased. "Certainly Evian."

Brian nodded and turned around to fill a glass.

"He knows different water brands?" Ben leaned forward, watching as Justin accepted the full glass greedily, saying a wrongly emphasized 'Thank you' and gulped away the cooled fluid.

"Yes. Amazing isn't it?" Brian smiled artificially. "And he also has two ears and a mouth, so you don't have to ask me about things you wanna know from him."

Ben grinned and then addressed his patient in a friendly way. "You want to talk to me for a while, Justin?"

Justin emptied the glass, sighed loudly and handed it back to Prian. "No."

Ben frowned. "No? You don't want to talk to me?"

"Yeah." Justin left the kitchen with small steps. "Of ...of course not."

Ben blinked after the boy speechless and Brian smiled against the brim of his bottle.

"Told you so."

-----

Professor Ben Bruckner insisted on a meeting next Wednesday afternoon, to discuss the situation further and promised to bring some books and informative material about autism.

Brian said he couldn't wait, presented a big, fake, farewell smile and slammed the door shut at 7.30 pm. "I fucking hate unannounced visitors. Especially the boring ones."

"Yeah. Certainly back...back into the tower." Justin sounded relieved. He preferred for Dr. Pruckner to not be in the beautiful castle and talk to the prince all the time.

"Yeah." Brian agreed and laid an arm around the boy's shoulders. "You were fucking rude. Remind me to invite you over the next time my mother comes to visit."

"Yes."

"Hmm. You want to go to bed now?"

"Yes. Sleep with Prian."

"You have your own bed."

"Yes. Take a...take shower with Prian."

"You can shower alone, you know?"

He could? Yes, but he wanted to take a shower ...

"...with Prian."

Brian watched the boy from the side and pressed a little kiss on his temple after a moment. "You want to?"

Justin rubbed his hair against the prince's cheek. "Yes. Certainly in...in the rainwater." He smiled. He liked to dance with Prian.

-----

At 8.30 pm, Justin hadn't seen the Good Night Greeting on channel 4, but he smelled of wonderful prince foam soap and his hair was wet and he kneeled on the mattress of the huge prince bed and it was warm and like wind and storm.

"Yeah." He squeezed his eyes tightly shut, when Prian combed his long fingers through the wet hair strands at the back of his head. Of course the wind was...

"...very loud."

"What?" Brian clicked the hairdryer off and leaned over Justin's shoulder.

"Yes." Justin blinked his still damp lashes. "Certainly the storm." It was very hot too.

"Yeah well, you won't ruin my \$350 Danish down-filled pillow with your wet hair." He clicked the dryer back on. "So stop being a fucking princess."

"Yes." Justin ducked his head and squeezed his eyes shut again. He liked Prian's pillows. They smelled like prince hair and red towels.

Brian stood on bare feet with a towel around his waist in front of his bed; Justin's bare back touching his terrycloth covered thighs. He hated blow-drying hair and almost never did it himself. But it was late and the boy couldn't go to sleep with his wet head.

He straightened a thick dark blond strand between his middle and forefinger, pulling it out to its full length. It was long. A little over chin length.

"When was the last time you had your hair cut?" He asked loudly.

"Yeah." Justin said back, trying to raise his voice too, but sounding really stressed. "January...January the fourth." In Harrisburg. He had screamed and kicked nurse Emma's shin. Nurse Emma had screamed a little too.

"That's almost a year." Brian said, tousling the wet strands under the hot air. "You want to cut it again? Get a nice haircut?"

"No!" Justin giggled and pulled his shoulder up when his left ear got too hot. Of course the prince made jokes with him and was a little stupid. He couldn't cut his beautiful long princess hair, it was almost Christmas.

Brian smiled slightly but didn't notice. "You like your hair this way?"

Did he? Yes, it was almost long enough to reach the ground beneath his tower window.

"Hmm." Brian brushed his fingers slowly through the thick hairs, watching as it grew brighter in the warmth of the hairdryer. "It's not too bad. I guess you can leave it like that for a few more weeks."

"Yes."

"But cut it before next summer or the morons over at the institution will accidentally get you a bikini instead of bathing trunks."

"Yes." Justin looked back up at the prince, smiling brightly. "For Justin Taylor." He would've preferred to have a blue swim suit. Blue like the water in the well.

"Hm." Brian didn't return the smile and made a mental note to buy the kid a pair of fucking bathing trunks, because he couldn't picture Theodore Schmidt on shopping trip for his blond patient.

Justin's smile ebbed away slowly but his gaze remained upwards. He liked the feeling of Prian's large hands as they brushed his hair off of his forehead again and again under the hot storm-air.

Brian looked down at a pale face, his fingers stalling in the blond bangs. And he furrowed his brows and really tried to see it. This autism-thing that was somewhere inside there. Tried to see it in the blue eyes or in the way Justin's lips moved while he counted soundless random numbers. And maybe he did. Maybe he could see it. But he liked what he saw. He liked the little flicker in Justin's blank gaze, when he rubbed his thumb over the boy's temple. He liked the slight sigh, coming out between soft lips, when Justin got confused with his numbers. He liked the way Justin's head nestled willingly into his touch. He liked... Justin. With autism. He couldn't imagine him without it, even though he wasn't sure what parts of Justin the autistic ones were. And he studied the pale face a moment longer and decided, he wouldn't change a thing. Justin wasn't flawed. He was misunderstood and badly treated. He was restricted. Not through autism, but in the opportunities he was given. Justin was trapped. And the boy knew it full well.

And Brian clicked off the forgotten hairdryer and bent down to kiss blond hair that was almost dry and had grown uncontrollable but wasn't really too long. Brian liked it. On Justin. And he slipped a hand on the back of Justin's head for support and kissed the smooth, dry lips before whispering against them.

"Brat."

"Yes." Justin said back and touched his sweet tongue to Prian's mouth. "My...my prince." He liked Prian Kinney so much.

-----

Thirteen minutes later, Justin was in the beautiful room with the blue carpet again, and sat in the big bed with his Gameboy but without the prince.

"Yes." Justin looked up from the little screen and blinked towards the closed door. "Certainly sleeps...sleeps with Prian." He really would've preferred to be in the prince's bed with the blue lights and the money treasure in the night stand. "Yes." His little console in hand, he crawled out from under the covers and off the mattress. "Of course forty...forty-three." With naked feet and small steps he padded over the soft carpet and after 52 seconds out of the room and into the dark corridor. "Yeah." He stood still for a moment, gazing at the dark-grey ceiling and then at his little bright screen. He started to press the black buttons on the side, his eyes fixing on the question asked in his game. "Yes, of course five...five squares." The little man congratulated him on the right result and Justin nodded and plodded along the dark corridor, his gaze remaining on the screen. Blindly he stopped in front of Prian's bedroom and pushed the door open, still tipping with his thumbs on his handheld console.



Absorbed in his article, Brian peered over the top of his Vanity Fair. "What?" He looked at Justin, waiting for a response, but the boy only entered the room silently and padded towards the bed, never taking his eyes from his game.

"Justin." Brian put his magazine down when Justin crawled onto the mattress on the other side of the bed. "What are you doing? I said you have to sleep in your own room."

"Hff." Justin huffed annoyed as he kneeled on the soft, big prince bed. The little man wanted to know how many apples were left in the bowl when the cook took thirteen out for his apple pie and needed nine more to decorate the table. "Yeah." He looked up to the ceiling and wrote then a crooked 11 on the screen. "Certainly poisoned." He really didn't like apples.

"Get. Out." Brian spoke slowly and pointed to the door.

"Yeah." Justin rubbed his forehead. The man wanted him to draw the shape of Africa. "Of course...of course the lions." He'd seen the big lions on the TV last year in Harrisburg. Their growling was pretty loud and they looked like the big bad wolf. He rocked a bit on his knees. He wasn't sure if he liked lions. "Yeah...certainly bites...bites Justin Taylor."

"No, but I'll rip you a new one if you don't get out of my fucking bed." Brian said it without sounding angry and disappeared behind his magazine again. "Twat."

"Yes." Justin looked nervously up at the ceiling when the little man asked him again to draw the right shape. He would've preferred to...

"...not draw the bad...bad lion." Its teeth were certainly very big.

"What lion?" The older one asked with his eyes on the 'Justin Timberlake alone under the Christmas tree' article.

"Yeah. In Africa."

"What about it?" Brian shook his head and turned to the next page. Who cared about fucking straight VIP dramas...

"Yes." The little man asked a third time and Justin sighed stressed and started to wrap a thick hair strand around his finger.

Brian looked over at the kid, stared at him for a second and then held his hand out. "Let me take a look."

"Yes." Justin handed the little console to the prince. "My...my Prian."

Brian took the game, read the question on the screen, "Hmm," and drew the requested shape with the little touch pen. "You know maps? From America or the world?"

Did he? Justin wasn't sure and decided he wouldn't eat asparagus again. It wasn't very good.

"Well," Brian gave the console back, "sometimes you should read other things than your fairy tales, you know? Something about history or politics."

"Yes." Justin marked all words with three syllables on the left screen. "Certainly...certainly the star...star talers."

Brian read his magazine again. "Hm. That's a fairy tale too."

"Yes. Of course Tom Thumb."

"No."

"Yes. The brave...brave little Taylor." Justin smiled slightly. He liked that one especially.

Brian blinked at the boy from the side. "You know full well it means the guy who sews clothes."

"Yes."

"A tailor."

"Yes."

"Not like your last name."

"Yeah." Justin looked up to the ceiling. "Justin...Justin Taylor."

"But the tale is called The brave little tailor."

"Yeah. Justin."

"You're brave?"

Brian received no answer to his question and after one silent minute extended his hand to take the small console out of the boy's fingers. He shut it and put it on the nightstand. "Come here." He said it quietly and laid back with one arm stretched to the side.

And Justin remained in his kneeling position, and just bent forwards to nestle his blond head in the crook of Brian's neck.

Brian held him like this, "Hmm," staring to the ceiling while his fingertips ran slowly through Justin's hair. "Yeah, you're pretty brave actually."

Justin rubbed his nose against the prince's warm skin. "Yeah." He sighed. He would've preferred to sleep here, so close to the beautiful prince, for ever and ever and a hundred years.

"Yeah." Brian closed his eyes and planted a light kiss above the kid's ear. "My brave boy."

## Chapter 25— Helplessly Aware

When Justin's eyes opened it was still dark and everything was warm and smelled so nice.

He sat up on his knees a little awkwardly, yawned and rubbed his forehead.

"Yes."

The prince lay very still and breathed quietly and Justin looked around the dark room and really wondered why he had woken up, although it wasn't morning yet.

"Hhh." He sighed and scratched his ear. Then he crawled out of the bed and padded with small steps out of the room and into the corridor. The prince had given him a big Evian bottle for when he got thirsty in the night and had placed it on the nightstand in the room with the blue fur carpet. The prince was very clever.

Justin blinked as he pushed the door open and hesitated for a moment in the doorway. The curtains weren't closed and one could see the big grey tower in the darkness in front of the castle window and all the dancing snow flakes, falling under the street lamps. Justin blinked again and slowly entered the room. He liked the soft carpet under his bare feet and walked directly to the nightstand beside the big bed. There was no red cup, but a wonderful glass that shimmered prettily in the white street lights. The bottle was heavy and a little of the water ran beside the glass and made everything wet. Justin's fingers, his beautiful book, the thick mattress, the pants of his pajamas and a few droplets even landed on his naked toes and the blue cat fur carpet.

"Yes."

Justin looked up to the ceiling. He wasn't sure if he liked the tasty prince water on his feet. It was cold and the carpet got all soggy. He rubbed his big toe in the wet spot for a moment and then grabbed for the glass. With big gulps he drank and drank until it was empty and licked the remaining wetness off the rim of the glass, before he sighed satisfied, and put it back on the bedside table. He was really very thirsty.

With his palm, he wiped over the soaked cover of his fairy tale book and quickly shoved it under the pillow. Then he touched the wet fabric of his pants, didn't like the cold feeling on his skin and sat down clumsily on the carpet to take them off.

Three minutes later, a crumpled dark blue pajama pants lay under the bed and Justin stood over by the window to watch the snow in front of the pane. And he pressed his forehead against the cold glass and breathed against it and everything was silent—so very quiet.

He felt his long lashes brush the pane when he blinked. The tower on the other side of the street was tremendous and like black rock and so, so cold. It looked cruel and evil and Justin hated the thick wall door he knew was in there. And he felt small and his stomach pinched—and he didn't want to look at the grey tower anymore. It made him feel sad, even with all the soft white Christmas snow.

"Yeah," he felt his throat tighten and sniffed because his nose tickled. He really would've preferred to lie close to Brian again.

With a clumsy move he wiped the back of his hand over his eyes, sniffed again and turned around to get his beautiful book from under the pillow. He hugged it close to his chest even though it was all wet and cold and with little steps left the room with the blue carpet and made his way over the dark corridor, back into the prince's bedroom, where it was warm and so wonderfully comfortable.

He walked around a bit undecidedly and in the end stopped close to Prian's side of the bed.

"Yeah."

The prince lay still and his pretty brown eyes were closed. Justin blinked his blue ones and sat down on the edge of the mattress to read his book. He couldn't see much in the dark, but he knew exactly what the prince on page 22 looked like when he danced with the princess on the shiny floor in the ballroom. He stroked his fingers over the paper, looked up to the ceiling and felt very clever when he started to read.

"The—the King's son conducted her to the most...the most honor-honorable seat."

He didn't need to see the words.

"...and-and afterward took her out to-out to dance with him."

They were all in his head.

"...and she dan-danced so very gracefully," he said and emphasized it wrongly. "That they all--all more and more ad--admired her."

"Hh fuck." Brian mumbled, his voice rough, and rubbed a hand over his face when he detected a slender figure sitting beside him on the bed. "What are you doing?"

"Yeah," Justin curled a blond hair strand around his finger, never taking his eyes from the dark ceiling. "Of course reading."

"Reading?" Brian's brain refused to work with this information.

"Yeah," Justin turned the page. "Certainly...certainly for Prian."

"What the fuck Justin?" Mister Kinney peered over at his alarm clock. "It's fucking four in the morning. Go to sleep and stop blabbering about dancing princes and shit." He turned to his side and snuggled his head into the pillow. "I'll have nightmares."

"Yes." Justin closed his book and sat still, not even thinking of leaving Prian's side of the bed.

After two minutes, Brian poked one extended finger in Justin's side. "Go away."

"Hhh." Justin sighed and looked at the wall. It was dark like the ceiling.

Three more minutes went by and Brian sighed himself before moving back a little and lifting the blanket. "I'll bite you if you touch me with your ice cold feet."

"Alright," Justin said, stood up and tried to shove his book under Prian's pillow.

Brian grumbled something about fucking brats and the human right to get eight hours of sleep, then the book was tucked safely under the \$350 Danish downs and Justin crawled stiffly beneath the warm covers, turned around two times, and after sixty-two seconds, finally ended up with his face against the prince's chest and his naked legs stretched out alongside Prian's. He liked to lie like this with Prian Kinney and blinked his long lashes against nice smelling skin.

Brian decided he should feel extremely annoyed with this obvious invasion of his personal space, but then lay his chin on Justin's head and felt too comfortable to form a suitable complaint.

"Where have you been?" He said quietly and closed his eyes. "You weren't in bed earlier."

"Yes." Justin breathed in deeply. "Certainly drink...drink lots of water." He liked Evian.

"Hmm." Three of Brian's fingers found their way to the back of Justin's head to play with blond hair. "What happened to your pants?" He rubbed his knee against a bare leg.

"Yes, of course it's wet."

Brian opened his eyes and furrowed his brows. "Did you piss?"

Did he? Justin moved around to touch himself between the legs. No his underwear wasn't wet at all.

"Spilled the water?"

"Yes." Justin wriggled his toes under the blanket. They weren't wet anymore. "Certainly on the...on the carpet." He sounded scandalized.

"You spilled water on the carpet?"

"Yes. Of course the blue...blue carpet."

"Hm." Brian brushed his lips over Justin's hair and placed one hand in the boy's neck. "Just wake me up next time you need something, alright?"

"Yes. Prian sleeps."

"Well it's night time."

"Yes." Justin spoke with his lips against Prian's bare chest. "Sleep with Prian."

“Hm.” Brian didn’t feel responsible for his left leg, which knotted all by itself around the kid’s slightly cool shins.

Justin lay very still. He liked the sound of the prince’s heart. It was like the drumming of thick rain drops or mommy’s voice, humming lullabies. He hummed too for a moment and then breathed his hot breath on Prian’s warm skin. It got a little damp, but not as wet as the window pane. He touched it with his tongue anyway.

“Stop licking me. It’s irritating.”

Justin didn’t say anything, thought of thirty-four little way stones and licked the spot beneath Prian’s nipple five more times. Then he pressed the tip of his nose into his spit shiny work. He found it a little funny to not be able to see the prince properly here in the dark. But he tasted good anyway, even with all the black night surrounding him.

“You’re good at ignoring people.” Brian snaked an arm around the boy’s upper body to pull him up. “Sleep now.”

Justin blinked and stared with wide eyes into a close-up face he couldn’t see. He only felt warm breath on his cheek and as he pushed his nose just a little bit forward, it connected with the tip of Prian’s. He liked it and after a while put his hand in the softness of the prince’s hair, petting it stiffly.

Brian shifted but didn’t pull back when Justin’s innocent touch made the skin behind his ear tickle.

“I can’t fucking sleep with you breathing in my face all the ti-“he was interrupted in his half-hearted defence by a warm wet tongue touching his lips.

A small mewling sound came out of Justin’s throat when he tasted the prince. He liked kissing Prian so much and wanted to lick him all over. His broad chest and strong fingers and soft bellybutton.

Brian held still, curious and waiting, then curved his fingers around slim hips, tugging the boy closer and bringing his other hand to rest firmly on Justin’s neck, guiding the younger man into the kiss as he slid the very tip of his tongue out to have an almost imperceptibly taste. And he purred in approval when both tongues met in the darkness, touching and tasting each other carefully in a slow, open mouthed kiss.

A quiet kiss. Slight wet sounds teased into the dark room when Brian pulled away, only to come back more hungry, one second later. Snaking between puffed lips and licking the warmth out of the boy’s mouth. His hand slid up and down on the back of Justin’s neck, squeezing lightly, taking control, guiding the sweet wet mouth back when the younger one lost his focus.

And Justin opened up greedily, his lips parting without hesitation. The prince’s hand around the nape of his neck made him curiously lax, like a kitten picked up by its scruff. He melted against the larger body, wrapping his arm clumsily around Prian’s waist with a helpless whimper, trying to get closer somehow.

Grunting, Brian pulled Justin flush to his body, encasing him and pressing their chests together. He could smell the kid’s fresh skin and hair and held him tighter. His fingers slipped from Justin’s hip up under the shirt of his pajamas, palming flat against the hot skin, rubbing the smooth back as Justin sighed fluttery into the kiss.

“You know the professor was right.” Brain said in a low voice, licking Justin’s upper lip with a flat tongue. “You are very responsive.” He ran his hand down the boy’s side as he spoke, over his hipbone, towards his groin, brushing along the cotton-covered hardness his fingertips found.

Justin arched. Eyes closed, wet lips parted, as his spine worked his body, pressing himself more firmly into Prian’s fingers. “Yes-my...” Justin thought of the magic mirror and all the white sperm shooting out of his penis and his hand shook when he tried to reach down to grab inside his underwear. “My...my dick.” He exhaled a shuttering breath. His head was full with clouds and fog and he couldn’t remember what Prian’s penis was called.

“Yeah.” Brian dived into the clear, fresh wetness of Justin’s mouth again. “I know.” And he pecked the damp lips adoringly and whispered against them. “It’s hard, isn’t it?”

Was it? Yes, his penis was pretty hard and throbbed and he really would’ve preferred to-

“...see Prian.”

And there was another kiss and then the prince was gone and the mattress swayed and bobbed up and down and when Justin opened his eyes, everything was beautiful and shone bluish like the water in the well. He blinked and pressed one hand between his legs, while he stretched his neck to look around for Prian.

“Are you cold?” Brian folded his sweatpants before putting them away and walked back to the bed...naked.

Justin blinked again.

Brian smiled slightly and slowly pulled the blanket off Justin’s body.

“Yeah.” Justin looked up to the ceiling. It was blue too. “Certainly...certainly catch a cold.”

“I turned the heat up.”

“Yes.” Justin’s eyes flickered. He liked how the prince looked. Without clothes in the wonderful blue lights.

Brian fetched a white bottle from the nightstand and crawled back onto the bed to lie down on his side again, facing Justin. He watched him for a moment, waiting silently for eye contact. And the corners of his mouth lifted again in a little smirk, when after 72 seconds finally Justin’s head turned. With a small sigh and surprisingly clear eyes.

Justin lay perfectly still. His fingers covering the front of his underwear, his attentive gaze scanning Prian. He sighed again and licked his lips. The prince’s brown hair looked so soft and lovely.

Brian furrowed his brows in slight amusement as he watched the near face studying him. ‘So much for the everyone stays in their own bed rule, huh’

“Yeah.” The blue eyes flickered back to the ceiling, but two clumsy fingers reached out to touch Prian’s face, feeling the light stubble.

And after a while, Brian laid his own palm over Justin’s smooth cheek, sliding back through blond hair onto a warm neck, pulling the boy closer to kiss him with gentle lips, calm and slowly.

Justin’s tongue was the first to sneak out, lapping the prince’s lips with little strokes before it slipped between them, searching for the wonderful taste of Christmas snow ice cream’ and dark red velvet.

It made Brian’s stomach warm and downy and he moaned low in the back of his throat and wrapped his free arm tightly around Justin’s slim body, tugging him closer, his hand finding its way back beneath the light cotton fabric of a blue pajama shirt, tender fingertips drawing a line over the delicate knots of the boy’s spine.

Justin breathed heavily through his nose, refusing to part from the kiss. His upper leg first twitched a little and moved then in an awkward angle over Prian’s thigh, while his hand almost cramped on the front of his tight white briefs. He whimpered and tried to find relief by pushing his tongue deeper into the wetness of the prince’s mouth.

Brian’s broad hand slid out under the edge of the blonde’s shirt and in one fluid motion on the firm roundness of a perfect butt, squeezing and kneading for a moment before he finally allowed his fingers to sneak under the thin underwear. His chest tightened for a second as his palm made contact with the soft, smooth skin and he spread his fingers savouring, to stroke up and down and deep between the warm flesh of Justin’s thighs.

“Pull your underwear down a bit.” It was damp breath, mumbling against the pink corner of Justin’s mouth.

And Justin wriggled his hips in response, mewled and dug his fingernails into Prian’s neck, his other hand tightening desperately around his cotton covered hardness. He felt dizzy and too warm and looked at the prince with weak blue eyes.

Brian looked back and held the visual contact firmly as he hooked his thumb into the waistband of Justin briefs and shoved it down steadily, exposing the dark, leaking flesh underneath.

“Hh.” Immediately Justin’s fingers pulled around his hard shaft, tugging roughly while he whimpered loud and helplessly in Prian’s face. His toes buzzed and the tips of his fingers tickled. He wanted to yell and cry and say so many things but couldn’t remember one single word.

“Don’t.” Brian nudged his nose against Justin’s and stilled the trembling lips with a soothing kiss. “Don’t touch it like this. It’ll hurt.” He grabbed the hollow of Justin’s knee and pulled the boy’s leg up, placing it over his own waist, moving the smaller body in the right position until the tips of their hard cocks connected in the middle. He showed a slight smile when he reached behind his back to fetch the white lube bottle. “Good thing you didn’t eat everything.” The cap snapped open and he squeezed some of the clear gel onto his palm.

“Hhh?” Justin’s head tilted back with a low groan, baring his throat. Prian’s penis was so warm and wet and jerked against his own. He wanted to lick it and wetted his flushed lip with a nervous flicker of his tongue.

Brian bent forward to capture the younger man’s mouth. “Careful, it’s cold,” he mumbled between two kisses and wrapped his long arm around Justin’s upper body, caressing his back and pulling him closer, as his other hand reached for both of their shafts, holding them together and gently spreading the cool lube.

Justin shut his eyes firmly, his whole frame stiffening, hot puffs of ragged breath against Prian’s cheek, when he was surrounded by icy wetness and in the next second felt nothing but a large, strong hand, sliding slowly up and down his penis. He clawed his blunt nails into the prince’s wrist, making little keening sounds, his chest rising and falling rapidly.

“Justin.” Brian whispered against the boy’s lips, his hand firmly stroking their two erections. “Open you eyes.”

“Hhhh?”

“Justin. Look at me.”

And Justin did after a moment with dazed blue eyes, feeling numb and far away. He wanted to touch the prince’s face but didn’t know where his hands were. And he opened his mouth to say something but his body shivered all over and all that came out was a weak mewl.

“Good boy.” Brian squeezed his fingers around both shafts and carefully rubbed his thumb over the wet-shiny heads. “Look down. See what I’m doing.”

Justin blinked lethargic, looking at Prian longingly. “Cer-certain…”

Brian had to close his eyes for a second and snaked his tongue between sweet, dark red lips in the next. “Look.” He circled one finger around Justin’s cock head, breathing heavily himself.

Justin looked unfocused up to the ceiling, moaned, and then brought his eyes down to the point where Prian held their body’s connected. “Yes- I-,” he hiccupped and looked bewildered back into the prince’s face. They were together! “Hh!” He let out a strained huff, letting his forehead fall against the older man’s broad chest and burying his face into the damp skin, while his quivering fingers pressed half moon marks into Prian’s wrist.

And Brian panted and kissed a damp blond head when his free hand found its way down on a round ass cheek. He rubbed it, using it to pull the boy even closer and let his middle finger run along a soft crack. Teasing, exploring and now and then pressing slightly against the puckered bud he found with ease.

