

This Side of Paradise

by

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Kurt/Blaine || AU || PG

Kurt was an author waiting for something to get back on his feet. Blaine was just traveling to find something outside himself. The night they meet in a lounge in 1920s Paris changes everything for the two of them. [Link to art.](#)

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Prologue

Kurt needed inspiration.

And it wasn't that he needed some bang on the head, life changing experience in order to jump start his creative process. He just wanted something *significant* to happen. He wanted to see something, to learn something that would spark his interest and maybe get him to sit at a desk and just—write.

He moved to Paris specifically for that reason. He assumed that living in the cultural center of the world would make it easier to write his second novel, but the opposite happened. The second he'd stepped foot onto Parisian territory, he'd been swept up into a world that was so much *more* than what he had known in New York—leaving his work behind.

See, New York had been one thing. Moving there had done enough to change the course of his life. He got to open up and see things bigger than himself. He went to parties, he met people, and he wrote. He wrote about everyone and everything, finally stumbling upon something tangible enough to become his first novel: *A New York Story*

To his surprise, everyone read it. Soon enough Kurt Hummel was no longer Kurt Hummel. He was *A New York Story*. That's all anyone wanted to hear from him. Sure there were still parties and friends, but the book had taken over that part of his life. There was no where he could go without crowds following him, people quoting his own lines back at him. After at first being flattered by this attention, Kurt soon found himself craving it. He would get irritated if someone would pass by without knowing who he was. It was six months later—sitting in a large, empty apartment—that he realized he needed to get away before he completely lost himself.

So, he left. He left everyone behind and made his way to Paris where at least he would be among other writers and artists. Besides, how could one not love Paris with its quaint city streets and loving atmosphere? He expected a boutique at every corner and a creperie on each street. He wanted to see beautiful women clad in haute couture lounging across from wealthy gentlemen with glasses of scotch.

The stereotype might have been why Kurt was so unprepared for the rowdy underground city that somehow took him under its wing. What he expected Paris to be wasn't exactly what it was, but then again there was an entire life hadn't been expected.

This is how, about a year after he published his first novel, Kurt found himself in the dusty, smoky lounge room where the wealthy came to play and the social climbers came to court. La Belle Époque. It was originally supposed to be a throwback to the days of peace and discovery before The War, but after the American prohibition sent so many of the young and talented to Europe, it soon evolved into a modern lounge.

It was there that Kurt found himself pressed up between Rachel and Elliot, squinting in the dim light, trying to catch the attention of a waiter who seemed mesmerized by a woman two tables away from where he sat.

Chapter One

Kurt was supposed to be writing a book. He was supposed to be writing a novel that would once again change the way people saw their lives. Unfortunately, Kurt had only written about two pages of usable material. Even with that, instead of taking every call that his publisher made, instead of trying to brainstorm, he decided to spend time in what was probably once a brothel before someone decided to try to assimilate into the changing culture in the city.

Kurt couldn't be blamed for trying to find inspiration outside of himself. La Belle Époque was a modern lounge with an old name, exactly like the people who came to it. It should have been a perfect place to find something to spark his interest. The people here were from families that everyone in Paris recognized, but they were the younger generation. They were born into money and were searching for a way to escape the uppity parents who were so stuck in their old ways. They sang and danced; they smoked cigarettes and drank champagne by the bottle. Most of all, they lived.

Kurt didn't really belong there. He didn't come from wealth, nor did he have any high expectations to escape from. That didn't bother him, though. Kurt never really *belonged* anywhere.

The best friends he had were Rachel and