Justin shook all over, trying to move his hips but didn’t know which way. He gasped loudly into Prian’s chest, stretching his left leg out, while curling the toes on his right foot inwards, as the stroking on his penis got faster and tighter and the strong tingling deep inside his belly just got too much, making all his thoughts white and light and disappear.

“Hhhfuck.” Brian cursed and pushed the tip of his finger into Justin’s warm little hole as his orgasm surprised him, shooting out of him as soon as the boy’s creamy wetness covered his hand and cock and stomach. He felt Justin squirm in his arms and pressed his finger a hint deeper into the tightness, feeling the pulsing contractions accompanying him into the lulling feeling of the post orgasmic afterglow. All light and high, until he slumped with a last weak groan around the smaller body. “Shit!” Closing his eyes and nestling his sweaty face into blond hair, resting his cheek on it, while he gently pulled his finger free, lazily patting the warm, firm globes of Justin’s butt.

“That was…”

Totally hot. Absolutely unbelievable. Fucking amazing. Three terms that came instantly to Brian’s mind, but even after a whole minute not out of his mouth.

“Yeah.” Luckily Justin knew the right answer. “Certainly-certainly sperm.”

“Yeah,” Brian agreed, combing his wide spread fingers through long hair strands. “That too.”

And he lay there, boneless, blinking his heavy eyelids and watched tiredly as Justin battled with the need to fall asleep, firmly holding to one of the prince’s long fingers and poking his tongue out to touch the tip.

Brian felt like he might smile about it but wasn’t sure if he really did, as the world changed from dim blue lights into comforting darkness.

When Brian Kinney woke up on this Saturday in December, it was 10.08 a.m. and the other side of the bed was empty.

A familiar picture, just not the right one on this morning.

“Damned brat.”

He grumbled as he moved his long legs ungracefully out of the bed and scratched the itchy spot right beside his balls, while trudging towards the bathroom.

“Needs a fucking collar and leash.”

His personal bathroom. A bathroom with an open door, lights on, a dripping tap, two towels on the floor and his \$6.80 tooth paste (enriched with real mint from the Spanish highlands) smeared over the mirror and his luxury washing basin.

Brian blinked at the whole scenario a little perplexed and ran a hand through his hair when he made his way to the toilet, swearing far too loudly for such an early hour.

Three minutes later, his bladder was emptied, he had found his sweat pants somewhere beside the bed and the first cigarette of the day stuck between his lips, as he scuffed down the stairs without much enthusiasm, even though the tasty smell of fresh poured coffee swirled up his nose. He knew there was a good reason to employ a maid.

“Good morning!” Emmett passed through the hallway with a big laundry basket in his hands and a much too happy smile painted over his face. “Hot Coffee, fresh eggs and bacon are in the kitchen!”

Brian took a deep drag of his cigarette and looked after his ‘servant’ with an irritated frown. Bacon and eggs? What the fuck! He rubbed the back of his neck, really hating such an enormous amount of stress’ only four hours after sunrise, and went into the kitchen to slouch down on one of the bar stools, where, like every morning, his three favourite things waited to make his day bearable: Hot, black coffee, a truckload of sugar and the newspaper (minus the birth- and death announcements because those were just boring).



He poured himself a cup, dumped way too much sugar in it, took a careful sip and peered over the brim, when a young blonde guy in grey cargo pants and a one-size-too-small t-shirt entered the kitchen. With small steps and a blank gaze.

Brian put his cup down and cleared his throat but said nothing, just watched as Justin stopped somewhere near the radio, swaying softly from left to the right and curled a long hair strand around his finger.

Brian leaned back, crossing his arms in front of his chest, when the boy began to hum along with the song playing the radio. Very quietly and very off key and still swaying on his feet.

“What are you doing?”

Justin didn’t say anything.

Brian smirked, stood up and went to stand in front of him. “You know this song?”

Justin didn’t answer and held his unfocussed gaze aside, but stepped steadily from one foot to the other in clumsy movements.

Brian watched him and drew his lips inside. Then he laid his arms on the boy’s shoulders, crossing the wrists behind his neck and pressed his forehead against Justin’s temple. “You are a lousy dancer,” he said it in a soft voice, finishing his statement with a kiss above a warm ear shell.

“Yes.” And Justin swayed some more and nestled his head against Brian’s.

“Hm.” Brian pulled him a little bit closer and shrugged. “Me too.”

“Yes.” Justin’s left hand came up to lie on the prince’s almost naked hip, where the sweat pants sat too low.

“Doesn’t matter.” The older one closed his eyes, joining in the slight swaying movements with his body but kept his feet firmly on the floor. “We’re both gorgeous.”

“Yeah.” Three thin fingers patted the naked skin over Brian’s hipbone stiffly.

“When did you get up?”

“Yeah.” Justin’s gaze changed from the wall up to the ceiling. “Certainly seven-seven thirty.”

“That’s early.” Brian rubbed his forehead lazily over pale skin and blonde hair, enjoying the young man’s unique scent. “Did you tell Emmett to make bacon?”

Did he? Yes, there were....

“...of-of course always bacon and eggs on Saturday.”

Brian smirked but only briefly. “You know, Emmett is not a real servant.”

“Yes.”

“He’s here to help with the household.”

“Yes.”

“To put my shit away and to do the laundry.” Brian furrowed his brows. “And that doesn’t make any sense, huh?”

Justin sighed.

“Hm. Just don’t tell him to polish your fucking noodle necklace or something.”

“Yes.” Justin liked that. Certainly his butterflies would shimmer like gold and silver.

“Good.”

“Oh hey you two,” Emmett came into the kitchen, placing a pile of neatly folded dish towels next to the microwave. “Dancing to this corny old song, how romantic!” he sighed, tipped his head to the side and put a hand over his heart. “This reminds me of this one time were I asked Robert Gimson to dance with me in High School. God he was so cute.” He sighed again, then shrugged with a little smile and disappeared.

“On the other hand,” Brian added as an after thought. “Tell him to hand wash your dirty socks next time you see him.”

“Yes.” Justin blinked up to the ceiling, snuggling a little bit closer to the prince and wiggling his toes in his socks. He liked dancing with Prian in the kitchen so much. Even without rainwater.

At the castle it was pasta with smoked salmon and spinach salad for lunch on Saturday and afterwards the prince said he had to do some work. So Justin sat on the white couch and played with his little handheld console, while Prian was at his desk, working on his laptop.

\*beepbeep\*

\*Bing\*

“You performed at cars speed!”

“Yes.” Justin scratched himself behind the ear with his touch pen.

“You’re good at this! I think you should check out Calculations x 100.”

“Yes.” Justin tipped with his pen on the screen a few times, until the countdown appeared.

3-2-1

“Yes.” Justin’s eyes flickered to the ceiling for a second, before focusing on his screen again, writing the right numbers down without a blink. He liked the funny melody the little man was playing for him.

Every time he wrote a right answer, an approving ‘bling’ was to be heard.

After the sixty-fifth ‘bling’ Brian cleared his throat and shifted around in his chair, his forehead wrinkled with deep folds, as he tried to focus again on the documents he wanted to study.

\*beepbeep\*

\*Bing\*

“Your time is 01:08.”

‘AMAZING!’

“Yes.”

“Justin.” Brian sighed but didn’t take his eyes from the screen. “Turn off the sound, I can’t fucking concentrate.”

“Alright.”

“Good.”

The boy blindly switched the sound button off and blinked when the little man said he should read a passage from ‘The Legend of Sleepy Hollow’ in high-speed.

“Yes.” He tipped his screen again with the touch pen and really wondered whether there would be a nice picture of the dwarf too. He liked Sleepy. He was like Plake.

3-2-1

The text appeared on the screen and Justin started to read. Aloud, like the little man wanted him to.

“He was-was in fact an odd mixture of small shrewd-shrewdness and simple credul- credulity.” He sighed. There were really tricky words in this tale. “His appetite for-for the marvelous and-and his powers of diges-digesting it were-were equally extraordinary,” he pronounced the last word wrongly and got corrected by the man behind the desk.

“It’s extraordinary.”

“Yes.” Justin looked up to the ceiling for a moment and then back to his screen. “And-and both had been in-increased by his residence in this-in this spell-spellbound region.” He wasn’t sure if he liked this tale. It was a little bit scary. “No-no tale was too gross or-or monstrous for his-for his capa-capacious swallow.” He sighed again, rocking softly back and forth on the sofa.

Brian scrolled down his page, flicking a gaze at Justin. “You don’t have to read this, if you don’t like it.”

He didn't? "Yes, of course read-read the text. The man says."

"What man?"

"Yeah, certainly Doctor Kawashima." He was a little bit fat and had glasses like the grandmother.

Brian lifted one eyebrow. "Doctor Kawashima?"

"Yeah." He said Justin was amazing, too.

Brian stared at Justin for a moment and looked then back at his laptop. "Yeah well, you don't have to listen to him. He just makes suggestions."

"Yes." Justin was really glad about it, because reading the tricky word tale was very exhausting. He yawned.

"You want to take a nap?" Brian laid both of his hands on the keyboard and started typing.

"Yes. Sleep with Prian." There was a warm swirl in Justin's belly. He liked Kitty nap's with the prince.

"No, I have to work."

"Yes."

"You can sleep here on the sofa if you want."

He could? Justin thought about it for a while and decided he would like to sleep on the white couch. It smelled like Prian and firesticks. So, he yawned again, put his console on the coffee table and needed 52 seconds to lie down in a comfortable position. On his knees, his upper body bent forwards, his head resting on the big seat cushion and his eyes blinking tiredly towards the terrace doors. He liked the castle gardens so much and his last thoughts before his eyes fell shut were of the green frog, jumping around beneath the pear tree to enjoy all the wonderful Christmas snow.

"Ribbit-ribbit?"

In the late afternoon, the servant said he wanted to go to Borders to buy a little gift for his friend's birthday and the prince decided it would be good for Justin to go with him and look for a new book. But as he helped Justin to close the zipper of the silver jacket and said "Later", Justin hit a hand against his forehead and started to scream loudly because he really didn't want to leave the castle without Prian.

Half an hour later, a tall handsome man marched grumbling into the local Borders store, closely followed by a young blond man who curled a thick hair strand around the middle finger.

"I have unfinished work coming out my ass!" Brain stated loud enough for everyone to hear. "But of course you have to be a fucking drama queen again, and now I have to sit here, doing fucking book shopping, as if I have nothing better to do!" He drew his fingers tighter around Justin's hand when he felt the boy stumble behind him. "Are you fucking happy now?!"

“Yes.” Justin didn’t like the grandmother with the white hair staring at him and quickly looked up to the ceiling. There were many lamps and lights.

“Ah, stop being so grumpy.” Emmett said and looked around for the Gay-Erotica department. “You can’t work the whole day. It’s the weekend.”

“Shut up, servant, and go get your damn copulation handbook.” Mister Kinney said and pulled Justin close to his side when a big, bald guy barged into the kid unscrupulously. “Hey watch it, Fucker!”

“Yes, of course broke my-broke my shoulder.” Justin rubbed the hurting spot and pressed his head stiffly against Prian’s arm.

“You’re fine.” Brian told him, brushed a small kiss on his temple and threw a frosty glare after Mister Bigfoot. “Let’s go find the coffee bar.”

“Yes. Certainly a cookie.” Justin really didn’t like coffee.

“You had a whole bowl of cookies yesterday.” Brian guided the younger one towards the elevator, pushing the button.

The doors opened and Justin wasn’t sure if he liked the small room as the prince pulled him inside.

“Yeah.” He rocked nervously back and forth, staring up to the silver ceiling. “Of course no window.”

“It’s an elevator. You don’t need windows in here.” Brian pushed the button for the 3rd floor, the doors closed and the cabin moved upwards.

Justin breathed heavily through his nose and his stomach felt ill. He really didn’t like the silver room. It was too small.

“Hey.” Brian looked in the boy’s face. “What’s the matter, you feeling sick or something?”

“I certainl-“ The boy gagged and wailed then quietly, trying desperately to hold his gaze up. He really would’ve preferred for the doors to open again.

“Ah ah. No puking, or you will clean it up yourself, brat.” Brian laid a broad hand on Justin’s lower back, rubbing his thumb soothingly up and down, while his eyes fixed pleadingly on the jumping numbers over the door.

“3rd floor. Doors opening.”

“About fucking time.” He pulled the boy out of the elevator as soon as the gap between the silver doors was big enough for them to fit through.

“Yes.” Justin blinked. The lights were brighter in the big room and it smelled like coffee and tasty cream cake.

“Are you alright?” Brian squeezed Justin’s hand. “Think you need to go to the toilet?”

Did he? No. But he wanted to-

“...certainly eat a cookie.” With chocolate and shaped like a star.

“Yeah sure.” Brian snorted and led the blond toward the coffee bar. “So you can puke it on my \$500 shoes. Think again, twat.”

Fifteen minutes later, Justin sat on a comfortable green chair and poked out his tongue to lick off the last cookie crumbs, sticking to the corners of his mouth.

Brian watched him while blowing a long trail of smoke to the side and stubbing his cigarette out in the ashtray. “Finished? Drink the rest of your water.”

“Yes.” Justin took his glass and emptied it, carefully lapping the last drops off the brim.

“Good.” Brian got up. “Let’s go and find you a book.”

“Yes. Certainly in the-in the castle.” Justin needed a few moments to get up from his chair and then took the prince’s hand in stiff fingers while he glanced up to the ceiling.

“I meant a new book.” Brian stroked Justin’s thin knuckles as he left the coffee area and walked through the big sales room, looking around searchingly.

“Yeah. Of course under the pillow.” He liked the big, soft pillows on Brian’s bed.

“What about this one?” Mister Kinney stopped in front of a high book shelf, taking one of the books out.

“Ooooh.” Justin looked at the big, colourful book mightily impressed. It had beautiful pictures of green woods and grey mountains with white Christmas snow on top.

“Here.” Brian gave the heavy book to Justin and pointed to a nearby seating area. “Sit down over there and look through it.”

“Yes.” With little steps and his eyes focused on the pages, the boy went to the small brown leather couch and sat down blindly, placing the open book on his lap.

Brian joined him after a while, bringing a selection of twelve other books and putting them down next to the kid.

“You want this one?” Brian leaned over Justin’s shoulder, looking at the opened page.

“Yes.” Justin liked the big book with the trees and mountains so much especially the pages 27 to 29 because there was a very big lake with black fishes and bright colored boats.

“Hm. You can read about the different countries in it. And the Rocky Mountains and the Serengeti and all that shit.” He pinched his nose.

“Yes. Certainly Harrisburg.”

“Maybe.” Brian stroked absently through the soft strands on the back of Justin’s head, watching as the boy read a couple of lines about the Arctic.

Justin liked all the pictures of the white snow and the blue sky and, “Ha!” there was a white bear coming out of the water! He turned around and looked up at the prince with a happy face. “Certainly swims in the well!”

“It’s the Arctic Ocean.”

“Yes.” Justin’s eyes flickered to the ceiling. He wondered whether the frog would like for the big white bear to swim in its well.

Brian pointed to the other books he brought. “Look through the other books too. I’ll be right back.”

“Yes.” Justin listened as the prince’s feet, on the green carpet, walked away and grabbed for another book. It was blue and a funny man was on the cover. “How your-how your body works.” Hh. He blinked up to the ceiling again. He wasn’t sure if he knew how his body worked.

“Baby!” Emmett fell in the seat next to Justin, holding up an opened bag of skittles. “Want one?” He looked around and shoved a yellow one into his own mouth. “Where’s Brian?”

“Yes.” Justin didn’t know where Brian Kinney was, but the little coloured things in the servant’s bag smelled rather tasty.

When Brian came back to the little seating area, Justin still sat there. His eyes focused on an open book in his lap and his right hand buried in a little red bag.

“What the fuck is that?!”

Justin put one blue and two orange colored skittles between his lips chewed carefully and looked up innocently at the prince.

Brian took the bag out of the boy’s fingers. “Where’d you get this shit?!”

Justin didn’t say anything. His mouth was full.

Brian stared at him for a moment and then rubbed his left temple. “Did you look through the books like I told you?”

Did he? Justin looked down at the book lying on his thighs. It was pretty and the most wonderful fairy tale.

“What the-” Brian wrinkled his forehead, taking the book from the kid’s lap, ‘A Part of your World by S. Knoben.’ before holding it up for Justin reproachfully. “I didn’t give this crap to you!”

"Yes. Of course a—of course a merman." Justin liked the pretty merman picture on the cover. He sat on a big stone in the middle of the well and his fishtail shimmered lovely in the sunlight.

Mister Kinney pointed disgusted to the summary on the backside. "It's fucking cheap gay schmoop!"

"Yes. Certainly for Justin Taylor." He would've really preferred for the prince to give him the fantastic book back.

"Oh, shall I get you a copy too?" Emmett appeared with a little Borders paperback dangling on his right middle finger. "I can highly recommend it."

"Did you give this dung to him?!"

"But of course I did."

"It's lesbionic!"

"It's about two gay men." Emmett assured. "Well about a gay man and his gay merman lover."

"It's awful soft porn."

"It's a bestseller, right Baby?"

"Yes."

"It's not."

Emmett pouted. "Well it should be. It's hot."

"Yeah right." Brian flung the novel back to Justin, "It will be." gathered the thirteen other books and a half empty package of skittles into his arms and marched towards the stairs instead of the elevator because he didn't feel like cleaning brat-puke off his leather jacket. "Shredded between the wood in my goddamn fireplace."

It was almost midnight when Brian closed his laptop and made his way upstairs.

The corridor was dark and only weak light came from the small slit under Justin's door. He pushed it open, the old wood creaking quietly on the hinges. And he stood there in the doorway, staring blankly at the picture folding out before his tired eyes.

Thirteen books spread out on a thick blue carpet. Some of them opened, showing their black and white printed contents and bright images of beautiful landscapes, wild animals and different people: houses and vehicles, baby boys and old women, showing life—just a small part, but a whole new world to 18 year old Justin Taylor who lay between them on the floor—sleeping. With freshly cleaned teeth in dark blue pajamas, his feet bare. Blond hair and closed eyes, long lashes against pale cheeks, breathing evenly. One hand on page 32 of a cheap gay novel, the other protectively around an almost emptied package of skittles; looking young and innocent, maybe a little bit lost, but mostly peaceful and contented.

Brian went to take the blanket from the bed and covered Justin's still frame with it. And he switched off the lights and when he looked for a last time through the dark room and saw the snowflakes dancing soundless in front of the window blurring the sight of a dark grey mighty tower in the cold night' he went to close the curtains.

Chapter 26 – Wet Dreams

... the beautiful merman almost flew through the shimmering blue water. Completely soundless. His silver-green fishtail flapping in graceful motions when he turned in a pirouette, moving upwards and breaking through the water surface like an arrow, white foam



and salty water spraying everywhere. Little droplets glimmered on his lovely face, a little piece of sea grass sticking to his blond hair, as he swam towards the beach, sliding fluidly on one of the big rocks, framing the long, white beach in front of the castle.

The prince took one last drag from his firestick before he threw it away carelessly in the dim light of the nightfall.

"That wasn't very convincing." He said when he walked closer, his bare feet printing pretty shapes in the wet ground. "I've seen old sea elephants doing a far better job."

The merman grinned, laying lazily on his side, resting on the almost black stone. "Oh yeah? Doing what?!"

„Shooting out of the water and gliding on a big, wet rock like a bad free Willy double." The prince said but smirked too, stopping when his toes made contact with the cool ocean water. "And don't think I'll set one foot in this shit brew. I had a \$450 pedicure today." He held his hand out.

And the beautiful merman smiled at him for a moment, wriggled his tail and in the next second it wasn't fin and fish scales anymore, but two long, pale skinned legs. And he slid off the high rock and waded through the shallow water to the beach.

He looked up to his prince with soft blue eyes. "You say the most romantic things." And he didn't get an answer...but a gentle kiss with a mild breeze of salty air brushing through his wet hair.

"Hhh..." Justin smacked his lips and sighed when the beautiful images blurred and in the end disappeared entirely. He blinked his eyes. Everything was hard and hard and something bit at his back. He didn't like it and clumsily moved to sit on his knees.

"Yes." He shoved a thick blond hair strand out of his forehead. He was on the blue carpet and all the lovely books lay everywhere. His look changed a little disoriented upwards to the ceiling. It wasn't very dark anymore, but the room wasn't bright as it should be in the morning either. He blinked his eyes again and then stood up awkwardly and went to the window. The curtains were closed and he needed a moment before he took another step forward to peek squinting behind the dark, heavy curtains. The sky was grey and the white Christmas snow lay on the big, evil tower, on the streetlamps and left and right in big mounds beside the black street, but not on the street itself. Just a little grey dirt-snow that looked like mud.

"Yeah." Justin found it didn't look very nice outside today, so he released the curtain fabric and plodded with small steps out of the room, into the long corridor and down the stairs. For a moment, he stopped on step twelve to look at the picture of the naked man and then went the last steps down until his bare feet touched the smooth black stone floor in the entry hall. It was a little cold and he tried to hurry up to reach the warm wood ground inside the castle's living room.

It smelled wonderful and Justin stood still for a while, just wrapping a hair strand around his finger and rocking softly back and forth. He liked the castle so much and would've preferred to not go back into the tower ever again. But of course he had to. It wasn't Christmas yet.

"Yeah." His eyes flickered as he looked to the wall. He felt a bit sad. Waiting for Christmas was really very hard and took far too long. He sighed and touched his belly. It didn't feel empty, but he went towards the kitchen anyway.

The big clock over the kitchen cupboards said it was 7.58 am. Two more minutes until breakfast time.

"Yes. Of course...of course Sunday. Waffles and fruit salad." He climbed on one of the big bar stools to wait. He liked waffles, but hopefully the prince wouldn't steal the tasty orange pieces from his plate again.

When the hand moved over to 8.04 am the kitchen was still quiet and no plate with waffles or fruit salad was to be seen.

"Yeah." Justin scratched his forehead. He didn't know where the servant was and as he thought of the wonderful breakfast waffles he always had in the tower, he felt quite hungry.

"Plake." He didn't call very loud for the nurse because he would've preferred for the beautiful prince to appear instead of the tower guard. He hated the tinkling key.

Plake didn't come, nor the prince or the servant, no matter how loud Justin's stomach grumbled. So he climbed back down from the high chair and padded to one of the cupboards, pushing himself up on his toes to reach the handle and open the cupboard door.

"Ohhh." There were many silver cans and colorful boxes and Justin fished for a pretty tin with a fruit salad picture sticking to the front. Certainly there were tasty banana slices inside of the can and grapes and oranges. "Yes." He shook it and listened carefully to the noises the contents made. It didn't sound like poisoned apples, so he put it down on the counter and picked at the shiny material with his fingers. He scratched and pushed and knocked on it, but it wouldn't open. "Yeah." Justin looked blankly up to the ceiling. He really would've preferred to eat breakfast now.

At 8.21 am he left the kitchen, because his feet were cold and he didn't like the quietness everywhere. With padding noises on the smooth floor he went through the living room and over to the big terrace doors. The pane was a little bit cold when he pressed his forehead against it, but the breath he breathed onto the pane was warm and he poked his tongue out to lick the growing wetness off. The castle gardens looked so lovely with all the snow and Justin really wondered if the frog would be white now too.

"Yeah." Maybe there would even be a little Christmas snow on top of the shiny gold ball. His belly grew happily warm at this thought and he giggled quietly and grabbed for the door handle to pull the door open like the prince did all the time. It was a bit tricky and Justin had to use all his strength, but in the end the door rolled open and cold air came through the narrow gap.

Justin blinked and wrinkled his nose when he stuck one of his hands outside, testing, before he made one careful step in the snow. He whimpered when the coldness surrounded his naked foot, but he made another step, and another and two more and after a slight hesitancy, walked straight towards the snow covered pear tree and the little pond that lay underneath.

"Yeah." He stood at the brink and looked inside for a moment before his gaze wandered up to the grey sky. He couldn't see the frog and the water was gone and everything was ice and hard and frozen. "Hh." He sighed and watched the damp fume coming out from between his lips with every breath. It looked like the smoke the prince made with his firesticks and Justin smiled brightly. Then he scratched his forehead and decided to look into the big well with the blue water. Certainly the frog would sit there and watch over the gold ball.

It took 42 steps through the white, cold snow for Justin to reach the big well and his feet didn't feel very good. They were all red too. But the well water was wonderful blue as always and it gurgled quietly and clouds of magic fog hovered over the water's surface. Justin blinked his long eyelashes and rocked softly, standing fascinated at the pool's edge. He wondered whether there could be a beautiful merman in the well, together with the frog and the big polar bear. And he wriggled his cold toes and really wished he had a shimmering fish tail too.

A little awkwardly he bent down over the water and reached his hand out to touch it.

"Ha!"

He laughed. It was warm! He was sure the frog liked that. ...and then the world fell over and all his thoughts were surrounded by water and his mouth was full of frog taste and his legs had no silvery fish scales.

-----

Brian groaned and fished blindly on the nightstand for the first morning cigarette, even before his eyes were fully open. God, he really hated mornings were he woke up feeling even shittier than at night when he went to sleep.

The lighter clicked, he took a deep drag and fell relaxed back into the pillows when the hot smoke filled his lungs. And he looked at the clock tiredly and exhaled in irritation, when the first thought coming to his mind in connection with the numbers 8.38 were, 'It was time for breakfast 38 minutes ago'. Followed by the image of a blond brat, lying in a pile of books on the blue carpet. Sleeping.

And he really tried to enjoy his morning cigarette in peace, but somehow his body was anxious to get out of bed. He cursed to no one in particular when he pushed the covers aside and swung his legs off the mattress, his cigarette dangling between his lips. He stood and scratched the back of his neck, inhaling deeply again as he went over to the window, looking blankly outside. Damn snow. He closed his eyes for a second, taking the cigarette between his lips for another drag, and when he opened them again he almost choked on the strong smoke and it came out in two short puffs. There, outside near the damn fucking swimming pool was Justin, toddling barefoot and in his blue pyjamas around in the snow, bending over the water and talking to himself. Saying words Brian couldn't hear through the window. And he was frozen behind it, a hot gush flowing through his chest, as he knocked at the glass and said something about 'shit' and 'fuck' and 'stupid brat'. And he thought of opening the window to call out, but then he was already halfway down the stairs and couldn't remember the last time he felt so mad about something.

He had a full range of colourful insults ready to shout in Justin's direction, and even practised a couple of them on his way through the living room, but when he reached the terrace doors, the boy was gone. Vanished. Disappeared from the face of earth or at least from the magically winter wonderland that was Brighton's gardens in December.

Brian heard the deadly silence and biting cold air hit the bare skin at his chest through the small gap of the glass doors. And his heart raced, but his legs refused to move. Refused to even twitch, for two seconds that seemed like an aeon. And when he finally threw his cigarette away and ran...outside in the coldness of countless points below zero, through a blanket of white snow... his legs felt heavy like steel and stone. No matter how fast he tried to run, he never broke turtle speed. And he didn't think about his brand new \$59.95 Ginch Gonch Crotch Rockets underwear as he jumped into a heated deluxe pool and was surprised about the thousands of needles that hit his skin immediately. Especially, when he gathered the slender body, a second later somewhere near the third shiny underwater lamp on the right side... a body that was way colder than the temperature of the heated water. And he had concrete plans to murder his incompetent pool boy and sue the entire pool company when he held Justin up and the boy stared at him with wide blue eyes, gasping for breath in sheer panic.

Brian wasn't gentle when he moved the kid over the edge of the pool, laying him down on the slightly snow covered tiles. Shouting at him when all that came out of Justin's mouth were choked gurgling sounds. And he pressed his forearm into the boy's stomach and the flush of chlorine well water spluttering to surface wasn't blue but Justin's lips were.

Brian panted and dug his fingers into Justin's shoulders, staring frantically down, his eyes flickering over a thin face that displayed only unhealthy colors.

And he burned with anger and opened his mouth to scream at Justin what a fucking idiot he was... but all he could hear coming from his panicked voice was a broken, "...you fucking stupid little twat."

Then he said nothing more, pulled Justin up and carried him back inside without even glancing at him.

And he didn't look at the boy when he turned the hot water on in the shower and he concentrated on washing Justin's beet-red skin for the next fifteen minutes. Massaging chlorine out of blond hair. Feeling a steady heart beat under his finger tips.

When he turned the water off and wrapped Justin into a big towel, Justin looked up at the ceiling, blinking his wet lashes and began to rock slightly back and forth.

"Yeah...certainly in... in the well."

Brian wanted to slap him. His hand twitched and his jaw tightened. But then Justin scratched his forehead and sighed. And all he could do was to kiss the blond, wet hair and close his eyes and think 'I'm sorry' even though it was utter bullshit...

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Justin shivered when he blinked over the edge of the thick blanket. The room was still and very quiet and only a few soundless snowflakes fell behind the pane of the castle window.

He felt his toes prickle and wondered why his lips wouldn't stop quivering. He wanted them to.

"Hhh."

He looked to the side and wriggled his hips under the heavy covers. His dripping wet blue pyjamas lay in the laundry basket and now he was all naked and alone in bed, even though it was bright day and his eyes wouldn't close.

"Yes."

He really would've preferred for the beautiful prince to lie together with him in the big, comfortable bed.

But Brian wasn't in the bedroom.

He was downstairs. Justin could hear him. Loud and loud and barking and growling like the big bad wolf and an angry giant.

Justin wasn't sure if he liked it and lay very still.

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"I don't care if it's the weekend! Get your fucking ass over here!" Brian slammed the phone down with a furious 'Fuck damnit!'

"Brian." Emmett sat on the white sofa and shot his boss a pleading gaze. "Would you please stop to-"

"What?!" Brian shouted at the other man, a wild look in his brown eyes. "I told you weeks ago, the fucking doors need to be fixed! But no, of course you were too busy baking tons of fucking cookies and turning the house into the next damn fucking north pole! And now it's too late!"

"No, it's not." Emmett spoke in a calm voice. "It's not too late. He's fine."

Brian stared down at him, fuming. He wanted to strangle him. Wanted to kick something and break a few things. He wanted to scream and ram his fist through the fucking mirror-glass door. He felt his blood boil and pulse in his veins. And he turned around and didn't bother for a glass when he grabbed a half empty Jim Beam bottle and drank. One big gulp. Before the golden liquid swam between thousands of tiny shards on an expensive Milan hard wood floor.

And he stood by the terrace doors and looked outside at the peaceful white that was his garden; feeling numb and tired. And when he left the living room eight silent minutes later, his voice was low and dark.

"Drain the pool."

"But you love to swim outside. You wanted it heated."

"What I want is a drained pool."

Brian walked slowly upstairs and stopped in the doorway of his bedroom. He'd hoped Justin would be asleep. But he wasn't. Two blue eyes looked at him, wide awake, over the edge of a thick blanket. And they followed him with rare attentiveness as he went over to his wardrobe. He tried to ignore it when he started to undress. But all he could hear in the quiet room was the boy's even breathing, and while he pulled off his jeans, he looked slightly back over his shoulder.

"Are you still cold?" He didn't like how unconcerned his voice sounded and he sniffed and concentrated on the buttons of his fly.

Justin blinked at Prian's bare back. It was beautiful. The prince always looked beautiful. Brown hair, golden skin and so tall and strong and graceful. He wanted to sniff at Prian's chest and belly. He wanted to lick Prian's mouth and neck and fingertips. He wanted to touch Prian's penis and lovely face.

But he didn't. He just lay there under the warm covers. Very still. Watching as the prince took off all of his clothes, disappeared into the bathroom without closing the door, pissed into the toilet without sitting down, washed his hands without the wonderful foam soap... and finally came back, with naked feet on a white cat fur carpet. He looked into Prian's face, the edge of the blanket rubbing at his chin, wondering whether his lips would stop to quiver if the prince would kiss them.

Brian only glanced at Justin briefly before he went to close the curtains, collected his cigarettes on his way to the bed, and without a comment lay down on the mattress.

Justin turned his head and watched as the shimmering silver lighter clicked and the little yellow flame lit the firestick in Prian's fingers. He liked the milky smoke puffs, coming out of the prince's mouth. They looked like clouds.

He blinked his eyes and pursed his lips, imitating the other man and blowing air through them. Noisily.

After the third fake-smoke-noise next to his ear, Brian turned his head to look at the boy.

Justin looked back, a hint of a smile on his face.

And Brian said nothing, but took a long drag of his cigarette and then expertly blew a couple of smoke-rings towards the ceiling.

"Hh!"

Justin's eyes went wide for a second, before his face showed a happy, bright smile. "Ha!" Circles! The Prince was so clever!

It was the first time that Brian thought Justin's laughing sounded really nice. It made him smirk, too. And he moved under the thick blanket to lie closer to the younger man, and without looking at him or explaining himself, he lifted his arm until Justin's head was snuggled comfortably in the crook of his neck.

He kissed blond hair, turned a bit to the side and again inhaled a deep drag of his cigarette into his lungs. He closed his eyes, enjoying the calmness spreading through his body.

Justin buried his nose into smooth skin, wiggled around a little, and then lay with his cheek resting on Prian's broad chest to watch the smoke puffs and clouds and little rings, flying high above their heads, before they disappeared magically in the air. He really wondered what firesticks tasted like.

"You're still an icicle."

He was? Prian's voice grumbled deep inside his body. Justin liked it and pressed his ear closer to the prince's chest.

"You'll have a major cold tomorrow."

Justin blinked his eyelashes, refusing to move along, as Prian reached over to the ashtray on the nightstand to stub his cigarette out.

"Hff." Brian lay back onto the pillows, closed his eyes and drew his arm loosely around the boy's shoulders, rubbing his hand over the slight goosebumps when he felt Justin shiver. "I'm fucking mad at you, you know..." It was a sleepily mumbled statement.

"Yes." Justin poked his tongue out to touch a beautifully dark nipple.

"You can't even swim."

He couldn't? Justin paused in his licking task for a moment. He wanted to swim through the blue water...

"...like the merman." With sea grass in his hair and a lovely fin with fish scales.

"What merman?" Brian blinked one eye open.

"Yes. In the well...well water." Justin licked Prian's nipple again. It tasted like shower-rain.

Brian flipped the boy on his back and hovered over him in less than two seconds. He brushed blond bangs off of a pale forehead when he looked down into a slightly startled face. "Is this one of your stories again?!"

Justin stared up into brown prince eyes and finally looked away and over to the wall. Breathing was difficult when Prian lay on his chest and belly.

"Justin!" Brian guided the boy's head back in the right direction. "What fucking merman?! You read about it in your book? Answer me!"

"Yeah." Justin pushed with all his strength against the firm hand on his face, avoiding the visual contact stubbornly. "Certain... certainly it's lesbionic."

Brian blinked and let go of the kid's chin. "You've read that soft porn."

"Of course it's a best seller." Justin sighed and looked up to the ceiling. Now all the smoke rings were gone.

Mister Kinney closed his eyes and let his hand fall down on the pillow beside Justin's head. "And it's about a damn fucking merman?" He sounded worn out.

"Yes." The book was wonderful and about lots of sand and water and...

"... fish scales." They shimmered in the moonlight.

"Should've known." Brian's forehead sunk against Justin's temple and then he said nothing more for a long time... and when he finally did, it was only quietly whispered words into a slightly cool ear shell. "You could be dead now."

Justin said nothing.

"Don't ever go near the water again without me."

Justin's eyes flickered as he listened to the low words.

"Never without me."

"Yes."

"Yes." Brian's fingers knotted tightly into blond hair and a kiss was planted right beside the boy's ear. "Never without Prian."

"Yes my... my prince." Justin's left hand moved underneath the blanket to pat Prian's bare side stiffly.

"Hmm." Brian sucked a pink earlobe between his lips, "I don't even have a crown." before he kissed a wet trail down a pale throat. "Or a sword." He licked Justin's chin with a broad tongue, speaking quietly. "Or a palace." But he had a Playboy-castle, a servant and a blond princess in the tower. And he frowned, and looked down into the soft blue eyes of this young man who dared to turn all of his fundamental rules and laws and principles into irrelevant vanities, and he had to kiss him. Desperately. With impatient growls, and savouring moans and gentle biting. Sucking on pink, swollen lips. Drowning in the dazed devotion Justin's flushed face showed.

"Justin." He panted when he nipped a wet upper lip, "Can I suck you?" and brushed his fingers over a feverish cheek, "Hm? Lick you?" waiting for the boy's eyes to meet his. "Here?" He reached down to touch Justin's erection.

Justin struggled to keep his eyes open, his pelvis moving upwards into Prian's teasing hand, the tip of his tongue reaching out to taste the prince's lips again.

"Hmm? Justin?" Brian stroked the warm hardness slowly. "You want me to lick your penis?" He bent down to lap Justin's glistening lips.

Justin arched his back and moaned loudly. He felt like flying and falling and everything at once and sucked on Prian's tongue greedily.

And Brian slid deep inside the boy's mouth, again and again. Relishing the warm, wet sweetness. "Justin..." He breathed the word almost soundless between two kisses. "I want to taste you..."

"Hhh." Justin's eyelids fluttered as the older man crawled slowly down on his body, kissing and licking him everywhere. It tickled and burned and felt so wonderful and he squirmed under Prian's smooth palms and extended a clumsy hand to search for the prince.

Brian reached upwards to entwine his left hand with Justin's fingers, rubbing his thumb soothingly in the kid's palm, when his mouth sank down to lick the leaking tip of a hard, twitching maleness.

Justin gasped and squeezed Prian's fingers, pushing his middle upwards. He felt like there was a fire inside his belly and he would've preferred for Prian to never stop licking his penis again.

Brian groaned deep in his throat, engulfing the boy's length in one fluid motion, while he rubbed his own cock in his right hand, relieving a bit of the tension. He knew Justin wouldn't last long and he didn't want him to. He really wanted to taste him. He wanted to feel him. His life and his warmth. And he closed his eyes and circled his tongue around the wet flesh, sucked three more times propulsive and felt, in the next second, thick sperm hitting his throat.

Justin's hectic panting was followed by a loud wailing sound and he tried to curl up and roll over on his side, but Brian held him in place, licked him clean for a minute with comforting patience and crawled up again, dropping randomly warm kisses here and there over the younger man's flushed skin.

"Are you still cold?" He smiled, not even an inch over Justin's face, and he slid his fingers into damp, blond hair, brushed it back off of the boy's forehead and bent down to kiss slightly parted lips. "Here..." he whispered and snaked his tongue against Justin's. "Taste."

Justin felt like he was surrounded by thick fog and cotton wool. Everything was far away and soft and three feet over the ground. He didn't think that his arms and legs were still there, but he could feel Prian over him, very close and all around, with warm almond skin and gentle lips and a tongue full of...

"...sperm." It was a little word spoken in a very small voice, but Brian heard it anyway.

"Yours." He kissed him again. "It's good."

"Yeah." Justin licked his lips lazily. The sperm of course tasted like...

"...white beet."

"Hff." Brian huffed and rubbed his cheek over Justin's temple. "No way."

"Yes. Certainly rabbit... rabbit slices."

Brian wrinkled his forehead. "That's gross."

"Yes." Justin's fingers patted Prian's upper arm awkwardly.

"You taste like Justin. That's a good flavour."

"Yeah." Justin found that, too. "With cookies."

The older man mumbled weakly against the boy's shoulder. "Is this your discreet way to hustle me for breakfast?!"

"Yes." Justin liked breakfast on Sunday. It was of course...

"...waffles and-"

"Fucking fruit salad. I know." Brian grumbled. He really wasn't supposed to know that.

"Yes. Certainly in the... in the kitchen." With the servant and much dancing.

Brian pushed his nose in Justin's skin for a moment. It was warm and rosy now. "No... let's go out."

-----

"My favourite boy!" Debbie cooed when he pinched her blond guest's cheek and smiled at him adoringly.

"And who am I?! The invisible man?" Brian's face showed something alarmingly similar to a pout.

"Yes." Justin rubbed his cheek and looked at the ceiling. There were two more stains and one fly.

"No." Debbie put a hand on her hip, taking the sweetness out of her voice. "You're the guy who's taking this poor kid to breakfast at eleven o'clock!" She pointed on her watch. "Are you trying to fucking starve him?!"

"No. I'm trying to keep him in shape." Brian smiled up at her artificially. "Don't start a day without your early morning exercise."

"Don't be a smart ass!" She wagged her finger at him, and then took out her note pad. "So." She turned to Justin again, smiling brightly. "What'll it be, sweetheart?"

"Yes." Justin's eyes remained upwards. "I was... was in the water."

"Good for you, honey!" She said encouraging and extended her hand towards his face again, but was stopped by five strong fingers around her wrist.

"Stop pinching him. He doesn't like it."

"And how would you know?!" She shot him a disapproving look.

Brian didn't answer this question and kept his attention to the menu. "We'll take waffles, fruit salad, black coffee and orange juice."

"Yes." Justin sighed. "Certainly fifteen... fifteen percent amount of pure... pure fruit."

"Right." Brian said and peeked into the menu again. "Make that one black coffee and a glass of milk."

Debbie just looked at him.

Mister Kinney put the menu aside. "And don't forget the fucking powdered sugar."

"Yes." Justin smiled at the wall.

Debbie smirked slightly at both of the men and after a moment, shook her head and disappeared.

Brian watched the boy for a while silently, and when he spoke, he kicked Justin's boot lightly under the table. "You're going back home today."

"Yeah." The blue eyes were blank.

"You want to take your books with you? The new ones?"

"Yes." Justin liked his new books and the little colourful candy balls.

Brian pinched his nose. "Listen, I have to work a lot before the holidays." He glanced briefly to the other side of the table and then down at his fingers, which fiddled with a paper napkin. "So, I'm not sure when I can come over for a visit again."

"Yes." Justin knew the right time. It was...

"...certainly two... two p.m."

"Not in the next few days."

"Yes." Justin's eyes flickered and looked then expressionless towards the wall.

Brian took the seven league boot under the table between his Prada shoes. "But you'll be a good boy, alright?"

The younger one didn't answer.

"Eat your meals and read the new books."

Justin only blinked and wriggled his toes in the shoe.

"Get on Dr. Bruckner's nerves."

And Brian wasn't prepared for the direct look the blond gave him abruptly. A dejected stare out of two blue eyes.

Justin didn't want to hear so many words about the tower. It was huge and grey and ugly, with evil vines and syringe water. And he felt angry and wanted Christmas to be now.

Brian turned away for a moment, drew his lips inwards and rubbed the back of his head when he met Justin's gaze again. And he hated how angry he sounded. How cold and uncaring. "Well you can't be with me all the time. I have other things to do." Because there was an ache in his chest with every word and he was afraid it was his heart.

A waiter with a D-A-N-I-E-L tag on his shirt appeared to serve the food, but Justin threw the fork under the table and looked at the wall, rocking back and forth in his place while counting the tiles on Brian's bathroom floor. Loudly.

"Justin." Brian grabbed across the table for the boy's arm. "Stop being a fucking princess and eat your food."

Justin counted even louder. There were too many waffles on the plate anyway.

"Justin, I fucking mean it! Stop to-"

"Brian?" Michael stopped in front of the table, bending down to kiss Brian's cheek, although his eyes held a surprised expression when looking at the blond man on the other side of the table. "I didn't know you would be here."

"Hey." Brian sounded reserved when he glanced at his friend for a second, before he looked back at Justin. "We just wanted to eat breakfast."

"Yes." Michael frowned and slid next to Justin on the bench. "I can see that." He stared at Brian accusingly, a reproachful tone in his voice. "This is the guy Ben told me about last night, isn't he?!" He pointed at the kid but didn't look at him. "The one from the lunatic asylum."

"Michael." Brian warned.

"Yes." Justin's eyes flickered nervously and his rocking grew stronger. He wasn't sure if he knew the loud man and really would've preferred for him to leave his stool.

"I couldn't believe what he told me!" Michael stated. "I told him he must've misunderstood the situation." He shook his head.

"Yes, certainly very... very angry." Justin really didn't like the evil man and pushed his forehead firmly against the stained wall.

"Michael, be quiet." Brian's jaw tightened.

Michael looked at Justin more closely, huffing a laugh that wasn't happy. "This is the crazy guy from your party!" He looked outraged at Brian. "Then it's true? You're fucking this retard?! I can't believe you!"

Brian's heart raced and when he jumped out of his seat his first impulse was to punch someone. "I said be quiet!" He shouted in Michael's face, temporary undecided what to do with his shaking fists.

"But this is sick!" Michael's expression showed a brief sign of fear, his eyes huge. He gestured to the disturbed boy next to him. "Fucking look at him!"

And Brian did. And he grabbed a hand full of his friend's pullover, pulling him roughly out of the way, before he took hold of Justin's wrist. The pale skin felt warm and soft under his hand.

"Justin, come here." His voice wasn't nice but filled with suppressed rage and concern. "Stop hurting your head." He pulled him firmly out of the booth, the staring eyes and whispered words from the other guests around him making his stomach boil.

"Brian!" Michael stood ignored a few steps away, a disbelieving look on his face. "What are you doing?!"

Brian didn't know. And he wanted to cover his ears and shut his eyes and disappear, when he dragged a rigid, screaming boy through a gawking audience and out of a ringing door.

The cool air on his hot skin almost hurt and he clenched his teeth and drew his hand around a thin wrist tighter, because Justin fought vehemently against him.

He stopped in front of his car, rummaged hectically for his key in his jacket and finally pushed Justin into the closed car door, shouting in his face on the top of his lungs. "SHUT UP DAMNIT!" And he dug his nails into the boy's thin arms and wanted to shake him and say so much more. But then he looked into confused flickering eyes, heard the nervous counting, almost soundless numbers coming out between rosy lips... And he placed his hand over a pale cheek and wrapped his arm around a softly back and forth rocking body, burying his nose into a sweet smelling neck. And he knew he held his boy too tight. And he didn't want for this snuffle to come out loud. And he stood there for a long, long time in the cold street in front of his car and really didn't know what the fuck he was actually doing...

-----  
Seven steps over a black street, covered in damp snow. Two hundred forty stairs up through a stinking stairwell. A strange smell on the dismal corridor.

Brian rubbed the knuckles of Justin's fingers the entire way and closed the heavy door tightly shut as soon as they entered the room.

It was cold and Brian tried not to look around when he put the two bags on the table and started to unpack the contents.

Justin sat on the edge of his bed, looking blankly up at the ceiling.

Brian tried to ignore that too.

And he put the empty bags into the wardrobe, arranged thirteen books on the shelf and went over to the bed to put a farfalle noodle necklace and an old fairy tale book securely under the cheap pillow.

He sniffed through his nose. "Okay, I have to go now."

"Yes." Justin blinked his blue eyes. He would've preferred to go over to the castle again to...

"...be with Brian."

Brian drew his lips inwards and slid one hand around the boy's neck, stepping a little closer. He shook his head. "You can't." He felt the need to smile, but it hurt his stomach when he tried.

Justin's eyes remained towards the ceiling, but they flickered and cool fingers came up to hold onto the prince's strong wrist.

Brian tipped his forehead to Justin's, caressing a smooth cheek with his thumb. "You're not..." He whispered almost too low for his own ears, but he didn't want to hear what he had to say. "You're not alright." The last word was broken and he closed his eyes as he kissed Justin's nose and his legs felt weak when he left the room. The clicking noise of the door lock stabbing his chest. And the



dagger moved painfully deeper, searching for his heart when he heard a dull thud against the door. The sound of crying. His name with a big P.

P like prince and pudding. P like pain. P like pathetic Priam Kinney...

His palm lay flat on the cold door and he touched the immovable surface with his nose and forehead, breathing warmth against it. "Be brave." He didn't know to whom he addressed this plea. He didn't know what to think or do. He didn't know anything...

Except that it was time to leave.

Chapter 27 – Kiss me alright – Part I

Tell them it's me who made you sad

Tell them the fairytale gone bad

"You know..." Blake said while he stroked his fingers gently through blond hair. "It makes me sad too, when you cry." His words weren't accusing or meant to make the young man feel guilty. They were the truth and all Blake could think of, as he looked at the red, puffy face; blank blue eyes staring at a random point on the white wall. For hours and hours. Not caring about pudding for dessert or Good Night Greetings on channel 4. "I wish you would eat something." The nurse glanced at the untouched plate on the nightstand. Dark rye bread, blue cheese and red beet. "Brian would want you to eat something."

Justin's eyes flickered for a second, almost unnoticeably.

Or maybe Blake just imagined it.

He took the food with him thirty minutes later, when he left room 4.11. Leaving his patient alone and knew his absence wouldn't make a difference.

-----

Brian stood silently behind the mirrored glass doors in his living room, with both hands in the pockets of his jeans; staring outside.

It was funny. No matter how much water disappeared... the pool was still blue.

He wondered if he could tile the basin in a different color. Orange maybe...

He heard himself huff a quiet laugh and felt his lips twitch at the same time. It was irritating and he fought against it immediately.

The phone rang twice, somewhere in the background, and the machine answered the call.

'Hey Brian, it's Ben. You never showed up for our appointment today. I have the books I wanted to give you. Please call me.'

Brian took one hand out of his pocket, went to his desk, deleted Ben's message along with the four calls from Michael and the message a certain Blake had left earlier, and made his way upstairs.

He closed the blinds and the bedroom door, to shut out every glimpse of daylight, before he crawled onto his mattress and the crinkled sheets that he would never change again.

It was nice to lie in complete darkness. Fake darkness. Fake darkness with a fake image in front of his eyes, of two men lying together in a big, comfortable prince bed, watching smoke rings. He turned around and buried his nose in an expensive down filled pillow. At least the unique sweet scent in here was real...

-----

"Sweetheart...I-" Mommy tried to smile and stroked his blond hair. She had wet eyes. He wanted to give her a tissue.

"Jen. Let's go." Daddy stood in the doorway. A green door. A room on the left side of the corridor.

Mommy turned to him, wiping her eyes. "Craig!" She sounded sad. Justin looked up to the ceiling and touched her cheek with three clumsy fingers.

Mommy took them in her warm hand, kissing them softly. "Nurse Emma will look after you."

"Yes."

"Here." She tried to smile again and handed him a present, wrapped in blue paper. "Why don't you go sit on the bed and look what's inside?"

"Yes." Justin swayed a bit back and forth. He liked presents.

Mommy sobbed quietly, covering her mouth with her hand and leaned close to kiss his forehead. "I love you." Wonderful whispering words in his ear.

She got up and went to the door, and when she turned around to look at him, she was waving with her beautiful, gentle fingers.

"Yeah." Justin really would've preferred to go downstairs where the silver car-vehicle stood to...

"...be with mommy."

"You can't." Her lips quivered and her words were quiet and quiet and made Justin's belly hurt. "You're not...alright."

"Yeah." Justin looked at the wall. It was all blurry.

And Daddy laid his arm around Mommy's shoulders and they were gone. Forever and ever and hundred years.

"Yes." When Justin's eyes opened his cheeks were wet and he felt warm all over and really would've preferred to have his...

"...book."

A little awkwardly he sat up in a kneeling position, pushed the damp strands out off his forehead and reached under the pillow. It felt good in his fingers. All heavy and smooth and when he opened it up on page 22, it smelled like mommy. "Yes." He hiccupped a sob and a water droplet fell on the word 'danced'. His lips quivered and he looked over to the window and the darkness outside and really wanted to be with Prian and read for him and lie under the warm blanket like an icicle. "Hhh!" He bent forward to press his nose hard against one of the book pages and he wailed loudly and didn't like the sound in his own ears. "Of... of course!" He hiccupped again and rocked back and forth strongly. "Of course not alright!" His voice was shrieking and a couple of stiff fingers cramped up in long, blond hairs and tugged and pulled and he screamed again until the thick wall door opened and the room was filled with bright lights and loud voices.

"Justin!" A nurse looked at him, holding firmly onto his wrist. It wasn't Plake and Justin kicked with his foot and did it again and then there was a bite in his arm and everything smelled like syringe water and poisoned apples when his eyes fell shut, heavy like grey stones.

-----

On Thursday the 12th, Doctor Cameron said Justin had a cold and couldn't sit at the window anymore because people with fever were supposed to rest in bed.

Justin told him to fuck off and fought against the brown evil vines until his arms and legs were too tired to move.

On Friday the 13th, Plake had a cold wash cloth and placed it on Justin's forehead. It felt good and Justin closed his eyes. He dreamt of pears and butterflies.

On Saturday the 14th, came nurse Schmidt to check Justin's blood pressure and temperature and wanted to know if Justin felt a little better. Justin pretended to sleep and sleep until the heavy wall door was closed again.

-----

When Brian Kinney came home from work on late Saturday afternoon, a young blond man waited in Brighton's courtyard.

Brian got out of the car and slammed the door shut. "Go."

Blake pushed his hands deep into the pockets of his jacket. "I thought we could talk."

"There is nothing to talk about." Brian marched towards the front door and rummaged for his keys.

Blake followed him. "He's not well. He has a cold."

Brian shot him an artificial smile. "Well I'm sure Misses Schmidt knows how to make a good cup of tea." He stepped into his house and tried to close the door.

Blake stopped him with his hand in the doorframe and a serious face. "Brian please. He's been terribly upset for almost a week now. He won't eat, he won't talk, he won't leave his room." He looked at the other man pleadingly. "At least tell me what happened, so I can try to help him."

Brian stared back. His jaw clenched tightly.

"Please. What happened between the two of you?"

Brian's eyes flickered for a brief moment, showing something that might have been dismay. But then, he glanced at the floor and had a cold mask of aloofness firmly in place when he looked up again.

"Believe me. You don't want to know."

The door was shut and Blake stood there for six minutes, facing a big, fancy fir wreath, before he finally turned around and made his way to the next bus stop.

-----

It was Monday, December the 16th, when maid Emmett Honeycutt entered the stained glass door of ward 4 and made his way towards the nurse's station.

"Hello-o?" He knocked at the big pane.

"Yes?" Blake appeared, seeming a little surprised. "May I help you?"

"You certainly may." Emmett told him in his best sultry voice. No one had told him what tasty little morsels the St. James' staff were. "See, I wanted to give this to a friend of mine." He presented a brown paper bag. "Justin Taylor."

Blake looked at the man silently for a moment. "You're his friend?"

"Well, technically," Emmett gestured, "I'm the friend of his friend, but this friend couldn't come himself and so he asked me." He smiled and swayed his hip to the left. "I'm the envoy."

"I see." Blake smiled back and nodded. "Well, Justin is asleep at the moment. Maybe you could come back in the afternoon?"

"Oh, I'm afraid that would interfere with my spinning class." He placed his fingertips on Blake's shoulder. "And my new trainer... who is a total and major hottie ... doesn't appreciate tardiness. So," He pushed the bag into Blake's arms. "Why don't you give it to him for me when he's awake?"

"Ah...sure." The nurse wrinkled his forehead. "But maybe you want to leave a note with your present?"

"Well, it's not so much a present." Emmett confessed and then whispered discreetly. "Actually it's his pyjamas. They were in the laundry when he left, and now that they're all fresh and dry, his 'friend'," he made quotation marks with his fingers. "Wants him to have them back." He sighed. "Believe me. It's complicated."

Blake drew his lips inwards. "Am I guessing right that we're talking about Brian here?"

"I'm not allowed to share this information." Emmett zip-locked his lips. "And if I did," he lifted his right eyebrow in Blake's direction and whispered again. "You can be sure that Brian would kill me."

Blake's face showed a smile, although his lips weren't really involved. He nodded, hugging the paper bag to his chest. "Thank you. I will give it to him."

The little smile Emmett gave in return seemed sad. "I've packed a couple of his favourite cookies, too. Tell my baby, I've baked them especially for him, okay?" He pressed his lips tightly together and turned to leave.

Blake stopped him after nine steps. "Justin misses him."

Emmett didn't turn around and his tone held nothing of his normal flamboyancy. "And he is a mess without Justin. But he will never come back."

-----

Justin lay on his side on the bed, singing quietly and watching his hands on the pillow.

"K-E-double L-O-double good...Kellogg's..." He sighed when he knotted his fingers together. "Kellogg's best to you." He wished he could hold hands with Brian.

"Hey frog." The thick wall door opened and Blake entered the room. Justin closed his eyes and pretended to be asleep, but sang his little song anyway.

"Wow." Blake fetched a chair, placed it in front of Justin's bed and sat down, so he could face the boy. "Patient Taylor is really clever. He can sing even though he's asleep."

"K-E-double..." Justin pressed his eyes tighter together and rubbed his nose clumsily. "...double L-O."

Blake sighed loudly and made sure to make a lot of noise when he opened the paper bag on his lap. "Well, it's a pity he's asleep though. I guess I'll have to eat all these cinnamon stars by myself now." He rustled with the plastic wrapping of the cookies, took one out and stuck it between his lips with a long, "Mmmmh."

Justin blinked when he opened his eyes. Blake sat in front of his white bed and he had a big bag and lots of cookies. He licked his lips nervously when the nurse chewed appreciatively.

"Oh you woke up." Blake smiled friendly. "That's good, because someone brought this for you."

"Yes." Justin looked up at the ceiling. He really wanted to have one of the terrific cinnamon stars. They looked of course like...

"...garbage...garbage cookies."

"Garbage?" Blake inspected one of the cookies more closely. "They look like really tasty cinnamon stars to me." He took another bite. "Brian sent them for you, along with your pyjamas."

Justin blinked again when Blake reached inside the brown bag and pulled his dark blue pyjamas out. They weren't wet anymore.

"Here." Blake put them down on the mattress next to the boy.

Justin touched them with two fingers. They were dry and soft and smelled beautifully like...

"...Prian."

"Yes." Blake smiled slightly. "He wanted you to have them back." He watched Justin silently for a moment. "You know, I saw him the other day. I think he misses you a lot."

"Yeah."

"You think he'll come to visit you here again?"

"Yeah." Justin's eyes flickered from the pyjama up to the ceiling, where they stayed blankly. "Certainly not."

Blake's voice was low and gentle. "Why not?"

Justin turned his head towards the window. He liked the dancing snow flakes. "Of course he can't."

"He can't?"

"Yes." Because Justin wasn't alright. But he didn't want to say that. It hurt his ears.

-----

On Thursday the 19th, Brian entered Woody's at 8.25 p.m. and cursed very rudely when he spotted the young, blond man at the bar.

"What the fuck are you doing here?!"

"Having a beer?" Blake raised his bottle and showed a little smile. "Same as you, I take it."

"Think again." grumbled Mister Kinney and sat down on the free chair beside Blake, before he called to the barkeeper. "Double Jim Beam."

A glass was placed in front of him, he downed it immediately and ordered another one. "So," he looked at Blake but not very friendly. "What do you want? Plake."

Blake smirked. "Nothing special, Prian. I just felt like drinking a couple of beers."

"Hh." Brian drank his second glass and sat there in silence for almost six minutes, before he spoke again. "Is he doing better?" It was a quiet question.

"Not really." Blake rubbed with his fingers over the cool droplets that ran down the neck of his bottle. "His fever is down though."

"Hm." Brian drew his lips inwards. "Is he eating again?"

"Not much." Blake shrugged. "But he ate all the cookies your messenger boy brought the other day."

Brian wrinkled his forehead and finally looked at the other man directly. "Emmett brought him cookies?"

Blake returned the look. "Yes. Pyjamas and cinnamon stars."

"Hff." Brian ordered a beer and drank a big gulp. "Fucking servant. I told him not to feed the brat that garbage."

Blake smiled. "Well he seems to like that garbage."

"I know." Brian stared down at the wet spot on the bar and touched it with his forefinger.

"Brian, I-" Blake started and was interrupted when Brian grabbed his beer and got up.

"I don't want to talk about it."

"Okay." Blake followed him towards the men's room. "But would you at least listen? Please?"

"Would you stop following me?" Brian shot back and almost slammed the toilet's door into the other man's face. "I have to piss!"

"Okay I'll wait here." Blake confirmed and positioned himself right beside the doorframe.

Brian grumbled something unfriendly, handed Blake his beer and disappeared.

When he came back out two minutes later, and reached for his bottle, Blake refused to give it back.

"I really want to talk to you. Can we go somewhere more private?"

"I already told you," Brian took the bottle roughly out of Blake's fingers, spilling some beer on the floor. "There is nothing to talk about." He walked away.

Blake followed again. "He thinks you're never coming back."

Brian sipped at his beer. "He is a bright boy."

"You would never believe how sad he is!"

"Well, that's life."

"Brian, please! I know you care about him! Why are you acting like-"

Brian spun around, shouting at the younger man furiously. "What the fuck do you want me to do?! There is nothing I can do for him, okay?! So leave me the fuck alone!"

Blake was calm when he looked directly into Brian's eyes. "You're right. There is nothing you can do. But he lives with his deficiency. Why can't you at least try and do the same?"

"I'm not talking about any deficiencies." Brian shook his head and went back towards the bar to sit down again. "Hell, I have more of them than he ever will."

Blake took the seat right beside him. "Then what?"

Brian looked him straight in the eye, speaking loud and angry again. "He's fucking unhappy, okay?! He hates that rat hole he has to live in and there is nothing I can do about it! Not a damn thing!"

Blake didn't even flinch. "Have you tried?"

"Tried what?" Brian spoke against the brim of his bottle, before downing half of the content.

"Have you tried to change his situation for the better? There are other possibilities for him. Maybe assisted living."

Brian snorted. "Oh yes, and where would that be? At my beautiful castle?"

Blake didn't join the humour. "Why not? Of course you'd have to employ a nurse and provide regular therapy lessons."

Brian snorted again and shook his head. "Yeah that would be great, huh? The knight in shining armour, ready to save the poor little ill boy. But you know what?" He turned to Blake. "I'm not the noble, big-hearted, generous benefactor." He took another sip of his beer. "You're mistaking me for fucking Batman."

"No." Blake's voice was soft and calm. "I'm sure Batman was in love with a big cat in black latex... not an eighteen year old with autism."

Brian's face was blank when he threw a couple of dollar bills on the bar and got up from his chair. "You wouldn't be so keen for me to take care of him if you knew me." He took his jacket and disappeared out of the door with long strides.

Blake caught up with him 10 minutes later, on the roadside, where Brian searched in his jacket for his car keys.

"I thought you could give me a lift." Blake stopped with his hands in his pockets.

"Yeah right. I had twice as much as you." Brian finally found his keys and opened the door of his jeep.

"True, but I thought you would spare me the cab fare." Blake smiled. "I'm a little short this month."

"Did you even listen when I was talking about this noble-generosity thing and how it's non-existent in my world?!" Brian climbed behind the wheel and shot the other man a highly annoyed look, but leaned over to unlock the passenger door without any real resistance.

Blake jogged around the car and jumped in with a big grin. "Thanks man, that's great."

"Hh." Brian grumbled and started the engine. Fucking Tower people. All short and blond and clingy...

They drove in silence for a while, before Blake decided to re-start the conversation. "You know, there are relationships of this kind."

Brian changed gears. „What kind?"

„Oh you know... between people with autism and people like you."

"Like me."

„Yeah. People of unimpaired mental faculties."

Brian huffed a laugh. "You really don't know me..."

"I'm just saying it's possible. It's difficult but it can work. I've seen it."

„Hh." Brian glanced in the rear-view mirror. „Well I don't do relationships. Difficult or otherwise."

Twelve minutes later the black jeep stopped in front of an old apartment building.

"Is this it?" Brian glanced through the front window.

"Yeah. Nothing fancy. But it's cheap and clean."

"Hm."

"Brian?" Blake unbuckled his seat belt and paused with his fingers on the door handle.

"What?" Brian sounded annoyed.

"You kissed him, didn't you?"

And Brian stared at the dashboard clock without seeing the time. Then he turned his head to look at Blake. Calm and serious. "You know I did more."

"I figured." Blake shrugged slightly. "Does it ... make him happy?"

And Brian felt his face light up although he didn't really smile. A little maybe. His eyes did. He bit his lip.

Blake smiled back. "That's special, you know? That you're able to touch him."

"I should be." Brian looked back at the dashboard. His tank was almost empty. "I'm his prince."

"Hm." Blake opened the door. "Then do something because I hate to see him cry."

Brian looked over at him, wordlessly, with an unreadable expression.

"Thanks for the lift. Have a good night." Blake showed one last smile before he left the car and disappeared behind an old, grey door.

-----

It was 11.04 p.m. when Brian knocked not too gently at Dr. Bruckner's house door.

"Brian?" It was Michael who opened, with a sleepy face and dressed in a dark green checkered robe. He rubbed his left eye and yawned. "What are you doing here? Is something wrong? I've tried to call you but-"

"Is Ben here?"

Michael frowned deeply. "Yeah, sure. He's-"

"I need to talk to him."

"But he's already in bed. What's the matter anyw-"

"It's important."

"I'm sure it can wait till-" Michael was interrupted by a large hand on his shoulder.

"It's ok, Michael." Ben closed the belt of his robe, looking at the man in the doorway. "Why don't you go to bed and I'll be right there." He kissed Michael blindly on the temple, before he addressed Brian. "Please come in."

Michael looked up at his boyfriend, clear disapproval in his eyes. And he glanced at Brian briefly and nodded slightly, before disappearing into the bedroom.

Brian looked at the floor when he stepped in. He closed the door quietly and reached into his jacket. "Can I smoke?"

"No. But I can make you a tea or some coffee."

Brian passed the couch, walked over to the windows and stared out in the darkness. "Water."

Ben came back a minute later with two glasses of water and placed them both on the coffee table in front of the sofa, before he sat down. "So, Brian, what do I-"

Brian didn't turn around. "Why is he at St. James?"

Ben furrowed his brows and blinked his eyes then. "Well..."

"He told me he was in Harrisburg before he came here." Brian stated and eventually looked at the other man, even though he held his place near the windows. "Is that where his family lives?"

Ben inhaled deeply, rubbing his forehead. "Brian, you know I'm not allowed to share this kind of information. Justin is my patient."

Brian only stared at him.

Ben smiled slightly. "No. His family lives in Delmont."

Brian nodded and looked away. "So he lived in an institution in Harrisburg, too."

"Yes. Since he was four or five."

"What the fuck for?" Brian's face showed anger all of sudden, his hands restless. "He's not severely disabled. Why can't he live with his parents?!"

Ben seemed to think about it and looked almost apologetic when he met Brian's eyes again. "It's not easy to live with autistic people, Brian. Many parents are unable to cope with it. It's often for the best if they give their children into professional care."

Brian sniffed through his nose, his lips shifting, when he turned to look out of the window again. He squinted his eyes although it was dark. "So in other words, his parents didn't want an abnormal kid and dumped him off in some asylum for second rate humans."

"Brian." Ben shook his head, pausing a moment. "Why are you here? It's almost midnight."

Brian leaned his forehead against the window pane and closed his eyes, not saying anything for a long time. When he did eventually, his voice was low. "Did you ever read fairy tales when you were a kid?"

"Yes. I had a book from my grandfather. I liked them."

Brian placed his fingertips on the pane, pushing lightly, while he gazed at the falling snow under one of the street lamps. "Well, I say they're all bullshit."

-----

On Friday the 20th, it was rabbit stew, white bread and Brussels sprouts for lunch.

Justin was hungry and ate half of what was on the plate, before he stuck all of his bread into the cup with apple juice and watched as it got soggy and wet, white pulp. He really wanted to go for a walk with Brian to look at the grey shit brew and all of the scary birds and the hard, blue gum.

"Yes." He looked up at the ceiling. "Certainly not eat...not eat everything. Prian says." He blinked. He wanted to put his ice fingers in the prince's warm jacket pocket too.

\*Scruuush\*

"Hh!" Justin grew stiff instantly when a loud scraping sound was to be heard.

\*scrush\*

It wasn't in the tower room.

\*scruuush\*

It was outside. On the street.

"Yes." His eyes flickered nervously and he didn't know if he liked it, but after a moment, he got up and padded with small steps and one extended finger in his hair, over to his window.

\*scruuush\*

"Of course." Justin rocked back and forth on his feet. "Hello... hello there neighbour." Outside, in front of the prince castle was the servant with a thick, orange jacket, blue mittens and a big shovel, and he scratched it loudly over the floor and pushed all the beautiful Christmas snow onto a huge pile next to one of the gatepost in Pritin's courtyard.

Justin didn't know why. But he liked the servant so much and had to giggle a bit and pressed his nose against the cold pane.

After three minutes, the snow pile was big like a mountain and the servant wiped his hand over his forehead and leaned tiredly with his arms and chin onto the handle of the shovel.

Hm. "Yes." Justin scratched his ear. Maybe the servant wanted to sleep.

But the servant's eyes didn't close. They wandered around a little bored and after a while looked straight up towards one of the upper tower windows. He stared a few seconds and finally waved happily and smiled and said something.

Justin didn't hear the words but his belly fluttered nicely and his heart thumped in his chest. He smiled back, feeling shy and exited.

And then there was a big 'thud' and a big snow ball hit the window pane.

Justin jerked back, startled, his eyes wide. "Yes." Of course now his tower window was full with snow and all white. He placed his palm on the white-snow spot and watched as it fell off again, piece by piece, until the plate was clear.

He peeked out timidly. The servant was still there. But the big shovel now leaned against one of the gate posts. "Yes." Justin's eyes flickered to the wall for a minute and then back down. Of course the servant had a very big snow ball now and rolled it over the ground. It grew bigger and bigger and the servant grinned up at him and waved some more.

Justin didn't smile back. He wasn't sure if he liked the huge ball of snow. Certainly it would be very loud if it hit his tower window.

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A black Jeep pulled into the courtyard a little after four o'clock in the afternoon, an angry man in Armani clothing jumping out.

"What the fuck?!" Brian trudged out of the open gate onto the sidewalk, lifting his legs extra high, to avoid any damage on his Italian leather shoes, and stared with a mixture of disbelief and disdain at the 3 feet high abomination, standing on the curb side.

"Shit..." And it wasn't only the ugliest snowman the world had ever seen... it was also his servant's fucking death sentence.

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Justin dreamed of ice and snow and big, white polar bears and felt a little funny when he woke up. He still sat at the window and his face was all cold, like the pane he was leaning against. Something bit his neck and he rubbed the back of his hand clumsily over his heavy eyes when he gazed outside.

The sky was darker now, not one snowflake fell out of the grey clouds and on the other side of the street, right in front of the castle, stood the wonderful white ball-man, the servant had built earlier. Complete with orange carrot nose, brown cone eyes, a smiling, green sprig mouth and a big piece of blue cardboard in it's snowy hands, saying, 'Hello Justin'.

Justin smiled.

And then, he whimpered and felt a stream of liquid hotness flashing through his chest, as he saw his prince. Without a horse, or crown, or silvery sword, but in a lovely black coat, with soft brown hair and a gleaming fire stick between his long fingers. Standing next to



the ball-snow man and looking at him. Up at his tower window, with one of his hands in his pocket and the most beautiful expression on his face that Justin could ever imagine.

Justin leaned his forehead against the pane and lay his palms flat on the glass, wailing in a small voice, when Prian took a long drag from his little fire stick one last time and stuck it then into the snowman's green sprig mouth.

And then he turned around and smiled at Justin.

And Justin felt so warm and wanted to fly out of the grey tower and all the way across the street...

...and when the prince was gone and the sun was too and no one could see fire stick smoking snow ball men anymore... he cried only quietly behind his window pane, because he was Prian's brave boy.

Chapter 28--Kiss me alright

Brian's hands were cold when he entered his home. He felt odd. And he wished he hadn't given his cigarette to the damn snowman.

"Hey." Emmett sat at the kitchen bar, peeling potatoes. "You're home early."

"Hm." Brian went to the fridge, opened it, stared blankly inside for a while, and closed the door again.

Emmett put a peeled potato into a pot of water and grabbed for another one, peering unobtrusively over at his boss. "So, what do you think?" He smirked a little.

"I think they should bring back the old BMW slogan." Brian slouched down on the opposite side of the counter. "The new one is just stupid." He took a spare paring knife and scratched the sharp blade over the tip of his thumb. "A company of ideas? Sounds like a fucking IKEA advertisement."

"Well actually-?" Emmett watched skeptically as Brian grabbed for a medium sized potato, turned it around three times in his fingers and finally started to peel the skin off. "I meant my newish snowman for Justin."

"Hm." Mister Kinney gritted his teeth when his damn knife scraped stubbornly finger-thick chunks off the fucking potato.

"I've thrown a snowball at his window." Emmett finished one, flipped it into the water and looked up. "Did I tell you that I was a member of our little school baseball team in Hazelhurst?"

"No." Brian answered absently and frowned at the asymmetric cubical piece of yellow vegetable he just produced.

"Oh, I loved our uniforms." Emmett mused with a dreamy sigh and tossed Brian's potato dice away. "And why don't you go out to Babylon instead of disfiguring innocent food."

Brian stared at the pot of water for a moment, before shaking his head slightly. He got up. "No."

“Well then go and visit him.”

Brian stood at the window and looked out into the darkness.

Emmett smiled. “You could sneak in, all mysteriously, tip toeing through the dark corridors, with a good bottle of wine and roses and-  
?”

“No.” Brian didn’t turn around but it sounded as if he smiled a little, too. “It’s better the way it is.”

Emmett tipped his head to the side and didn’t say anything and then he peeled another 24 potatoes for dinner, although his boss surely wouldn’t eat carbs after seven.

Male nurse Blake Wyzecki had the late shift on Saturday the 21st, but nonetheless hopped off the bus at the Fuller Street stop at 9.25 in the morning.

He shouldered his bag, zipped up his jacket and made his way over to house number 3, where he entered the huge courtyard and only a few seconds later rang the doorbell five times. Then the door was opened by a tall man with a white apron, yellow rubber gloves and pink feather duster.

“Well, hello.” Emmett smiled brightly at the unexpected visitor. “What can I do for you, neighbour?”

Blake smiled back. “You know, actually I don’t live in the clinic. I just work there.”

“Yeah well, I don’t live here either.” The house maiden confessed and then whispered none too quietly. “But when the boss isn’t home I put on one of his suits, waltz around the house and pretend I’m a young Warren Beatty.”

Blake smirked and nodded. “He was hot in Bonnie and Clyde.”

“I know!” Emmett sighed dramatically.

Blake nodded again. “Ah listen, Emmett is it?”

“The one and only.”

“Okay, uh-I wanted to talk to Brian if that’s possible. And since you’re not Warren Beatty at the moment-? he gestured towards Emmett’s outfit. “I was wondering, is he home?”

“He sure is.” Emmett said. “But I’m afraid he’s still asleep.”

“Oh. When do you think he will be up? It’s really important.”

Emmett pressed his lips together, watched the young man in front of the door a moment and then stepped aside with a smile. “I’ll tell you what, why don’t you come inside and I make you a nice cup of coffee while you wait for him.”

Blake looked a little worried. “Are you sure? Maybe he doesn’t want me to-?”

“Aah.” The employee assured. “He’s a big old grumpy grouch with a heart of pure gold. Believe me. He will be thrilled to see you!”

“What the fuck is he doing here?!” Brian pointed with a disgusted expression at the young, blond man at his kitchen bar. He fucking hated uninvited visitors especially the early ones, who stole his precious coffee. “And why is he drinking my fucking coffee?!”

“Aww, now now.” Emmett said conciliatingly, laid a hand in Brian’s back and guided him over to a free chair next to Blake, where a fresh cup of coffee and a truckload of sugar waited. “Enough coffee for everyone. And see? I cut all the little birth announcements out of your newspaper, just how you like it.”

“Hh.” Brian sat down and eyed the nervous man beside him suspiciously, while dumping way too much sugar in his coffee cup. “What does he want?!”

“Well,” Emmett put quickly a propitiating slice of dry toast without anything down in front of his grumpy boss. “Gorgeous Blake here just came over to share a really brilliant idea with you. I’m sure you’ll be thrilled!”

Brian only stared blankly at both of the men. He really hated every kind of idea in the morning.

Blake showed a slight smile. “I’m sorry to disturb you this early but I thought maybe you’d like to join me on my way to...” He cringed a little. “Delmont?”

Brian blinked twice and disappeared behind his newspaper. “No.”

“I know you don’t want to have anything to do with it.” Blake tried. “But I looked through Justin’s documents and found his parent’s current address. I thought we could pay them a visit, you know? See what they think.”

Brian stayed behind his market-report. “None of our fucking business.”

“Maybe. But Justin needs some one. I’m only a nurse. It’s not my place to be his friend. And you don’t want to be in this place either. So maybe his mother can.”

Brian put the newspaper roughly down and looked angrily at Blake. “She was the one who dumped him off in the clinic in the first place! So what makes you think she will play the loving little mother now?!”

Blake shrugged. “People change. And he’s her son after all. I think it’s worth a try.” He looked seriously at Brian. “For Justin.”

When Justin woke up on Saturday the 21st, he felt angry and stubborn. He didn’t want to eat breakfast or brush his teeth or go to the therapy room to draw stupid pictures. He only wanted to sit by his tower window and look at the beautiful white snow ball man. And he screamed and fought with every nurse who wasn’t called Plake and slammed his forehead hard against the white wall.

Then Dr. Cameron came, held his arm tight and tight and it bit and after three minutes everything felt numb and light and cold, strong fingers were in his neck and shoved him outside the thick wall door and into the drawing room with all the paper and crayons.

“Hello Justin.” Miss Eterson smiled and laid a hand on Justin’s shoulder. He didn’t like it. “Are you feeling better now? Dr. Cameron said you were a little upset this morning and he had to give you a sedative.”

Justin stared at her expressionless. He really hated thick chests and flower smell.

“Well I’m glad you’re here.” She smiled again and stroked his cheek lightly. “We’re drawing pictures of apples and pears today. I’m sure you’ll have a lot of fun.”

She walked away and Justin looked after her and felt a little dizzy. Then he giggled softly and looked up to the ceiling. He wanted to go to bed and sleep with Prian.

“I’m really glad you’re doing this.” After 22 minutes on the road in silence, Blake tried to start a conversation with a nervous glance at the man behind the wheel. “It would be really great for Justin to have contact with his family again. I’m sure he still remembers them.”

Brian didn’t react for a while, but then he shrugged almost unnoticeably with his left shoulder. “I thought he was only a preschooler when they left him.”

“Yes. It was a little before his fifth birthday. But I’m sure he’ll remember something.” Blake looked out of the side window. “I think he was never in kindergarten or preschool though.”

“And never in school?” Brian sounded calm and seemed to concentrate on the traffic.

“No. Not a regular one.”

“But he can read and write.”

“They have teachers in psychiatrics for children.”

“Hm.” Brian scratched his left eyebrow and placed both hands on the wheel again.

After three more minutes of silence, Blake laughed quietly. “Oh you wouldn’t believe what he did a couple of days ago. You know, we have this really terrible nurse. Nurse Zeckendorf. She’s from England and absolutely no one can stand her.” Blake gestured with his hands and looked amused. “And see, Justin didn’t want to eat his tuna sandwich, even though the whole ward had tried to get him to eat it. And Nurse Zeckendorf came and said what incompetent people we were and that she had to do everything by herself and all that.” He turned a bit in his seat to look directly at Brian. “And she took the sandwich and disappeared in his room, and we were all holding our breath outside in the corridor, because everything was quiet. But then—” He grinned from ear to ear. “There was this really loud clattering sound and Justin screamed ‘Fuck off!’ and good old nurse Zeckendorf stormed out of the room, her face red and with a half tuna sandwich on her white uniform.” Blake laughed. “Oh man, you should’ve seen it.”

A little smile flew over Brian’s lips and then he drew them inwards. “Fuck off, huh?”

“Yeah!” Blake confirmed almost proudly. “At the top of his lungs.”

Brian nodded, his eyes looking happy. “What was the clattering?”

“The plate. He threw it off the table.”

“Hm.” Brian pinched his nose and nodded again. “He doesn’t like tuna sandwiches.”

“No he doesn’t.” Blake shook his head and looked out of the side window again, smiling. “I brought him some cold chicken and a piece of chocolate cake afterwards, when no one was looking.”

And Brian wanted to say “Thank you” but he didn’t. Instead he took the exit “Delmont” and muttered something like “I hope you know the fucking streets here. I don’t have time to drive pointlessly around the whole day.”

The Taylor residence was a common affluent suburb house with a neatly trimmed green space behind a pretty white fence.

Brian hated it immediately.

“Huh?” Blake unbuckled his seat belt and examined the adjoining premises. “Well this is a nice place.”

“Yeah.” Brian put his sun glasses on and got out of the car. “Nice.”

On the mailbox next to the gate stood ‘Taylor’ in golden letters, same as on the sign right above the doorbell where a small ‘Welcome’ was written.

Brian thought Justin would like to see his name in golden letters and almost heard a soft voice saying an amazed “Ooohh.” But he shoved those thoughts away quickly and watched as Blake cleared his throat, extended one finger, and pushed the door bell. Brian thought Justin might’ve liked the sound of the door bell too.

“Yes?” A blonde woman opened the door, looking surprised at both men. “May I help you?”

Blake cleared his throat again. “Mrs. Taylor?”

“Yes.”

“Hello.” He smiled a little and put his hand out. “I’m Blake Wyzecki and this is Mister Kinney.”

“Hello.” She blinked and shook Blake’s hand hesitantly.

“I was hoping we could maybe talk for a moment about your son.” Blake said and looked at her.

She looked back and frowned slightly. “Well, he is still in school. What did he—did he do something wrong? Are you—?” She glanced at Brian and his black sunglasses. “Are you from the police or anything?” She forced a nervous smile.

Blake shook his head. “No! No, Mrs. Taylor, I’m a nurse at St. James.”

She wrinkled her forehead deeply and after a moment pulled her arms around her chest. “Then you didn’t want to talk about Danny.”

“No. We’re here because of your son, Justin.”

She stared at both of them and turned around when someone called from inside the house.

“Who is it, Jen?!”

She called back, “No one!” and stepped one step further outside, pulling the door almost shut behind her.

"Look, Mrs. Taylor, I know this may be a little unexpected, but-?"

She interrupted him. "Is there a problem with the custodianship?"

Blake frowned at her. "No. That's not why we're here. See, we thought maybe you would like to-?"

"I'm sorry, but I think you need to discuss any problems regarding Justin with the custodian or the responsible doctors." She stated brusquely.

"Mrs. Taylor, there are no problems. It's more that we hoped you might like to see him again sometime. I'm sure he would like to see you again." Blake tried again with a little smile and Brian gritted his teeth, while looking in the other direction.

She reached for the doorknob. "I'm sorry but I really have to go."

"Please." Blake made a step forward. "Maybe if we could come in for a moment we could talk about this and explain what-?"

"Mister Wyzecki." She addressed the younger man sharply.

"Blake."

"Yes. What ever." She shut her eyes for a second and fought for a calm voice when she spoke again. "Please understand that everything regarding Justin has been put behind us for a long time. We've done our best for him and moved on afterwards. It was the best for all of us. There is no need to go back and make everything complicated again."

Brian snorted and spoke for the first time. His tone wasn't very pleasant. "Yeah I'm sure he wouldn't quite assimilate with your cozy little uncomplicated suburb life here. What would the neighbours think?" He pulled his cigarettes out of his jacket and started to light one when he turned around and walked back to his jeep. "Fuck that shit!"

Blake watched him go and looked then at Misses Taylor again. "I'm sorry. He's a really good friend of Justin. He cares about him."

"Is he a nurse too?"

"No."

She watched as Brian climbed behind the wheel and slammed the car door shut. "Well, he doesn't seem very nice."

"But he is." Blake changed in a soft voice. "Same as your son. He's very bright and handsome. You would be very proud of him."

She reached for the door again. "Please contact his custodian if there should ever be a problem. I really have to go now."

Blake nodded and handed her a small white card. "If you ever change your mind, please call me."

She smiled thinly and disappeared behind her door.

Blake made his way back to the car. He had almost reached the pretty white fence when he heard her voice and turned around for a last time. She stood in front of the door again, her arms wrapped tightly around herself.

"But is he alright?"

Blake wasn't sure what she wanted to hear. But after a moment he said, "Yeah. He's fine."

When it started to get dark outside of the tower window, Justin yawned and turned over to the next page of his book.

"Yes." He looked up to the ceiling and rocked softly back and forth in his kneeling position on the bed. "The ex-external male genitals consist of the penis and the-the scrotum." He sighed and rubbed his forehead. "Yes. Certainly my-my dick. Prian says." He looked down on the page that showed a very pretty penis-drawing. Some parts were purple and some parts were yellow. He liked it. It looked almost like Prian's. Just not as big and warm and tasty. He blinked and leaned forward to poke his tongue against the picture.

The heavy wall door opened wide and was latched to the wall so it wouldn't fall shut again.

"Come on, get up Goldilocks. The Doctor told me to bring you to the shower." Male nurse Gold walked towards the bed and reached for the patient's arm.

Justin stiffened and breathed with an open mouth against his book.

"Come on, let's-? The nurse grabbed for the book and pulled it away. "What's this?" He looked at the spit shiny penis drawing and then at the book cover. "How my body works? Where did you get this shit? You didn't try to suck that cock picture, did you? God!" He flung it disgustedly on the nightstand. "I thought you'd perv over your little kids book." He slapped the back of Justin's head lightly. "Fucking lunatic?" He took hold of the boy's upper arm and neck and dragged him off the bed.

"No." Justin said and squeezed his eyes shut. His neck hurt and he wanted the evil man to go and?

"Fuck off." He said it only quietly and repeated it sixteen times. All the way out of the room, through the corridor, until he was pushed into the patient's bathroom.

"Fuck—fuck off." He rocked slightly on his feet and tried to look up to the ceiling to count the moldy stains, when the nurse ripped down his wonderful-smelling dark blue pajama pants to get him ready for the shower.

"Yes you can?" He wrapped thick, blond hairs around his finger as two strong, cold hands urged him under the piercing water. "You can shower-shower alone, you know?" He tried to imitate the prince's beautiful voice but his teeth chattered. There was no foam soap or red wash cloths. He only felt ill and cold and wanted to be an icicle in Prian's bed very badly.

And then he pressed his face against the dirty tiles and his chest and belly and all of his body, but it was a thick wall door and wouldn't open up for him when the evil big paws touched his butt and stroked and pinched and he started to scream and scream until his throat hurt and all he could hear was Prian's voice.

Blake read through three new messages on his cell phone, while he trudged up the stairs. He was a little early for his shift, but it was too cold to pass the time outside.

With his eyes still on the phone to read the news about cousin Bobby's new apartment in Altoona, he reached blindly for the greasy glass-door of his ward and pushed it open. After five steps, subliminal noises penetrated his thoughts and he lifted his head up to absently look around. The noises got clearer immediately and Blake felt his heart speed up, as he frantically put his cell phone into some opening he could find on his jacket and ran with long strides towards the patient's bath room.

He froze for two seconds in the doorframe and stood in the third half inside a narrow shower stall with both hands on nurse Gold's slightly damp uniform.

"Shit!" He screamed but it sounded not nearly as loud as intended, more breathless and shocked. "Shit, what are you doing?" He pushed the other man into the stained tile-wall and felt his heart drum unregulated in his throat. It was difficult to breathe properly.

"Get off me, asshole!" Nurse Gold shouted and pulled on the hands, cramped in his shirt. "I didn't do anything!"

“I’ll report you!” Blake said, his voice shaking with disgust and disbelief. “Shit, how-? With a tight hold on the fabric of Ethan’s uniform, he turned his head around to look at the wet, naked figure, standing under the spray of the shower with chattering teeth, banging the ball of his right hand rhythmically against his temple.

“You touched him...” Blake said bewildered and slammed nurse Gold then forceful into the wall, his voice shrieking. “Get out of here!”

“He refused to wash himself!” Ethan shouted back defending, straightening his clothes out. “I helped him!”

Blake grimaced, shook his head and let go of him. “I’ll report you.” He tried to control his breathing, but panted anyway. “I’ll go to Dr. Marcus and the police. I swear it.” He took two steps back.

“He’s a silly fuck who can’t even clean himself!” Ethan said outraged and then made his way out of the room. “A fucking retard, that’s what he is!” The door slammed shut and Blake could hear the blood pulse in his ears. It was louder than the running from the cold water in the shower.

Brian slouched on his designer sofa in the dim glow of hundreds of tiny Christmas tree lights.

“So?” Emmett gave one of the lights a little jiggle, picked on one of the green twigs, and finally stepped back to examine his work. “What do you think?”

Brian didn’t look up from the little golden hazelnut he rolled around in his fingers. “Well it’s a tree.”

Emmett put his hands on his hips, with a scandalized tone in his voice. “It’s not just a tree! It’s a 5 meters Nordmann Fir! It’s majestic! It’s perfect!”

“Hm.” Mister Kinney grumbled and threw the nut at his servant’s shoe. “I hope you checked this thing for fucking squirrels before you decided to mutilate my living room with it.” He scrunched up his nose. “And it fucking reeks. Do something about it.”

Emmett sniffed at the tree. “It’s fir smell and resin. It comes naturally. What could I possibly do about that?”

Brian gestured and squinted, highly annoyed with the conversation. “Well use some of these tree-scent-sprays they’re selling at the store.”

Emmett blinked reproachfully. “They smell like fir. You use them for plastic trees, to make them seem more real.”

“Why would anyone want to do that?! The good thing about plastic trees is the non-smelling thing!” God, sometimes he really felt like an alien on this fucking planet.

Emmett stared at his boss for a moment, thinking this over, before he waved his hands in the air and turned around with a little snappish “Tsk. “You just hate Christmas?” He ranted and left the room to get another box of Christmas tree decorations from the cellar. “You’re like the Grinch just better shaved. That’s the problem...”

Brian moved a bit deeper into the couch cushions in an almost sulking manner. The problem was that he was at home on a Saturday evening to watch his servant decorating a tree, instead of fucking lots of guys at Babylon.

But when he looked up at the little clock on his DVD Player, he really couldn’t bring himself to stand up, dress in something hot, and leave his home in the direction of Liberty Avenue. He just didn’t feel like it.

“God!” he slouched even deeper into his sofa. He’d really gotten old. “Hff.” His eyes fell on the cookie bowl on the coffee table and after a moment of hesitation, he leaned forward to grab a few. And he ate them on his white designer sofa, without a plate or napkin and really didn’t care about triple fat chocolate or fucking cookie crumbs...



"It was good that you screamed like that." Blake said quietly while rubbing a white towel over wet, blond hair. "You know earlier in the shower."

"Yes." Justin knelt on his bed and stared towards the window. It was dark outside and also in his room. Blake hadn't turned the lights on. But they could still see everything, because wonderful street-lamp-light fell through the window pane.

"It wasn't right for him to touch you like this."

"Yes." It wasn't snowing and Justin could see the round, pointy castle roofs and the moon and two little clouds in front of it.

"I will report this at Dr. Marcus' office." Blake went to hang the damp towel next to the small washing basin, fetched a hairbrush and walked back to the bed. "First thing Monday morning."

"Yes." Justin's eyes wandered up to the ceiling when he felt gentle fingers and a brush in his hair.

Blake brushed Justin's hair for a few minutes in silence, amazed by the boy's calmness. "Justin?"

"Yeah."

"What would you like to do tonight?" It was a softly asked question and he already knew the answer when he saw the blue eyes flicker and eventually turn back to the window."

"Yeah." Justin really would've preferred to?

"Be with Prian."

Blake drew his lips inwards and put the brush aside, replacing it with his fingers. "You know." he said and stuck a thick blond strand behind the kid's ear. "You look pretty tonight."

"Yes."

"Maybe you should ask your Brian for a date."

"Yeah." Justin liked to hear the prince's name. "My Prian."

"Hmm." Blake smiled slightly. "When you have a date with someone you dress in pretty clothes and go dancing or eat dinner together. It's really nice."

"Yes." Justin rocked a little on the mattress and smiled. He liked to dance with Prian and eat dinner over at the castle. He remembered it and felt happy butterflies in his belly. The prince was so beautiful and nice.

"Did you ever dance?"

"Yeah." He danced in the rainwater and also?

"In the kitchen."

"Really? In the kitchen?"

“Yes. With Prian.” Justin thought about it and sighed. “Of course we’re lousy—lousy dancers.”

“Ah, I’m sure you’re still better than me.” Blake grinned and became more serious again. He cleared his throat, stared at the window and saw two names written faintly in the glass. “You think he’s at home?”

“Yes.”

“You want to give it a try?” It was a question with an uncertain undertone. “Go over there and visit Brian? Ask him for a date?”

“Yes.” Justin felt warm all over and turned his head to look over his shoulder at Plake. He really wanted to go and see Prian and eat white beet and sleep in the big prince bed. Forever and hundred years.

Blake stared back in silence for a while and then nodded. “Yeah. I think so too.”

Plake took his hand as they walked across the street, but it felt different from Prian’s. Less strong and smooth and golden.

“Are you cold?” Blake looked around somewhat nervously, clutched the stolen rose from patient Elaine’s nightstand to his chest, and hurried to reach the other side of the street.

Was he? Justin looked down at his feet. He had his wonderful seven league boots on and the whole ground was white with snow, but as he looked up into the sky, not one single snowflake fell out of the clouds.

The big, white snowman stood still on the sidewalk and Justin craned his neck and made smaller steps to see it better, but Plake pulled him along the snowy pavement and only stopped at the castle’s gateposts.

“Okay, his car is here.” He said and then looked at the young patient. “Do you still remember what I told you?” He handed him the flower.

“Yeah.” Justin rocked slightly back and forth with his eyes on the snow man.

“Justin.” Blake touched the boy’s shoulder softly. “Come on, don’t you want to see Brian?”

“Yes.” Justin really would’ve preferred to be with Prian and turned to see the castle. He smiled when he saw the lights in the windows. He liked the beautiful prince castle so much.

“Okay.” Blake pointed. “Go over there to his door and push the button.”

“Yes.” Justin looked blankly up into the dark sky and then aside when he slowly plodded through the gate and towards the entry door. “Of course my—see my Prian.” The castle smelled like dirt cookies and silver and he stood still for a moment to listen for the frog’s croaking. He couldn’t hear it.

“Go on.” Blake called in a hushed voice and waved his hands encouragingly. “Ring the doorbell.”

“Yes.” Justin padded the last few steps and stopped with both feet on the doormat. He stood there for 64 seconds, swaying softly back and forth with his slightly swatted rose in hand, before he extended one finger and blindly pressed the button of the doorbell.

After seven cookies and half an hour pointless staring at a festive decorated Nordmann Fir, Brian Kinney mumbled, “Fuck this.” threw the eighth cookie back into the bowl, got up from the couch and went upstairs, because sitting pathetically brooding at home on a Saturday evening like some lovesick teenager made his dick even softer than the sight of his Christmas-carols whistling servant, putting a blond-haired angel on the top of the tree.

So he changed into his most “I’m the hottest stud in town screaming designer club clothes, messed his hair up into an irresistible post-orgasm look and had just arrived in Brighton’s entry hall to collect his wallet and car-keys, when someone rang the doorbell.

He stopped in his tracks with his hands in the drawer of a small adornment commode and turned his head to stare at the door. Fucking impolite, uninvited visitors! He really should put a safety lock on his gate or consider the acquisition of a watch-dog.

“Fuck.” He slammed the drawer shut, put his car-keys into his jacket-pocket and marched towards the door. He opened it in one sharp move. “What!”

His annoyed expression disappeared instantly and changed into a blank face when he saw the unexpected blond man in front of his door.

“Yes.” Justin eyes flickered but he held his gaze aside.

Brian’s face darkened. “What the fuck are you doing here?!” He made one step backwards.

“Yes.” Justin sighed a little and held out his rose for the prince. He still looked aside and now blinked a little upwards to see the moon. “Certainly—certainly it stinks.”

Mister Kinney furrowed his brows. “Did you cross the street alone?! I fucking told you not to!”

Justin didn’t say anything, just stared upwards and held the flower out.

Brian heard footsteps outside, pushed Justin aside and looked into the courtyard.

“Hello.” Blake had his hands buried deeply in the pockets of his jacket and didn’t smile. “You don’t look happy to see him.”

“That’s probably because I’m not!” Brian said harsher than intended. “I told you I don’t want him to-?”

“I know.” Blake interrupted him. “I know what you told me. But I had to bring him here tonight. There is nowhere else for him to go. And he needed a break.” He sounded upset and looked as if he’d cried. “He only wanted to see you.”

Brian stared at him for almost a whole minute. And his gaze was hard and dark when he said something. “You’re risking your job.”

Blake’s voice was quiet as he shrugged. “I had to.”

The tone made Brian’s stomach clench. “What happened?”

And Blake turned his head a little to look at Justin, swaying slightly on the door mat with his crushed flower, and he smiled a little. “Just make him happy tonight. It’s his first date.” He pulled his shoulders up against the cold and turned to leave. “I’ll tell the staff he’s with you till tomorrow.”

Brian didn’t watch him leave his property. He just stared into the darkness for a long time and when he spoke again it was directed at Justin. “I don’t do dates.”

“Yes.”

Brian took the flower and went inside. “And I hate flowers.”

“Yes.” Justin followed him over the threshold without closing the door behind him. “Of course it stinks.”

“Then why did you bring one?” Brian waved the rose around as he walked through the living room and into the kitchen.

“Yes.” Justin plodded after him with small steps and his eyes towards the ceiling. “Of course Plake says.” He stopped next to the prince who stood in front of the sink. “Bring a—bring a nice flower.”

Brian looked down at the boy and lifted his brow. “And what did wise man Plake suggest to do with the fucking thing afterwards?” He held it up for Justin to look at.

“Yes.” Justin didn’t look at it, but did something similar to a shrug and sighed. “Certainly put it into—into the shower.”

Brian stared at the younger man for a few seconds until a little smirk crawled over his lips. “It’s not the shower you little twat,” he said and sounded amused. “You put flowers into water, in a flower vase.”

“Yes.”

“If you’re a lesbian.” Brian clarified.

“Yes.”

“Men throw them into the sink.” He demonstrated it with the rose he held in his fingers. “Because they look ugly.” “He would tell his servant to rescue his one and only date-flower later. Maybe to dry it and put it in the cellar behind the Christmas decorations?”

“Yes.” Justin turned up his nose. “Of course it stinks.” He really didn’t like flowers.

“Hh.” Brian nudged the back of his hand against Justin’s belly. “You look nice tonight.”

“Yes.”

“Where’d you get the blue sweater?”

“Yeah. Certainly from Plake.” Because one had to look very nice for a date.

“Hm.” Brian nudged him again and this time wrapped his fingers lightly around the boy’s wrist to pull him closer. “Come here.”

“Yes.” Justin did slowly, until he could feel the prince’s arm around his waist.

“Look at me.” It was a very quiet request.

And it took Justin 38 seconds to follow it. But his eyes were clear and attentive when they met Brian’s.

Brian smiled. “Hey.”

“Hello.” The younger one fidgeted a bit, but didn’t break the visual contact.

“So you want a date?”

“Yes. See my—see my prince.”

Brian touched his forehead to Justin's. "And what are we supposed to do on a date?"

"Yes." Justin knew it. They had to dance and eat dinner. But he really would've preferred to instead?

"...lick Prian's lips."

Brian's hand slid to the back of Justin's neck, to caress the soft hairs there. "What's it called?" He whispered it.

And Justin kind of whispered his answer in return after 12 seconds. "Certainly kissing."

The answer "Good boy" lay on Brian's lips, but they were pressed against Justin's mouth before even one of the words could come out loud. It was just a light touch of lips at first, once, twice. By the third time a little groan escaped Brian's throat and he brushed the backs of his fingers over a smooth, pale cheek, when he slipped the tip of his tongue into a sweet, warm mouth.

Justin stood on his toes to make himself taller, because he liked the taste of Prian's lips and tongue so very much. The prince was so warm and smelled so good and was so nice. He wanted to be with Prian forever and ever and hundred years.

"Mmmh." Brian pulled back slowly, came back for another peck on a red mouth, and smiled again. "You taste good, brat."

"Yes." Justin looked aside and up to the ceiling. "Certainly like ice cream." He laid his head on Prian's chest and enjoyed the feel of the prince's chin resting on his hair.

"Hm." Brian looked at the clock on his microwave. "You know, I actually wanted to go to Babylon tonight."

"Yes." Justin swayed a little from one foot to the other and wrapped a hair strand around his finger, but didn't move his head away from the prince's chest. "With Justin Taylor." Babylon was very old and had brown houses and much sand. He had seen it in one of his new books. He wondered if Iraq was near Harrisburg.

"Hm. It's a place to dance."

"Yes." Justin laughed. He would like to dance?

"...in the sand!" He looked up happily at Prian. Of course they had to take their shoes off.

Brian wrinkled his forehead. "That's one of our weird conversations again, is it?"

"Yes." Justin looked at the fridge.

"Hm." Brian nodded and buried his nose into blond hair. "Are you hungry or something?"

Was he? Yes, he was very hungry and really would've preferred to eat lots of prince food?

"... in boxes."

"Chinese? Thai?"

"Hh." Justin sighed and swayed some more, rubbing his belly against Prian's. "Of course with sticks." Although he would eat the tasty white beet surely not with wood, only with his fingers.

A movie with a Cowboy was on TV and seven boxes of food stood on the coffee table, but Justin wasn't interested in any of it, because the huge glittering tree was so green and shiny and all the little lights were so very beautiful. "And— and thus she stood there with—with nothing left at all," He talked quietly to himself as he looked up to the top of the tree, swaying slightly from left to the right and wrapping blond hairs around his index finger. "When sudden—suddenly some stars fell—fell down from heaven. The little man on top of the tree looked exactly like the poor child from the star talers. And they were nothing—nothing else but hard shining talers." He sighed. He was very glad the poor child was rich in the end. Maybe it could buy lots of ice cream now, with sprinkles and black?

"...black coffee. Certainly ninety—ninety-five cents."

"Justin." Brian put his chop sticks into one of the boxes and leaned back on the couch. "Come here and sit down. You can watch the tree from here too."

He could? Justin's eyes flickered and after a while he padded over to the pretty white sofa, where the prince sat. He went closer and closer until he pushed with his leg against Brian's knee. But he didn't sit down.

Brian took hold of his wrist, pulled lightly and waited patiently until the boy had crawled stodgily onto the thick couch cushions, shifting around to get comfortable in his kneeling position.

"Shoes down."

"Yes." Justin looked up to the ceiling.

"Justin." Brian nudged the kid's knee. "Take your feet off the sofa."

"Yes." Justin looked uninterestedly aside. "Of course not."

Brian lifted his left eyebrow. "Down immediately. Your shoes are dirty."

They were? Justin lifted up and moved his legs clumsily off the sofa, before he bent down to look at them. Yes, they were a little bit stained with...

"...dirty—dirty water."

Brian took one of the boxes from the coffee table, opened it and mixed the contents up with a pair of chop sticks. "It's melted snow. You can wipe it off with a cloth."

"Yes." Justin thought about it. "Certain—certainly the servant."

Brian cogitated this suggestion and then shrugged in agreement. "Yeah, I suppose he needs to be punished for putting that lesbionic tinsel angel on my fucking tree." He fished a piece of meat out of the box and held it out in front of Justin's mouth. "Eat."

"Yes." Justin turned his head away. "Of course not eat with—eat with wood."

"Chopsticks." Brian touched the meat to the boy's lips. "Open up."

Justin squeezed his eyes shut and opened his mouth after 53 seconds.

"That's better." Brian pushed the piece of chicken unceremoniously between Justin's lips and immediately dug for another one in his food container.

Justin chewed carefully, swallowed and opened his mouth wide for more. He liked fried bird with brown sauce very much.

Brian smiled slightly, loading a piece of meat and a couple of soy bean sprouts off and wiping the corner of the kid's mouth clean with the tip of his finger. "Look, that's James Dean." He glanced at the TV. "Do you know him?"

"Yes." Justin said with his eyes still closed.

"You're not even looking." Brian tipped his foot against Justin's shoe. "Open your eyes."

"Yes." Justin blinked and smiled at the prince. Brian looked very beautiful.

An oddly warm feeling gushed through Mister Kinney's stomach, and it wasn't caused by the spicy peanut sauce he'd just consumed. He returned the smile briefly, and then busied himself quickly with the chop sticks again, feeding Justin another piece of chicken. "You're a fucking princess, you know?" He muttered and helped with one of the sticks as the boy's tongue darted out to catch a falling soy sprout. "Letting yourself be fed like this."

"Yes." Justin chewed fast three times, swallowed and licked his lips with his eyes on the food container. "Certainly white beet?" He looked hopefully at Brian.

Brian shook his head, but found three more soy sprouts anyway. "So" He fed them to Justin. "Did you have a good week?"

Justin didn't say anything.

"Blake said you had a cold."

"Yes. You—you'll have a major—major cold tomorrow." Justin looked aside. "Brian says."

"I did, huh?" Brian grimaced unconsciously, while looking down in the greasy box.

"Yes." Justin sighed and wrapped a hair strand around his finger. "Certainly in the—in the well."

"I know." Brian picked around at his food, before placing it back on the table. He watched the pretty man on his high resolution screen for a moment and then placed his hand on Justin's thigh. "I could teach you, you know?" He looked at the kid, a hint of uneasiness in his voice. "How to swim, I mean."

"Yes." Justin rocked gently back and forth while studying the white stuccowork at the ceiling. "Like a merman." He loved the shimmering fishtail.

"No. Like Brian."

Justin didn't react for almost two minutes but then he smiled; his gaze still upwards and one of his fingers stiffly touching the prince's hand on his thigh. "Yes my—my Brian." He really would've preferred to swim like Brian Kinney in the well. With the green frog and beautiful...

"...black bathing—bathing trunks."

Brian grinned a little. "Yeah, I do look pretty hot in my speedos."

"Yes." Justin's face felt warm.

Brian laid his arm around the boy's shoulders. "I'll buy you one too."

"Yes." Justin liked that.

After five minutes of silently watching TV, Brian finally squeezed Justin's shoulder. "You wanna get out of here? Drive around for a while in the car?"

"Yes. Certainly it's dark."

"Yeah, well." Brian got up and held his hand out for the younger man. "We're big boys, aren't we?"

Justin looked out of the side window to watch all the street lights pass by in the darkness. He liked to drive with the fast car-vehicle. It made his stomach flutter.

He could hear a clicking sound, Brian breathing deeply in and out, and then everything smelled like firesticks and almonds and fresh air when the window on the other side of the car was opened and cool wind flew through the narrow slit.

He liked that too. It tickled his ear and face and tousled his hair a little.

"So." Brian used the ashtray on his dashboard and put the cigarette between his lips again, for another drag. "Where do you want to drive?"

"Yes." Justin leaned his forehead against the cool pane. "Certainly Harrisburg."

"Harrisburg." Brian lifted his brows and exhaled his smoke in surprise. "That's a pretty long way, don't you think?"

"Yes, of course to—of course to Babylon." The boy poked the tip of his tongue at the slightly damp window. "With Justin Taylor."

Brian huffed a laugh and changed gears. "You can't go to Babylon."

"Yes. Certainly dances—dances with Brian." In the sand and without shoes.

"Hff." Mister Kinney furrowed his brows and glanced at the kid in disbelief. "No!"

"Yes." Justin sighed and the window grew even more wet.

"We can't go dancing." Brian shook his head and flipped his cigarette out of the open pane, before closing it again.

"Yes, of course we're lousy dancers."

Brian stopped at a red light and looked skeptically at his passenger. "That's not the reason, brat."

"Yes."

"There are lots of people and it's loud. You wouldn't like it, believe me."

"Yeah." Justin glanced up and tried to find the moon outside in the darkness. "Of course Brian dances—dances with Justin in the shower."



The traffic light changed to green and Brian stepped lightly on the gas. “You want to take a shower later?”

Did he? He wasn’t sure and thought of cold water and 26 moldy stains on the ceiling. He felt ill and softly pushed his forehead against the hard side window again and again in a rhythmically beat.

“Justin?” Brian shot a quick glance at Justin, before looking back at the street. “Hey.” He touched the boy’s shoulder. “Don’t do that. You’ll hurt yourself.”

“No.” Justin really didn’t want to take a shower again. He wanted to sleep with Prian. Like an icicle under thick, nice-smelling blankets, with smoke-rings and blue lights. He hit the window harder and felt dizzy somehow. His head hurt too.

“Justin!” Brian spoke louder and pulled up at some gas station. He stopped, pulled the key out and jumped out of the car, slamming the door behind him. He jogged over to the other side of the car and slowly opened the passenger door. His head almost connected with Justin’s slightly red forehead. “Careful brat” He didn’t say it loud or sound annoyed and the hand he brushed over the side of the boy’s scrunched up face was gentle. He wanted to say something, but had no idea what. So he just got one step closer, unbuckled Justin’s seatbelt and was silent, while the kid squeezed his blue eyes tightly shut and buried his nose in a soft Armani shirt.

“Fuck—fuck off.” The words were almost inaudible and stood in absolute contradiction to the five stiff fingers, clinging to Prian’s upper arm.

Brian felt taken aback and didn’t know why. “No,” he said quietly, leaned his head on blond hair, and held this position for what felt much longer than just a few minutes. And then he kissed a warm temple, stepped a little back and slid his hand in Justin’s cool fingers. “Come on. They have good ice cream here.”

Justin blinked up at him wordlessly and then he just moved off the seat and it didn’t seem particularly awkwardly or clumsy—at least for Brian Kinney.

They walked towards the gas station, hand in hand both using small steps. And Brian thought it wasn’t in the least lesbionic to agree on a pot of Ben & Jerry’s Honey, I’m Home- Ice Cream, with two plastic spoons, to share outside in the parking lot, leaning against a black car-vehicle. He thought it was a nice thing to do on a date... After all, wasn’t it just Justin’s first one?

They drove pointlessly around for almost two hours, once around Pittsburgh. And they talked about apple and pear drawings, the need for drained pools during wintertime, and the little gap between the servant’s front teeth. They laughed about the expression and listened to some music, too. Morrissey’s “First of the Gang to die” and some club-mix, which was an attempt from Brian to demonstrate the music played at Babylon. Justin didn’t like it very much and sang a song without words for Prian, that he’d just made up. Brian didn’t say anything about it, but nudged Justin’s leg and asked for a lick on the lips. Justin leaned over after 81 seconds and kissed him.

When they got home, it was a little after midnight. Justin’s eyes were tired, but he went as fast as he could through the courtyard and into the castle, because the tower felt cold on his back.

Prian mustn’t have liked the tower much either, because he closed the door and turned the key three times, to make sure it was safely locked. He did the same with the cellar-, attic-, and terrace door. Then he turned off all the lights, fetched two little Evian-bottles from the fridge and took Justin’s hand to walk upstairs.

In the bathroom, Justin avoided the shower stall carefully and tried not to look in its direction. Brian wanted to know what the hell the fucking problem was, but when Justin’s fingers cramped up in blond hair strands, he decided for both of them to go to bed like real men: unwashed and reeking.

Justin liked that and compromised by at least pissing into the toilet and brushing his teeth.

“Don’t use too much toothpaste.” Brian said as he watched how Justin squeezed half of the tube onto his toothbrush.

Justin remained concentrated on his task, prepared his toothbrush, laid it down on the edge of the sink, closed the toothpaste tube, filled a cup of water exactly halfway, and finally began to brush his teeth.

Mister Kinney shook his head and did the same. He was finished after a good minute, spit, cleaned his mouth, dried his face and cocked one eyebrow at Justin, who still moved his toothbrush in slow up and down motions over his front teeth.

“You know, it’s after midnight. Think you’ll finish this before sunrise?”

Justin ignored him. His mouth was all foamy and he knew three minutes weren’t over yet.

Brian sighed and used the time to check his face closely in the mirror for wrinkles or other irregularities.

Justin spit a mouth full of white foam into the sink two minutes later and needed another one to clean his toothbrush carefully under the running water. Then he placed it into his cup, arranged it exactly two inches away from Brian’s and turned wordlessly around with a wide open mouth.

Brian shot him an annoyed look, but hooked his index finger behind the boy’s lower teeth anyway, for inspection. “What do you expect me to find in here?” he grumbled while checking the upper molars. “You brushed them for like five hours.”

“Yeah.” Justin mumbled and smacked his lips noisily when the prince released him.

Brian eyed him for a moment challengingly, smirked a little and opened his own mouth widely.

“Ha!” Justin laughed.

Brian too, but didn’t close his mouth for it.

With a bright smile and small giggling sounds, Justin extended one finger and reached hesitantly for the prince’s teeth, his eyes flickering kind of nervously back and forth between sharp teeth and brown eyes.

As soon as a warm fingertip brushed Brian’s inner mouth, he closed it quickly and captured the thin finger with his teeth, grinning wickedly.

“Ah!” Justin shrieked startled, his eyes scanning the prince’s face in alarm.

Brian looked at him directly, while touching his tongue to the boy’s fingertip. Then he loosened the hold of his teeth and sucked softly on the whole finger. He released it with a little Plop, kissed Justin’s nose and went to turn the bathroom lights off.

“Yes.” Justin stood in the half dark, held his damp finger and looked at it in slight concern. “Certainly eat—eats Justin Taylor’s finger.”

Justin had received fourteen good night kisses, had no pajama on and laid in his underwear under two heavy blankets, with his nose squished against a naked prince shoulder. His eyes shut to the sound of comforting silence three minutes before 1 a.m.

Brian’s not. His head was full of thoughts about sterile suburb houses with white fences, dirty seven league boots on designer sofas, syringes, broad leather cuffs around pale ankles and wrists, innocent blue eyes, bright smiles and farfel noodles. He had an uncomfortable feeling in his chest, like the weight of a ton of stones, and when he turned his head on the pillow to look at the young man right beside him, the feeling got even worse. He hated it and brushed his hand lightly through silky hair strands. And he closed his eyes, then squeezed them tightly together and finally sniffed through his nose and rolled out under the covers and carefully off the mattress.

He didn’t think very much, when he walked down the stairs and straight towards his desk, where his address book lay. He lit a cigarette while flipping through the pages and exhaled a long trail of smoke when he reached the letter G.

The dull tooting of the telephone at his ear sounded far away when he plopped down on the couch, in the dim glow of hundreds of tiny Christmas tree lights.”?”

“Yes.” The voice that answered didn’t sound sleepy, but calm.

“Gunn, this is Brian Kinney, sorry for calling this late.”

The response took a moment. “Brian, hey. How are things going down in the Pitts?”

“Presumably not as good as in L.A. but good enough.” Brian watched the gleaming cigarette between his fingers. “I could use a good lawyer though.”

“Well buddy.” Charles said. “You called the right guy then.”

“I know. What do you know about custodial care?”

The present was wrapped in blue paper and heavy in his arms. He didn’t understand why mommy was so sad and really wanted to go with her down to the parking lot where the silver car-vehicle stood. They could lean against it to eat ice cream with plastic spoons.

“You can’t.” Her lips quivered and her words were quiet and quiet and made Justin’s belly hurt terribly. “You’re not all right.”

“Yeah.” Justin knew it and looked at the prince. He was all blurry.

And Prian laid his arm around Mommy’s shoulders and they were gone forever and ever and hundred years.

“Huuhw.” Justin felt his nose prickle and tried to breathe properly but his throat was tight and tight and he wailed into the pillow and it smelled wonderfully of soft prince hair, but he had to cry anyway. His heart hurt very badly.

At three a.m. Brain drained the last drops of his beer, put the bottle down and sent the last e-mail addressed at Charles Gunn on it’s way to California. He felt better. Confident and comfortably tired, when he made his way back upstairs.

His calm mood changed however, as soon as he opened his bedroom door and found all the blankets on the floor, Justin curled up in the middle of the mattress, his face buried in the sheets, and desperately crying.

Brian didn’t rush into the room or turn on the lights. No, he walked slowly, picked the blankets up, placed them at the end of the bed and then almost reluctantly sat on the edge of the mattress to touch the boy’s bare back. It was smooth and cold.

“Cer—certain—” Justin stiffened immediately and stemmed his knees and forehead into the mattress, producing muffled shrieking sounds. “Not alright!”

“What?” Brian moved a little closer and bent forward, nearer to Justin’s hidden face. “What is not alright?”

“Yes!”

“Did you have a bad dream?” Brian tried to turn him around, and failed. “What is not alright?”

“Yes!” Justin’s voice shrieked again hysterically. “Certainly Justin!”

And a dark, heavy shroud sank down on Brian Kinney’s tired body crushing him painfully. It hurt and made him cold from head to toe. And his fingers were imperceptible and trembled on the side of Justin’s face when he leaned over him, “Sssh.” kissed the back of his neck, blond hair, “You are.” and finally turned him around on his back, only to blanket the smaller body fully with his own. “You

are alright.” He kissed the boy, his mouth and eyes. “You are alright.” He licked off salty tears, which didn’t belong on pale skin and stifled every sob he didn’t want to hear with soothing kisses. “You are alright.” Inculcated words, hissed against warm lips. “Do you hear me?” He sounded almost angry.

“Ye-es.” Justin hiccupped under him, blue eyes wet and wide open in the dark room. “Justin.”

“Yes.” Brian closed his own, pressing his nose into a soft neck, searching desperately for comfort. “Justin is alright.” He wrapped his arms around his boy, holding him tightly and kissing him again and again, kissing him alright for the rest of the night.

On Sunday, December the 22th, Justin had his silver jacket on and walked holding Prian’s hand seven steps over a black street, covered in damp snow. Two hundred forty stairs up through a stinking stairwell. A strange smell hovering over a dismal corridor.

Brian rubbed the knuckles of Justin’s fingers the entire way and closed the heavy door 4.11 tightly shut as soon as they entered the room.

And he turned to look at Justin’s face, and smiled. “So. You wanna come over to my place for Christmas?”

Justin looked up at the ceiling instead of brown prince eyes, but he smiled brightly. Sometimes Prian was really a little bit stupid. Of course he would come to the castle for Christmas! Everyone knew that.

“That’s only two more days.” Brian said somewhat quietly and touched his forehead to Justin’s.

“Yes.” Justin laughed. He felt so happy.

“You want me to come and pick you up?”

“Yes.” Justin rubbed his blond hair against Prian’s temple, when he turned his head to look over at his tower window. “Of course through the window.” With a crown and silver sword.

Brian smiled and kissed a warm ear. “Later.” He whispered it and was accompanied out of room 4.11 by a beautiful, gentle laughing sound.

Chapter 29—Silent night

“Ha!” When Justin woke up on December the 24th, it was 6.03 a.m., and he had to laugh because he felt so happy. It was the most wonderful day he could think about and he thought it even smelled much better than all the other days. Like almonds and red candles.

With a bright smile, he shifted around on the mattress, kneeled down for a moment to look around, and then climbed out of the white bed to pad over to the window.

Thick, fluffy snow flakes danced in front of the pane but Justin wasn’t surprised. Today was Christmas Eve, after all, and it always had to snow on Christmas. And there would be fried bird to eat without head and feathers but with mashed chestnuts in its belly. And tasty Pudding with glittering money treasure in its middle.

“Yes.”

He scratched his temple as he thought about it. There were fourteen pennies in the drawer and of course tonight he would have...

“...five—fifteen.”

He sighed and leaned his forehead against the cold pane. He really would’ve preferred for the beautiful prince to come now and climb up the grey tower to rescue him then they would hold hands and walk across the street and sleep over in the castle in Prian’s bed for ever and ever and hundred years.

His belly felt so warm as he imagined it and he pressed both hands flat against his window pane with a small whimper. “Yes my—of course my Prian.” Prian Kinney. With a big P like Prince and Pudding.

“Hhh.” At 8.14 a.m. on December the 24th, Brian was rudely awakened by the vigorous ringing of his door bell. And before he even had a chance to form a sound of protest or lift his tousled head off a Justin-scented pillow, two little Spiderman sneakers trampled loudly up the stairs.

“Daddy, Daddy!” called Gus, running through the corridor and pushing his father’s bedroom door open. “Mommy says you have to wake up now!” He bounced towards the big bed with four kangaroo jumps and lifted up an edge of the blanket, under which he presumed his daddy was hidden. “It’s Christmas Eve!”

Brian groaned and squinted in the direction of his alarm clock. “It’s not any eve. It’s 8.16 in the morning. Come back after sunset.”

“Daddy!” The boy giggled and poked a finger in his father’s eye when it fell shut again. “Stop making fun!”

Brian groaned again and wasn’t quite sure what his son was talking about.

“Daddy!” Gus jumped up and down twice on the thick, white carpet. “Stop sleeping! Aunty Emmett said we have to bake cookies for Santa Claus.” He bent forward to peer closely in his daddy’s face. “He comes tonight through the chimney.”

“Not when he eats all those damn cookies.” Brian assumed. “He’ll be too fat and won’t fit through it.”

Gus giggled again. “Daddy! That’s not true! Mommy said he can suck his stomach in.”

Brian blinked his tired eyes open. This was apparently one of those arguments he couldn’t win, no matter what he said. But he tried anyway. “Men don’t bake cookies.”

“Why not?”

“Because they’re too busy doing manly things.” Mister Kinney rubbed a hand over his face. “Like kickboxing or driving trucks.”

“Yes, we play with the trucks!” The kid jumped again excitedly, but this time towards the open door and then loudly down the stairs. “I brought four in my bag!” he called out informatively. “You can play with the blue one, Daddy!”

Brian groaned a third time and sunk weakly down into his pillows, while seeing a clear picture forming in front of his eyes, of a certain blonde woman with his hands strangling her neck.

Blake cleared his throat in front of door 4.11 and tried for an unconcerned smile while he unlocked it.

“Hello frog.” He entered the small room and found a quietly giggling Justin near the window. “How are you today? Have you finished your breakfast?”

“Yes.” Justin liked toast with raspberry jelly.

“That’s good. You’re going to see Brian today, right? Visit him for Christmas?”

“Yes.” Justin laughed.

“That’s good.” It was, because Dr. Marcus refused to suspend his colleague Ethan during the understaffed Holidays and just because. Blake cleared his throat again. “Listen, I thought maybe you’d want to come with me to the art room and make a present for Brian. You know you could give it to him for Christmas.”

“Yes.” Justin felt butterflies in his belly. Of course he could give to the prince?

”A book.” With blue wrapping and a pretty ribbon.

“Yes, maybe.” Blake held his hand out, smiling slightly when the boy took it after a moment. He looked happy.” “You’re looking forward to seeing Brian again, huh?”

Justin didn’t say anything as he left his tower room with Plake. But he smiled and hummed a quiet melody that almost sounded like Jingle Bells.

“Would you quit your fucking singing already!” Brian turned around sharply, and growled at his servant. “I’m on the phone!”

“Well.” Emmett said with a patient smile towards the little boy who was sitting on the counter top next to the microwave. “Maybe your dad needs another cup of coffee, what do you think?”

“I can make it!” Gus offered and raised a finger as if he were in school.

“Great!” Emmett said. “I’ll get the psycho-stimulants and you get the sugar.”

“Okay!” The child answered enthusiastically. “He can use my Scooby Doo cup!”

“And wouldn’t he just love that?” The house maid nodded, with his head in one of the lower cupboards to fetch the box with the coffee filters, and “Oww!” jumped then when his boss passed behind him, slapping his butt.

“Hey what’s all that noise?” Gunn leaned back in his comfortable leather chair, changing the phone to his other ear. “Full house during the holidays? Family visits?”

“I don’t do holidays.” Brian clarified as he left the kitchen heading towards his desk in the living room. “Or family visits.”

“Of course not. Tell your son I said hello.”

Brian glared at no one in particular.

Gunn looked at the screen of his computer, where the picture of a young blond man was opened. “Same to Justin. He looks more than worth it. All the efforts I mean.”

“Yeah.” Brian said, glancing out of the terrace doors. “He is.”

“What’s he doing in this picture?”

Mister Kinney was silent for a moment and pulled his lips inwards, before he calmly answered. “Watching a pear.” The only one on a stunted tree. For two hours.

Gunn nodded. “Listen man, I’ve talked to his current custodian and the Surrogate’s court.” He opened a few files. “And it doesn’t look bad. Not at all. It’s just a protracted process.”

Brian wetted his lips briefly. “So my chances aren’t bad?”

“No. The clinic where he lives at the moment has an ambiguous reputation, was sued three times in the last 48 month, and his family assigned all rights and duties to a third party, when he was practically still an infant.”

Brian nodded, not saying anything.

“But the fact is: The kid still costs them money.”

“His father pays for the clinic?”

“He has to. The kid is on his health insurance. Neither is eagerly willing to waste money.”

“Hh.” Brian furrowed his brows, picking with his index finger at the edge of his desk. “So, what are the chances for us in negotiating with his father?”

Gunn grinned. “I’m meeting him for a late lunch.”

“Today? In Delmont?”

“But of course. You told me, and I quote, to hurry the fuck up. And you’re paying good money.”

“I did.” He did.

“Well then, last chance before I’m off to the airport: Are you sure about all this? You want full custodianship of Justin Taylor?”

With one flick of his finger, Brian opened a picture on his screen and a small smile tugged at the right corner of his mouth. He hoped that fucking tree would have a new pear next summer. “Call me when you’ve talked to him.”

Justin liked it in the art room today. There were no other people and also no Miss Eterson. Just him and Plake and many empty tables and he could choose any seat he wanted.

He liked one table at the window the best, sat down and glanced out at the white snow, while wrapping a blond hair strand around his finger.

“Okay.” Blake stood beside him, digging through a big box with wool-, cork-, leather-, and wood remnants, small buttons, colorful paper strips and little Styrofoam balls. “I thought maybe...” he examined a piece of soft, black leather cord. “We could try to make some kind of jewelry for him. You know?” He placed the leather cord on the table and started to pick a couple of smooth, shiny white shells out of the box. “A bracelet or something.” He looked at the boy for approval. “What do you think? It would be really personal.”

“Oooh.” Justin reached for the wonderful little way stones in Plake’s hand and touched one of them carefully. They were a bit broken, but nevertheless very pretty.

“These are cowry shells from the ocean.” Blake took one and pointed to the little slit. “See? It’s the house of a marine snail. It lived in here.”

It did? Justin looked at the small, white shell closely. He wondered where the snail had gone.

“It’s pretty don’t you think?”

Justin’s eyes wandered up to the ceiling. He thought the snail houses were rather pretty.

“You want to use them to make a bracelet for Brian? He can wear it on his wrist.”

“Yeah.” Justin rocked gently back and forth on his chair. He liked Brian’s wrists. They were soft and warm and smelled so nice.

“Okay.” Blake smiled, put the box aside, sat down next to Justin and spread all the shells and the leather cord on the table. He wrinkled his forehead. “Now we just have to figure out how to do it.”

“Daddy!” Gus called from his place on the backseat and craned his neck so he could see his father better.

“Yes!” Brian gritted his teeth and tapped his foot lightly on the gas, while steering the car at snail-speed through the pre-holiday stop and go traffic in Pittsburgh’s downtown.

“I’m thirsty.” The boy complained and kicked rhythmically against the back of his father’s seat. “Can we go to McDonald’s?”

Brian’s hand shot backwards to capture one Spiderman sneaker in a steel-like grip. “Stop kicking my seat.”

“But I’m thirsty!”

“Wait till we’re at the mall.”

The child was silent for 52 seconds, before he kicked at his daddy’s seat again. “Daddy!”

Brian hit the wheel with his palms. “What?!”

“Why do we have to buy Justin’s present at the mall? Santa Claus can bring it.”

“No he can’t.”

“But why not?”

Brian changed gears and peered into the rear-view mirror. “Because Santa Claus only brings presents for children. Justin is an adult.”

Gus thought about it for a moment. “Can we buy a Power Ranger for him?”

“No.”

“Donatello?”

“No.”

“But he’s a Ninja Turtle!”

“I said no.”

Gus pouted and then kicked the seat again. “I bet he would like a dog. A black one.”



Brian slowed down at the entry of the underground car park. “No he wouldn’t.”

“A cat?”

“No!”

“A violin?”

“Gus!”

The boy pouted again.

Brian called the young lady who stole his parking space a very offensive word, which was really not appropriate for sonny boy’s innocent ears.

Half an hour later, Mister Kinney and son stood at the display of the jeweler on the third floor of the local shopping centre, to look at a couple of pretty golden necklaces and matching pendants.

Gus didn’t like the idea of buying boring jewelry instead of a puppy very much. “Daddy?” He tugged at his father’s coat sleeve.

“Hm?” Brian examined a little golden J pendant.

“What’s a bitch?”

The salesclerk behind the counter coughed into her fist and turned discreetly away.

Brian on the other hand remained completely unfazed while looking at a nice, broad necklace. “I don’t know.”

“But you said it in the car.”

“No. I didn’t.”

“But I heard it!”

“You heard wrong.” Mister Kinney assured, waving for the salesgirl to get one of the necklaces out of the showcase. “I want to see this one.”

“Of course sir.”

“But you said bitch to that women with the pink car.” Gus tugged his father’s sleeve again.

“I said witch.” Brian told his son and held the jewelry more into the light, squinting his eyes.

“She is a witch?” Gus made big eyes.

“Yep.” Brian nodded and handed the necklace back to the salesgirl. “In 18 carat gold with the butterfly pendant.”

“Of course sir.”

Gus scratched his temple. “I didn’t know witches have pink cars.”

“Of course they have.” Mister Kinney said and pulled out his wallet. “Just like Barbie.”

“Hm.” The child seemed to be satisfied with that explanation.

“Hm.” Brian too. And even though he’d just spend \$1,615 for a lesbionic butterfly gold necklace, he felt nothing but perfect contentedness and almost something similar to Christmas joy.

The little gift was wrapped in light blue paper, had no ribbon and the words ‘Merry Christmas for Prian’ in the self-made card illegibly written with a dark blue wax crayon.

Justin held it in his hand as if it were the most precious thing on earth.

Blake smiled and folded a sweater on Justin’s bed to pack it with the other things in the boy’s bag. “He’ll love it.”

“Yes.” Justin didn’t dare to move his hand and held it slightly outstretched, even as his eyes wandered to the ceiling.

“What else do you want me to pack?” The nurse looked around in the small room. “Your pajamas?”

“Yes.”

Blake placed the white pajamas on top of the other clothes in the bag. “Okay, I’ll leave the zipper open. If you want to take something else with you, you can pack it before you go.”

“Yes.” Justin’s belly was all jittery. He really would’ve preferred for the prince to come now through the tower window.

Blake looked at him again, and after a moment went to touch his arm. “Hey frog? I have to go now.”

“Yes.”

“But I wish you a very wonderful time with Brian.”

Justin smiled and started to rock softly back and forth on his feet. “Yes.”

“Will he come to pick you up?”

“Yes.” Justin laughed. “Through the—through the window.”

Blake smiled and rubbed his thumb over the boy’s wrist. “I’m sure he’ll be here soon.”

“Yes.”

“Okay. I’ll see you in a few days then.”

“Yes.” Justin sighed.

“Merry Christmas.” Blake brushed a blond strand behind the young patient’s ear, went out of room 4.11 at 2.12 p.m. and just as he was about to lock the door, he heard a faint answer.

“Merry—merry Christmas.” Wrongly emphasized and monotonous sounding, but the nicest holiday salutations he’d received for the season.

Gus had fallen asleep on the couch in front of the television, but Brian felt oddly restless especially after wandering around for a while, carrying his non-ringing telephone. Finally, he walked aimlessly up the stairs.

“Hey.” He found his maid in one of the guestrooms and leaned against the doorframe to watch him changing the sheets.

Emmett looked at his boss suspiciously and after one minute lifted his eyebrows. “Everything alright?”

Brian bit at his fingernail and shrugged slightly. “Just looking at what you’re doing, that’s all.”

“Well in that case...” Emmett decided and took two corners of the fresh sheet, spreading his arms as wide as he could. “Take the other side.”

Brian took his finger out from between his lips with a dumbstruck expression.

Emmett only stared at him.

“Hff.” Beaten, Mister Kinney slouched and walked a few steps closer, grabbing reluctantly for the other side of the sheet.”

Emmett lifted his part up, waited for Brian to do the same and started to shake the folds out and smooth it down on the bed. When he tucked the sheet edges under the mattress, he peered over at his boss with a little smirk. “That’s kind of cute you know? Making his bed for him.” He smoothed last small wrinkles out of the expensive fabric. “Not that he’ll use it?”

“I’m not making his bed.” Brian frowned as he tucked one end of the sheet under the mattress corner, just to see it slip out again on the other side. “I’m stuffing a damn sheet under the mattress.”

“Of course.”

“And he will use it.”

“He will?” Emmett looked seriously surprised and then almost disappointed.

Brian avoided his gaze and threw a pillow on the bed. “I want him to have his own space.” And while he folded a thick, soft blanket in slight frustration, before pulling a dark blue bed cover over his work, Emmett’s face lit a up with a gentle, little smile.

“And that’s what makes this special, right?”

Brian didn’t look up. “What is?!”

“That you want him to have his own bed. He’s the first man with his own bed in your life. You want him to stay.”

Brian didn’t like the heavy feeling shooting through his stomach and his face mirrored bitter agony.

“Don’t worry.” Emmett’s tone had changed all of sudden, becoming more serious now and comforting. “He will.”

And Brian looked at him? for a long time, without saying one single word and then he turned around on a blue cat fur carpet, to leave the room. “Don’t forget to put fresh water on the nightstand.”

When male nurse Schmidt entered room 4.11 at 3 pm, patient Taylor sat motionless on his bed, a little blue present next to him on the pillow, and an open fairy tale book in his lap, showing the pictures of an old grey tower and a beautiful blonde-haired princess, looking out of its window.

“Ah, that’s Cinderella, right?” The nurse said in a friendly tone and peeked over Justin’s shoulder to see the picture better. “I loved these kinds of stories when I was a kid.”

Justin sighed, stood up and walked away, with little steps towards his window, his eyes never leaving the book pages.”

“Uhm?” Theodore cleared his throat and gestured around behind the young man. “Well actually I’M here at Dr. Cameron’s request. He wants to do something nice for the patients because of Christmas.”

Justin looked at the words in his book but counted how many socks Plake had put in his bag loudly. “Three-Four-Fif—  
Five.”

“Well nothing big?” The nurse raised his voice a little helplessly. “I think a hairdresser will go around offering free haircuts or maybe a shave. But then again...? He laughed. “You won’t need that, right?”

“Six-seven-Eight-nine.” There weren’t that many socks in his bag, but Justin counted anyway. He really didn’t like the sleeping nurse.

Ted patted the patient’s shoulder. “But hey, maybe I should sign up for one, huh? Never turn down a free service!” He laughed again.

“Aah!” Justin started to rock back and forth on his feet strongly. The hand on his shoulder wasn’t good and of course the sleeping nurse stood way too close.

“Ah, okay.” Nurse Schmidt held his hands up, capitulating. “I guess I’m on my way then. Just-? He gestured again. “Be ready huh?”

“Aah!” Justin looked up to the ceiling and screamed a little bit louder until the thick wall door was closed again. Then he turned around and counted the water marks on his window pane.

“Two...twenty-two. Yes certain—certainly it’s melted—melted snow.” He paused and looked aside with a blank gaze. “You can—can wipe it off with a cloth. Prian—my Prian says.”

“I don’t like the pig-girl.” Gus said and ate another piece of popcorn.

“I know.” Emmett agreed seriously. “Me neither. And I really don’t get why she won’t stop making advances toward Kermit.” He sipped at his punch. “I mean he’s so gay.”

“And a frog.” The child added helpfully. “Frogs don’t like pigs.”

“Of course not.” Emmett seemed gravely distraught and couldn’t even enjoy his butter-caramel-popcorn anymore when Miss Piggy oozed her charm once more in Kermit’s direction.

They all sat on the sofa to watch “It’s a Very Merry Muppet Christmas Movie?”, drank some non-alcoholic eggnog and ate popcorn, but Mister Kinney paid only minimal attention to the developments on the screen and alternatively massaged his right temple and this little spot right above his eyebrow at five second intervals. He felt a major headache coming, and glanced for the thousandth time in the last 30 minutes at the coffee table, where his non-ringing phone lay, right beside his untouched cup of eggnog and a flat, dark green gift-box.

It had no card, nor was it wrapped in some festive paper, but it counted as a real present anyway, and the aerial image of a young blond man with a shimmering golden butterfly-necklace around his pale neck flashed briefly through Brian's head. And he caught himself smiling just a little, but forced it down immediately and shifted around in his seat with an almost embarrassed sideways glance.

He cleared his throat and got up from the sofa. "I want a beer."

Emmett watched him leave the room and wanted to say something like "You can't drink beer on Christmas Eve!". But he didn't. Instead he threw a pleading look at the damn telephone and hoped this lawyer guy would call really soon, because it was more than time for the big grouchy Grinch to get rid of this heavy weight he'd carried around on his shoulders for the last few days, and finally jump on his white horse to pick up his lovely princess.

At 3.22 pm Justin got startled when the thick wall door flew open, and lots of loud, hectic noises and movements filled his small room.

"Okay?" Dr. Cameron said and stepped aside with his back to the open door, so his colleagues could enter the room. "And he gets a full cut." He looked at the clipboard in his hands, scribbled something down with a black pen, and then stuck the board under his arm with a smile towards his patient.

"Hello Justin?" He said it loud and held his hand out for the boy to shake it. "How are you today?"

"Yes." Justin sat still on his bed and looked up to the ceiling. He didn't know why all the people were in his room.

Dr. Cameron laughed and patted his cheek lightly. "I bet you're very excited. The nurses told me you're allowed to visit a friend during the holidays."

"Yes." Justin's eyes flickered nervously. He wanted to count, but couldn't remember the first number. He wished the noises in his room were quieter.

"Okay." The Doctor spoke to a man with a big nose, who Justin had never seen before. "If you don't get far with the scissors, just use the clippers." Then he turned to Justin again, his voice a bit louder. "See? We'll get you all spiffed-up for Christmas, huh?!" He laughed, clapped his hand on the kid's shoulder and then hurried out of the room and the thick wall door slammed shut with a loud bang.

Justin didn't like it. There were still nurses in his room and men he didn't know.

"Ah, it's almost a shame, don't you think Justin?" Nurse Max stood next to the patient, touching his blond hair. "I kind of like your hair."

"Yes." Justin felt proud. He liked his hair too. It was very long and all silky.

"Well come on, then." The nurse said in a friendly tone and took hold of the boy's elbow. "Let's make you pretty for Christmas."

Justin blinked upwards to the ceiling and after a moment laughed. "Yes!" He could brush his hair and wear beautiful?

"Slippers."

Max smiled too and waited patiently until the kid had climbed off the bed. Then he guided him towards the little table in the middle of the room. "Here, just sit down, all right?"

“Oooh.” Justin did and was completely fascinated as he looked at the different hairbrushes and silver scissors the man with the big nose had put on his table. He wanted to touch them and, “Ha!” laughed happily. There was also a mirror! A new one without shards! He smiled at his own face and extended a finger to touch his white, shiny teeth in the mirror.

One of Max’s hands remained on Justin’s shoulder and another man stood close behind the boy’s back, while he combed his fingers through the long strands, straitening them out to full length.

“He seems young.” Steve glanced briefly into the mirror and grabbed for a black comb. “How old is he?”

Justin held very still and breathed noisily through his nose when the man with the big nose combed all his hairs over his face. It tickled his nose and he wondered whether he could see the beautiful prince with such a hairstyle.

Max shrugged. “Eighteen, as far as I know.”

Steve nodded. “Pretty young to live in here.”

“I suppose.” Max shrugged again and took a peppermint nurse Schmidt handed him.

Steve, combed the hair out of the kid’s face and moved his head a little to the side. “Stay like this.”

Justin blinked in the mirror, watching as some strands of his hair were pulled out straight. The strange fingers on his neck were soft but really cold.

Steve took one of the scissors and held it together with his comb in one hand when he cut off the first thick strand.

Justin froze. Millions and millions of blond hairs fell down on his shoulders and belly and in his lap. “Hh!” He bent down to look at the floor horrified, “Oh oh!” and reached with both hands for his head, feeling his hair.

Steve pulled his scissor back. “Would you hold his damn hands?!”

“Sorry.” Max tried to guide the boy back in an upright position on the chair, meanwhile nurse Schmidt fished for Justin’s wrists to hold them still.

Steve moved Justin’s head a little forcefully back to the right angle and cut two more strands down.

Justin watched what happened in the mirror, quickly squeezed his eyes shut and shook his head violently. His beautiful hair fell?

”To the floor!” He screamed loudly, repeating the same words over and over.

“Keep him still!” The hairdresser shouted angrily at the two nurses; holding his scissors out of the way.

“Justin!” Max tried to hold one of the kid’s arms still.

“Maybe we should sedate him?!” Nurse Schmidt suggested a little helplessly.

“We don’t sedate patients because of a haircut!” Max shouted back, two seconds before Justin managed to pull his arm free and instantly started to hit it against his forehead.

“Fuck off! Fuck—Fuck off!”

"Ted, go and get Gold and Sherman!" Max instructed his colleague and addressed Steve, who seemed more than a little annoyed about all the delay. "How long will it take with the trimmer?"

The hairdresser shrugged. "Three minutes, tops." God, he really looked forward to serving the other 16 patients of this ward, he couldn't think of a better way to start the holidays?

And then the door swung open and Justin couldn't think anymore. His head hurt and his screaming was loud and loud but not loud enough to drown the terrible buzzing sound in his ears. "Fuck off!" And he fought with his arms in panic, kicked his legs and slammed his head back and forth frantically, towards the mirror. "...off—fuck off!" But there were no shards this time, just loud, evil voices and so many hands. "Of—of course!" He shrieked. "My Priar says!" Strong fingers, wrapped around every part of his body. He didn't want them to. He didn't want to sit here. He didn't want to see the silvery buzzer-box and watch his silky princess hair falling to the floor. "Fu-uck?" He hiccupped desperately. And he wanted to be gone and far away, and he cried and saw himself in the mirror. "No-o." Saw his mouth wide open, his blue eyes red, and the small buzzing box running over his head. "Noo." Watched countless blond hairs floating around in the air. And he felt so sad and weak and heavy and looked at one of the men around him, but no one saw him. "Of—of course!" He whimpered and his throat felt scratchy. "My hair!" And then the loud buzzing was gone and all the hands and he fell off his chair and slammed on the ground and lay there in a sea of dead hairs that didn't belong to him anymore.

The phone rang five times, before a boy in Spiderman sneakers entered Brighton's living room with big kangaroo jumps and picked it up.

"Hello!" He said a little too loud and jumped a sixth time.

Gunn paused surprised, while gesturing to the waitress for another coffee. "Uhm, hello. You're Gus, right?"

"Yes." The boy confirmed and jumped again, a little out of breath.

"Hi." Gunn smiled. "I'm Charles."

"Hello." Gus started to jump in the direction of the coffee table, where the rest of the popcorn was. "Santa Claus comes tonight."

"That's right." Gunn nodded when a fresh cup was placed in front of him. "Listen buddy, I need to talk to your dad. Any idea where he is?"

"Yes." Gus prepared for a last big 20 inches jump. "He's on the toilet."

Gunn frowned and then smiled when he could hear another person in the background. A big, grouchy person.

"Who told you to answer the phone?" Brian took the receiver out of the boy's hand.

"I hope you flushed." Gunn grinned.

"And I hope you have a good reason for not calling!" Brian growled back.

"Yeah sorry, man." Gunn stirred his coffee. "Took longer than expected. But it went really good. We'll still need to go to court, but Mister Taylor agreed to-?"

"Wait." Brian fetched his jacket and went towards the front door. "I need fresh air and a cigarette."

"That could be difficult."

Justin was alone in his room. The thick wall door was closed, and all the silver scissors and loud clippers were gone. Even the new mirror.

It didn't matter.

Justin didn't need a mirror to know that Christmas was over now and the beautiful prince would never come to climb up the grey tower and rescue him. He couldn't. Because all the long, blond princess hair lay dead on the floor and wasn't shiny anymore.

Justin rubbed his nose weakly over the hard ground and all the soft hair strands. It still smelled like him though. Like shampoo and water. A little like peaches and sun. But most of all it smelled like Prian's fingers.

Justin sobbed a shaky breath and sniffled, the tip of his thumb against his red lips, his cheek resting on the remains of his hairs. He loved the prince's fingers in his hair. Soft and strong and gentle. And he really would've preferred to feel them right now."

A smiling Prian with a red towel to dry his wet hair. "Shit, your hair is really long, you know?"

Prian's long fingers brushing his hair off of his forehead again and again under the hot storm-air. "You like your hair this way?"

Soft words out of Prian's mouth and two strong fingers, wrapped in blond strands. "People don't climb on hair. Nobody climbs on hair. People climb on a rope."

"Hhy-yes." Justin sobbed again, rubbed his eyes and sat up clumsily on his knees. "My...my Prian says." His voice sounded funny, his back hurt and he felt numb and dizzy from all the tears and screaming. Maybe he was a little ill too, but he didn't want to puke. And he stood up from the floor, blond hairs sticking to his skin and clothes, and he wiped the back of his hand over his wet face, while the other hand reached for the long strand behind his ear, to curl it around one finger. It wasn't there. "Ye-es." And he stood there in the middle of his room, tugged lightly at his earlobe, squeezed his eyes shut and felt more tears running down his cheeks, tickling his nose and lips and chin. He brought his arm up awkwardly to cover his face with it. And he pushed his nose into the soft fabric of his sweater but it didn't smell like Prince or Pudding or?

"Prian!" He wanted to see him so badly. His brown eyes and soft hair. And he wanted to be with him. In the castle. Because of Christmas and for ever and ever and hundred years.

And he blinked his damp eyes, made little steps towards his nightstand and needed 43 seconds to pull the drawer open.

"Yes."

The blue ball of wool felt soft under his fingertips and reminded him of butterflies and kitty naps and a warm kiss from Prian on his nose. He rubbed his sleeve over it, as another tear tickled him and then looked up to the white ceiling for a long time.

At 4.38 pm the late winter sun began to set in front of a narrow tower window and Justin rattled at its handle, pushed and pulled, until it opened and cold wind-air flew into the room, hitting the sore, red skin of his face. He blinked rapidly a few times, "Yes." plodded towards his wardrobe for his silver jacket, needed a while to close the zipper and then sat down stiffly to put on his brown seven league boots.

The black bag was difficult to close and heavy to lift up on the windowsill, and when it stood there unsteadily, Justin wasn't quite sure what to do with it. "Yes." He looked up into the grayish clouds to see the snowflakes, and looked down again when he heard a dull thud from far away. "Of course." His bag was gone and he bent a little forward and thought it was funny to see it all the way down on the ground. In the lovely white snow. And he smiled and hiccupped a sob at the same time. "Alright." He rubbed his ear and turned around. Walked slowly to his bed and lifted the cheap pillow. He felt warm when he saw the three things underneath. And he placed the yellow butterflies carefully around his neck, held the little blue Christmas present cautiously in his hand and hugged his fairy tale book close to his chest, before sticking it under his arm.

He went to the open window, "Yes" Certainly the cord." It was blue and soft and very long. And he held it on one end when he threw the rest clumsily out into the cold winter air. He swayed slightly on his feet for a moment, his blank gaze upwards, and then draped the piece of blue wool he held in his fingers meticulously over the window frame and sill. Exactly in its middle. He looked at it and sighed.



“Yes.” His stomach fluttered when he tried to lift his feet high enough to reach the ledge. It was very hard to do and he had to use his free arm and almost lost his little parcel. But then he kneeled in the narrow window frame, with soft snowflakes dancing around his head, and it was so cold and high and on the top of the grey tower, but his butterflies flapped their wings inside of his belly and his cheeks felt hot and he smiled brightly and had to laugh a bit. He was like a bird just without beak and feathers. And he was like the princess in his book. Just without long hair. But with wonderful blue cord.

He grabbed it and wobbled a little when he looked back over his shoulder”And then his book was gone and he flew away and never touched the clouds but the ground underneath his tower window. And then he just lay there in the lovely white snow. On Christmas Eve. With closed eyes and stiff pale fingers, tightly wrapped around a small blue present. For Prian.

“Well, that’s bullshit!” Brian walked a small furrow into the brick flooring of his gateway. It was fucking cold, the stories about Justin’s father made his blood boil and he had only one more cigarette. “Why would I make a worse guardian than some hetero schmuck who doesn’t even know the kid?”

“Because heterosexuals rule the world, I’m sure you know that.”

“”Well, not my part of the world.” Brian said and turned towards the street when he heard the thud of something hitting the pavement. He squinted his eyes but couldn’t see anything. “So what’s the Master plan?” He looked up at the upper windows of the institution and walked a couple of steps closer to the posts of his gate, when he saw that one of the windows was wide open. He thought it was Justin’s.

“The plan is, to give this Taylor guy your hard earned money, so he’ll recommend you as the perfect guardian to the judge.”

“Hm.” Brian shielded his eyes when he reached the sidewalk in front of his house and peered upwards. A young man climbed around on the window sill. A young man with a silver jacket and a book. “What the fuck?” He held the phone a few inches away from his ear. “Hey!” He called towards the boy but didn’t receive any reaction.

The thought of running across the street and up the stairs to pull the kid furiously away from the window, crossed his mind briefly. But it seemed ridiculous one second later.

“What the fuck are you doing?”

He sounded angry and full of overwhelming fear, made two stupefied steps on the black asphalt and felt so sick, it hurt his stomach, when the small figure in the window frame swayed dangerously.

“Justin!”

It was meant as a scream but his voice broke in shock and devastating heartache as a muffled squeal was to be heard and the boy in the open window lost his hold. “No!” It was an anguish, helpless outcry that no one heard or noticed, as the telephone fell out of his fingers and shattered into pieces on the slightly snow covered street. He wanted to run but couldn’t. Instead his arm twitched as if he would try to reach out. “No.” The little word was almost as soundless as the odd sound, when Justin’s light body hit the ground.

The world faded to black in front of Brian’s eyes but he ran anyway, “No.” flew practically. Long strides with surreally heavy legs. “No, no, no.” Seven steps across the street, two more over the sidewalk with slit-stones and then his knees got wet as they made hard contact with the frozen ground. White snow, muddy with thick, red fluid. Arms and legs in awkward angles. Two broken farfel noodles somewhere between. “No!” He screamed hoarsely at a pale face. It was paler than usual. And he felt so angry. “God damnit!” Ten strong fingers, cramped in the smooth fabric of a silver jacket, lifting the motionless body up a little. “Stop it!” He felt his voice tremble, before he noticed that the rest of his body did the same. “I was on my way.” He said and pressed his nose against a cold face, seeing tears on it, and knew they were his own. “To get you.” He felt like choking on the words. “You goddamn stupid boy.”

He knew someone called the ambulance. He knew there were other people around. People who shouted at him to get off the victim, make room.

It didn't matter. Nothing mattered anymore. Not when he collected a crumpled, wet fairy tale book, straightening the pages carefully before shutting it. Not when he had to shut his eyes as he took the little blue parcel out of thin fingers and trembled as he kissed cool lips. They were bloody. It didn't matter. "Come on." Nothing did, but the faint pulse he felt against his hands, when he carried Justin Taylor slowly across the street. To the other side, where he wanted to be.

Because there was nothing else that Prian could do.

The paramedics wanted to know who Justin's legal guardian was. Brian said he didn't know the guardian, but that he was Justin's friend.

Apparently, that wasn't good enough and he didn't go with the ambulance, but drove in his own car to the hospital. He had Justin's bag on the backseat.

As Justin was transferred from the ambulance into some room with swinging doors and bright lights, Brian thought briefly about calling Michael. Or Cynthia. Then he wondered why, and sat alone on a white plastic chair, in some endless long hospital corridor.

After the first two hours he started to feel angry about the empty, white silence though, and played a scene in his head, where he drove to Delmont with a shotgun. It ended as bloody as Justin's lips had tasted and the image of teary blue eyes and a poisoned apple popped up in front of his eyes. They grew blurry and he wiped them with his sleeve.

After three and a half hours, Brian stared at the self made card that stuck to the small blue parcel, he held in his hands. He pulled it off and put it in the left inner-pocket of his jacket. It felt warm.

Ten minutes later he hesitantly unwrapped the light blue present, stared blankly at the unexpected cowry-shell bracelet he found underneath the paper, and let it quickly disappear inside his hand. He cleared his throat and looked aside."

In the fourth hour on the hard chair, the unusual bracelet lay around his wrist and he wanted to call Blake. He realized he didn't have his number.

In the fifth hour he realized he wouldn't need the number, because he no longer sat alone in the endless long corridor. The silence didn't change though. He was glad about it. He didn't feel like talking.

But Blake did. Half an hour later. With a light nudge against Brian's arm. "You're wearing it."

"I like shells." That was true, but not the reason he was wearing it.

Blake folded his hands and looked at the floor, "So..." before nodding towards the closed swinging doors. "What are they doing in there?"

Brian glanced at the doors, too and shrugged. "His legs are broken. I guess they need to fix them. And three of his ribs."

Blake didn't say anything.

"And they said something about damage of his internal organs. And bleeding." Brian cleared his throat. "Internal bleeding." He grimaced and picked at the tip of his thumb.

Blake pressed his lips tightly together, nodding again. And after a moment he exhaled with something similar to a laugh. "I'm so glad he's alive." He looked at Brian with a smile.

Brian looked away and decided that blond, blabbering tower people were maybe better than empty, silent corridors.

It was the last six minutes of Christmas Eve when Brian Kinney was allowed to enter a small, white, sterile room on the right side of the corridor. It had no window at all, but a big glass wall with blinds to close and the bed had rails over the full length to prevent blond brats from falling out.

Blond brats with bandages all over and tubes and pipes and beeping monitors. Blond brats with closed eyes, slightly opened lips and extremely short hair.

Brian shifted uneasily from one foot to the other and in the end sighed a little without noticing it himself, and then he went closer. One step and another one, and he touched one of the flickering monitors, and looked down at his shoes before he made the final step and bumped the cold metal bed rail lightly with his hip. He cleared his throat. This close to the bed, the room didn't smell of antiseptic spray anymore. It smelled like Justin.

His eyes moved rapidly back and forth, studying the boy's still features; pale and calm, clean and spotless, except for one little scratch on the right cheek and a light bruise under his chin.

He wanted to touch him, but only dared to extend one finger. He tipped it to Justin's nose. It felt good. So he brushed it gently over a soft cheek, passed one closed eye, and finally watched his hand twitch and fan out over short blond hairs. It seemed a hint darker now, but was incredibly soft.

Brian wanted to crawl in this bed and lie beside the boy. Close enough to breath into a warm neck.

Of course he couldn't. But he sniffed through his nose and leaned forward to kiss a pale, pink mouth. He closed his eyes while doing it and lingered a moment longer, breathing in the smell of clean skin and pure Justin. "Wake up." He whispered it against smooth, dry lips—very quietly. And then he kissed him again and pulled back.

"Hhh." Justin sighed and clicked his tongue. Something inside his head felt heavy and too big. And he was tired. But his mouth tasted like ice cream.

Brian blinked startled, stepping an inch backwards.

And after a minute, or maybe two, blue eyes fluttered slowly open. "Yes." Justin tried to move, his voice sounding low and rough.

"Ssh." Brian touched his hand. "No talking."

Justin's gaze wandered in the wrong direction as he tried to orientate himself somehow. "Certain?"

Brian rubbed his knuckles. "Are you in pain?"

"Hff." The boy sighed again, closed his eyes and looked tiredly at Brian when he opened them again. "Into-into the castle."

Brian stared back, glanced briefly at one of the monitors to pinch the bridge of his nose, and eventually huffed a little laugh when he looked back at Justin. "You couldn't take the stairs, huh?"

All he got for an answer was the innocent blinking of two blue eyes. But that was fine.

And he released Justin's fingers, went out of the room, came back with a chair, put it close to the boy's bed, sat down and stuck his hand through the bed rail, onto a thin blanket.

"Sleep."

It took Justin a long while to answer. "Yes."

“Yes.” Brian leaned back and closed his eyes.

And almost 10 minutes later, shortly after midnight in the dawn before Christmas, he felt a feather light fingertip against his palm.

“My—my prince.”

He wrapped his hand around it, holding the thin finger loosely, and answered because he wanted to and this was special...a special situation—a special feeling. A very special man in his life. And everything felt so worth it.

“It’s true. I am.”

Chapter 30 (Epilogue)—I Might Have Laughed If You Told Me

“WELL THAT’S BECAUSE YOU’RE A BLEEDIN’ IDIOT WHO CAN’T SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PRESENTABLE LAYOUT AND COMPLETE SHIT THAT WILL MAKE THE CLIENT THROW UP ON YOUR FUCKING UGLY SHOES!”

The whole building seemed to shake under the force of the feral growl, resounding through the corridors of the executive floor, a few minutes after Lunch break.

“My god.” A young intern glanced nervously in the direction of Mister Kinney’s closed office doors. “Who’s in there?”

“Olaf. The new head of the art department.” Cynthia assumed. “He did brilliant work back in his former company in Sweden. But here?” She cringed when her boss turned his voice level again up to the maximum. “He seems to have a few communication problems or something.”

“OH YOU WILL DO IT AGAIN ALRIGHT, OR YOU CAN RESHIP YOUR SORRY ASS BACK TO IKEA-ISLAND!”

The doors flew open and a pale-faced, thin man in a corduroy suit hurried out. “Thanks Mr. Kinney.” He did an obsequiously half-bow midst walking and disappeared in one of the elevators with thick beads of sweat on his forehead.

“Poor guy.” The intern watched, sympathizing with the man’s plight, as the elevator doors closed.

“Ah.” Cynthia smirked. “I’m sure he’ll get used to certain people’s varying moods.”

The young man shook his head and gathered a couple of files from the secretary’s desk. “Yeah, with the help of a good therapist maybe?”

Cynthia still grinned when the phone rang. “Vanguard, you’re speaking to Mister Kinney’s office, how may I help you?”

There was a short rustling sound on the line and then nothing but even breathing.

“Hello?” She furrowed her brows and sat down on her swivel chair. “Hello? May I help you?”

21 seconds later a heavy sigh could be heard.

And Cynthia’s grin changed into a loving little smile. “Oh, hello Justin. How are you doing today?”

She received an answer after a short moment. “Yes.”

"I bet you want to talk to Brian, am I right?"

The line was silent.

She smiled again. "Just wait a second, I'll put you through." She pressed a button and waited for the answer.

It was a barked, "WHAT?!" after three seconds.

She didn't lose her smile. "There is an important call on line two."

"Hm." He grumbled back, took the call. "Kinney." And didn't receive any answer other than steady breathing into his ear. He lifted one eyebrow and waited; enjoying the relaxed feeling, as some of the tension immediately left his body.

The right corner of his mouth twitched, when he heard a little sigh and after almost a whole minute a small word.

"Hello." It was wrongly emphasized but clearly understandable.

"That was very good."

"Yes. Justin."

Brian leant back in his chair, his eyes wandering automatically towards the clock on the wall. "Why are you calling? You have your physiotherapy in 3 minutes."

"No."

"Sure you do. Look on the schedule."

Justin sighed in annoyance. "No."

Brian's lips folded inside. "Where's your therapist? Is she already there?"

Justin looked directly in his therapist's expectant face and then demonstrative up to the ceiling. "No."

Mister Kinney pressed the tip of his tongue deep into his cheek, stood up from his chair and went over to his leather sofa, to slouch down on it. "Did Blake make you call me?"

Justin blinked and didn't answer.

Brian sighed, deciding to change the subject. "Work sucks today."

"Yes."

"I'm surrounded by a bunch of idiots."

“Yes.” Justin began to sway slightly from left to right. “Fuck—fucking income-incompetent people.”

Brian folded his lips inwards again to keep from smiling. “Yes. Everywhere.”

“Yes.” Justin sighed and knew exactly what the Prince meant.

They were silent for a while, before Brian spoke again. “How much longer until I come home?”

“Yes. Certainly three—three hours and forty-eight minutes.”

“Hm.” Brian glanced at the clock. “Make that two hours and forty-eight minutes. I’ll come home early.”

“Yes. Of course see—see Justin.”

“No. Drink a beer and take a long shower.”

“Yes.” Justin giggled a little. “Certainly see Justin.”

“Well, it’ll be unavoidable since you’ll be all over me the minute I walk in the door. Brat.”

“Yes.” Justin looked in the direction of the entry hall. He really would’ve preferred to?

”...see Prian now.”

“Later. What do you want to do tonight?”

“Yes. Go—go for a walk.” With Prian. To the shit brew water and the evil birds.

Brian felt himself relax some more. He really enjoyed pointlessly walking around with the little twat. “Hm. You can’t. You’re legs won’t work properly since you’re not doing your physiotherapy like you’re supposed to. But hey.” He made sure the tone of his voice was absolutely serious. “We could always use the wheelchair.”

A strange feeling shot through Justin’s belly and he looked down at his feet to wriggle the toes in his shoes. He hated the wheelchair. It was ugly and one couldn’t walk on his own with it. He felt a little ill and rocked more strongly back and forth.

Brian waited a moment. “Why don’t you go and do your exercises with Isabel.”

Justin sniffed soundly through his nose and looked up to the ceiling, but his eyes flickered uneasily around.

“Justin.”

It was silent.

“Physiotherapy sucks?”

Justin sniffed again. “Yes.” The therapist had a thick chest and always touched him.

“Do it anyway. Then we can go for a walk.”

“Yes.” Justin rubbed his nose and then his left eye.

“And dance.”

“Yes.” In the kitchen and the shower but never at Babylon.

“And practice swimming, so you won’t drown again in the fucking pool.”

“Yes.” Justin smiled a little and looked over at the terrace doors. He liked swimming with Prian in the wet, blue frog water...

“Well.”

“What ever.” Brian could hear a slight smile through the phone and liked it very much. “Will you go and practice with Isabel now?”

“Yes.”

Brian showed a slight smile, too and said his answer in a low voice. “Good boy.”

“Yeah?” Justin’s belly felt much better now. “Justin.”

“Great.” Brian grinned. “Now give me a kiss and then let me go back to my work already.”

The pure sound of happy laughter came through the line.

The prince was of course a little bit stupid. One couldn’t kiss over the phone. There was only voice but?

”Certainly no mouth!”

Brian’s tongue wandered back into his cheek and then the laughter from the other end of the line stopped abruptly when he kissed the mouthpiece of his phone soundly.

“Hh!” Justin pressed the receiver to his ear and didn’t dare to blink. Then he licked his lips and felt his heartbeat sped up, as the Prince whispered for him.

“I’ll lick your mouth when I’m back home, okay?”

Something warm formed deep inside Justin’s stomach and he felt a little nervous. “Yes.”

“Good. Now say goodbye and go do your therapy.”

“Yes.”

“Say it.”

“Good—goodbye.” It wasn’t the right way to pronounce the word distinctly, but it didn’t matter because Justin remembered to press the red button on the telephone to disconnect the line.

Mister Kinney sat in his office, on an expensive Italian leather sofa for six more minutes, feeling oddly proud.

At 5.10 pm, Justin stood in front of the beautiful prince castle, staring down the street through his sun glasses. Now and then he shoved a few blond bangs off of his forehead, sighing deeply. He thought it was really very warm in June. Even when the day was almost over.

“Yes.”

He gazed up to the sky. It was still blue and the sun shone brightly. He didn’t like it and really would’ve preferred for the moon to come out, because the air never was very warm without the sun.

“Hff.”

He sighed again, made a really annoyed face behind his sunglasses and turned his attention back to the street.

“Yes certain—certainly see Justin at five-five pm.”

Maybe the black car vehicle drove only very slowly today?

“Justin!” Blake appeared in the courtyard, taking his own sunglasses off. “What are you doing on the sidewalk?! I told you to wait by the gate posts!”

Justin blinked and remained where he was without moving a single toe.

“Hey.” Blake jogged over, stopped and pointed to the iron-gate that marked Brighton’s driveway. “You can see the street from behind the gate, too.”

Justin looked uninterestedly aside. He didn’t want to wait behind the gate. He wanted to stay here on the sidewalk with all the slit stones.

“Justin.” Blake grabbed for the boy’s wrist.

“Naaa!” Justin made himself stiff and started to rock back and forth strongly.

Blake pursed his lips and put his hands on his hips.

Justin stopped screaming, but swayed a little more.

The nurse shook his head and went a few steps over to the low wall, bordering Mister Kinney’s property. He pursed his lips again with a reproachful look at Justin, and then sat down. “You’re as stubborn as a mule, you know that?”

“Yes.” Justin stopped rocking and turned his gaze back to the street.

Blake looked up to the sky and put his sunglasses back on. “God it’s oppressively hot today.”

“Yes.” Justin really didn’t like it.

“Maybe you should wear a hat or something.”



“Yes.” A blue one with a big purple feather, like the puss in boots had.

“Brian would kill me if you have a sun stroke.”

“Yes. Don’t—don’t forget the sun—sun block.”

Blake smiled. “We didn’t.”

Justin too. “Yes, sun—sun protection factor fif-fifty.”

“Yeah, Brian wouldn’t like your skin crispy brown I guess.”

Justin laughed. “Yeah, looks like a fuck—fucking roast turkey!”

“He said that, huh?” Blake shook his head grinning.

“Yes. My—my Prian.” He liked the prince so much.

“Hm.” The nurse stretched his legs out. “So, are you two having plans tonight?”

Did they? Justin wasn’t sure. But he really would’ve preferred to go for a walk tonight and maybe eat some?

“Ice cream with—with sprinkles.” And whipped cream and a cherry without stalk.

“Uhh.” Blake held his stomach with a theatrical sigh. “I hope you remember to bring some home for me. I could eat a whole bathtub full of chocolate almond ice cream!” He sighed again. “Or bathe in it.”

Justin wrinkled his nose in skepticism. Presumably Plake would...

”...become very dirty.”

Blake waved his hand half-heartedly, “I don’t care. Better dirty than deliquescent.” and then sat up straight and pointed to the left. “Look, there he is.”

“Yes.” Justin saw the black car vehicle come closer on the street and felt some butterflies flapping their wings inside his belly. Automatically he reached for the golden jewelry around his neck and stroked the little butterfly pendant with the tip of his thumb.

Blake stood up and guided the boy out of the way, to make room for the car to enter the gateway.

Brian wore his newest Armani sunglasses and a complete suit, despite the temperature, which was 95 degrees Fahrenheit. He parked near the garage doors, gathered his cell phone, keys, wallet and a styrofoam cup of iced coffee, and climbed out of the jeep with a blank expression.

Justin waited silently a few steps away, slightly swaying on his feet, and his gaze held aside.

Brian locked the car, took a sip of his coffee and then stood directly in front of Justin, tilting his head to the side. “Are you wearing sun block?”

“Justin didn’t say anything, and sighed softly after 32 seconds.

Brian moved a step closer, sniffing the younger man's cheek. "That's good." He said it quietly right beside a warm ear shell and then kissed it.

"Yes." Justin's eyes moved rapidly behind his shaded glasses and ten toes wriggled openly in a pair of \$174.95 black Hugo Boss Flip-Flops. "Certainly lick—licks Justin's mouth. Prian says."

Brian showed a small smile, placed five guiding fingers on a soft neck, pecked Justin's mouth and then stroked his tongue slowly over the smooth lips, before moving back again to study the boy's face. "How was physiotherapy?"

Justin didn't feel like talking about his exercises and instead lay his head against Prian's chest. He liked the smell of the prince's beautiful suit.

Brian wrapped one arm loosely around Justin's back. "Did Isabel leave a report for me?"

Justin didn't say anything.

"Of course she did." Blake came over and smiled. "She wouldn't dare leave this house otherwise."

Brian rubbed Justin's back for a moment and then released him to walk towards the front door. "So everything went alright?"

Blake followed. "Yep. We had a great day."

Justin too. "A blast." He said it in a monotonous voice and entered the house with his blank gaze up to the ceiling.

Brian shut the door and flung his wallet and keys on the small ornamental table on the left side. "Well, seems like I'm the only one who had a shitty day then."

"I wouldn't say that." Emmett passed through the entrance hall with a sweaty forehead and a huge laundry basket in his hands. "But the customer service guy who came to check the washing machine seemed to have the time of his heterosexual life, when he fished the ribbed condom out of the inlet spout."

"Yes, certain—certainly a new one." Justin reported and disappeared behind the servant in the living room.

"A new what?" Mister Kinney squinted his eyes in irritation as he followed the two other men. "Customer service guy, washing machine or fucking condom?!" God, he wished this goddamn day would be over soon.

"Yes of course always—always use a condom." Justin walked into the kitchen with small steps, to drink a glass of water. "Prian says."

"He did?" Emmett lost his interest in folding underwear briefly. "When?"

Brian smacked the back of his head when he passed by to join Justin in the kitchen and fetch a beer out of the fridge.

"The guy said you'd need a new washing machine." Blake clarified and shouldered his bag. "And advised to check your sheets more carefully, before throwing them in the laundry." He winked and then put his sunglasses back on.

"Great." Brian opened his beer bottle and took a big sip.

"Not the end of the world. Just a new washing machine." Blake told him, waved for Justin, "See you tomorrow, Justin. Enjoy your ice cream." and left with a friendly smile on his face.

“What fucking ice cream?!” Brian shot Justin a deprecating look.

“Yes.” Justin placed his empty water glass back on the counter. “Certainly go for—go for a walk.”

“Yeah.” Brian grumbled and took another gulp of his beer. “But certainly not to the fucking ice cream parlor.”

Justin loved the ice cream parlor. It was near the park and very colorful and one could sit outside with a red-white striped sunshade over the head. But the best thing was that it smelled so very wonderful.

“Would you stop sniffing the air like a goddamn dog and eat your fucking ice cream already? I’m not planning on spending the whole evening in this calorie polluted place.” Brian was frenetically stirring his coffee, while looking around suspiciously, as if at any moment someone could jump on his back and force him to eat a huge Mocha Madness hot fudge, coffee ice cream sundae, topped with chocolate syrup, chocolate jimmies, whipped cream and a cherry without stalk.

“Yes.” Justin tipped his head to the side and looked up to stare at the pretty round sun shade. Of course the man with the white apron had brought him a cup with one scoop of banana ice cream, two scoops of chocolate ice cream, a heart shaped crispy wafer and some brown sprinkles on top, even though he wanted a whole lot of peanut butter fudge ice cream in...

“...a bathtub.”

Brian lifted one eyebrow and laid his coffee spoon on the saucer. “You know full well that no one eats ice cream out of bathtubs. You have a cup.”

“Yes. Certainly a bathtub.”

Brian stared at him, shrugged after a moment, and eventually reached out to pull the wafer out of Justin’s ice cream. He gave the boy a vacant look as he licked the banana ice cream off before taking a big bite.

Justin’s heart hammered in his chest. He was shocked. The prince ate his terrific cookie!

Brian finished the last piece of waffle with a slight grin, sipped at his coffee and then used his coffee spoon to scoop a little of Justin’s chocolate ice cream. “Hm.” He nodded approvingly and reached out to gather some more. “Not bad.”

“Oh oh.” Justin started to rock on his chair nervously. “Yes, certain—certainly eats Justin’s ice cream.”

Mister Kinney shrugged and ate another spoonful. “This shit costs \$11.50 and it starts to melt. Someone has to eat it.”

“Yes, of—of course eats all the sprinkles.”

Absolutely calm, Brian took some of both ice cream flavors on the spoon, fed it unceremonious to Justin and then leaned in to kiss him. “How many sprinkles?” He spoke against cool lips and licked them briefly.

“Yes.” Justin nudged his nose against Brian’s cheek. “Thirty—thirty three.”

Brian pulled back and fed the younger man another spoon. “There were thirty-three sprinkles on the ice cream?”

Justin looked blankly aside and rubbed his nose with the back of his hand. “Yeah.”

“Hm.” Brian handed Justin the spoon, leaned casually back in his chair and sipped his coffee. “That’s not very much for \$11.50.” He placed the cup back on the table. “Fucking cutthroats everywhere.”

“Yeah.” Justin ate some banana ice cream, sighed and looked up at the sunshade again. “Certainly have to—have to sue them.”

“Hm.” Brian nodded while lighting a cigarette. “Maybe.”

“Yeah.” Justin nodded too. “Fuckers.”

It was 8.32 pm when they passed the big wooden sign, marking the Riverview Park entry and the air was a little bit colder now, but Justin still had his red hoodie jacket tied around his waist. He looked around, liking the green lawns and small way stones everywhere. In the distance was a dog with long, brown fur that drank some water out of the big fountain. Justin giggled a little and crinkled his nose under his sunglasses when he looked up at Brian.

Brian gave a brief smile in return and reached for Justin’s hand. “Let’s walk on the grass. I have stones in my shoes.”

“Yeah.” Justin plodded a little reluctantly along behind the prince. “Certain—certainly keep off the grass.”

“Says who?” Brian took his flip-flops off and hooked them onto three fingers of his free hand.

“Yeah.” Justin gazed up to the sky. There were three big clouds and five small, but everything around them was very blue. “Of course the sign.”

“Fuck the sign.” Mister Kinney looked around and decided to bring more distance between himself and this bed of pink flowers. “We’re taxpayers. That’s our lawn.”

It was? Justin blinked and made three more steps on the soft grass. Yes, he liked his lawn.

Brian squeezed Justin’s hand. “Go on, take off your shoes. Walking barefoot is healthy for your feet.”

“Yes.”

Justin stopped and Brian waited 161 patient seconds until both of the kid’s Hugo Boss flip flops stood in the grass. He bent down to carry them along with his own.

“Does it feel good?” He took Justin’s hand again.

“Yeah.” Justin curled his toes. The grass tickled against his skin and was a little bit cold. It felt like green rain.

“Hm. Just watch out that you don’t step on a bee or something.”

“Yes.” Justin watched as two men on bicycles passed on the way with the little white stones. He didn’t like bees. They made strange noises.

After six minutes of walking over the well-kept lawns of Riverview Park, Brian released Justin’s hand and requisitioned the red sweat jacket. Justin didn’t react, so he took it off the boy’s waist himself and spread it out on the ground near a sturdy oak. Then he flung the two pairs of shoes in the grass, sat down and demanded the same from his companion. “Well? Sit down.”

“No.” Justin swayed a little from left to right and didn’t know why the prince was sitting on the floor suddenly. On his beautiful red-

”... Jacket.”

“I’m certainly not ruining my pants with grass stains. They’re a remembrance of my last white party.”

“Yes.” Justin curled the blond hair strand behind his ear around his finger. Twice. It was getting longer.

Brian leaned back on his elbows and then held one hand out. “Come here.”

“Yeah.” It took almost two minutes until Justin Taylor kneeled a little bit stiffly on his red jacket between Prian Kinney’s legs. On their own lawn in Riverview Park.”?”

Brian nudged his inner thigh against Justin’s side. “Well isn’t that the most lesbionic thing ever, dear?” He faked a big smile. “Sitting on a lawn together to enjoy the early evening. How nice.”

“Yeah.” Justin rocked a little back and forth on his heels. He felt nervous. Certainly there lived?

”...many ants in the grass.”

“Don’t be a girl.” Brian nudged him again and tipped his head back to exploit the last rays of the sun for his facial tan.

“Yes.” Justin rubbed his forehead. “Of—of course spiders.”

Brian didn’t open his eyes. “There are no spiders.”

“Yeah.” Justin sounded concerned. “Tick—ticks live in the grass.”

Brian frowned. “What’s a fucking tick?!”

Justin looked to the side, but seemed focused on what he said. “Blood—blood-sucking parasites.” He scratched his forehead again and then his ear. “Of course they—they are related to scorpions.”

“Scorpions?”

“Yeah. And spiders.”

“Did you read about them?”

Did he? Yes. In a book and?

”...the pharmacies magazine.”

“Hm.” Brian grabbed for the kid’s wrist and pulled slightly. “Come here.”

“Yeah.” Justin bent forward until he lay against Prian’s chest. He sighed. The prince was warm and smelled so very nice.

Brian kissed the top of his head and rubbed his back lightly. “There’s at least ten gallons of coffee in my blood. No fucking tick would like to drink that.”

“Yeah.” Justin blinked through his sunglasses. “And sprinkles.”

“Yeah I’m sure they won’t bite anyone who just ate thirty-three sprinkles.”

“Certainly twenty—twenty-eight.”

“Twenty-eight?” Brian’s hand stilled for a moment on the boy’s back.

“Yes. Of course Prian eat—eats five sprinkles.”

“Of course.” Mister Kinney nodded and started rubbing again. “You should be a fucking accountant you know?”

“Yes.”

“Hm.”

Justin turned his head to press his nose in Prian’s shirt, sniffed a little and then rested his cheek again on the prince’s chest. There was a light breeze blowing and he liked it. It made him feel his hair and he got slight goose bumps on his bare arms. He shivered.

Brian wrapped his arm around Justin’s body and peered down at him. “Gsst.”

Justin moved around and looked up. He smiled. Prian looked funny through the shaded glasses.

“Are you cold?” Brian took the boy’s sunglasses off.

Justin didn’t say anything, he just watched as Prian’s lips moved with every word. He wanted to lick it.

“You’re shivering. Do you want to put on your jack-? He was interrupted when Justin’s tongue snaked out to touch his mouth.

Brian blinked surprised and smacked his lips. “What was that for?”

Justin chuckled quietly.

Mister Kinney lifted one eyebrow, stuck the tip of his tongue into his cheek and curled then his fingers around the back of Justin’s neck to pull the boy closer and kiss him.

It was just a little peck at first, but grew deeper until Justin made small mewling sounds and pressed himself closer against Prian’s body.

Brian held onto Justin’s chin and pulled back a little to examining the kid’s face. He found closed eyes, open lips, shimmering with wetness in the evening sun, and he kept his own eyes purposefully open when he dipped his tongue appreciatively back into this warm mouth to taste it some more.

Justin tilted his head a little to the side, letting out a relaxed sigh.

Brian pecked him on the lips. “Brat.”

“Yes.” Justin pressed the tip of his nose against Prian’s, trying to look him in the eyes at the same time.

Brian let him, stroking the soft blond hair strands at the back of his head. “It’s strange you know?”

“Yeah.” Justin enjoyed breathing his warm breath near the prince’s face.

“I kind of like to sit pointlessly around here with you.”

“Yeah. Certain—certainly maggots in the—maggots in the grass.”

Brian huffed a laugh and let his head fall back. “Jesus! And I thought I was the most unromantic person on the planet!”

“Yeah.” Justin blinked his long eyelashes. “My Prian.” He really didn’t like bugs.

It was slowly getting dark when they made their way back to the car. Justin felt tired and suddenly found it difficult to walk on the small white way stones in his flip-flops. He kept on stumbling and couldn’t concentrate because Prian was talking and talking on his little silver phone.

“Yeah.”

Brian slowed down a bit while rubbing Justin’s knuckles with his thumb. “No, I have some people coming over tomorrow afternoon to help Emmett.” He guided the boy to the left and out of the park, in the direction of the parking area. “No, you really don’t need to bring anything.” He drew his fingers a hint tighter around Justin’s fingers and looked back over his shoulder when the kid stumbled again. “No, not even lasagna.” Brian rolled his eyes and released Justin’s hand to unlock the passenger door of the jeep. “Yes, okay, I’ll see you tomorrow.” He snapped the phone shut, tossed it on the dashboard and then helped Justin to climb in the car. “That was Debbie.”

“Yes.” Justin rocked a little on his seat and curled a thick hair strand around his index finger. He was really tired.

“She thinks I’m letting you starve and wants to bring you real good food tomorrow.”

“Yes. Certain—certainly white beet.”

Brian leaned in, helping Justin to put on his seat belt. “Yeah. Tell her that.” And he sighed and gave the younger man a long look. “Tired now?”

The blue eyes flickered and finally drifted aside, but five slightly cool fingers reached out to stiffly touch the prince’s cheek. “Yeah.”

“You’ve missed the good night greeting again.”

“Yeah.”

“Want to read a little when we get home?”

“Yeah.” Justin didn’t want to read today. He wanted to-

”...sleep with Prian.”

Brian folded his lips inwards, smiled briefly and in the end pressed his nose against Justin’s. “You have your own bed.” He spoke quietly.

“Yeah.” Justin too. “Sleeps—sleeps with Justin.”

Brian closed his eyes for a moment. He liked the feeling of Justin’s clumsy touches on his face. “You want me to?”

“Yes.” Justin stroked Brian’s cheek with his finger. “Be with my prince.”

And Brian didn’t say anything, just kissed soft lips. Twice. And then he drove home and went to bed at 10.28 pm on a Friday evening.

END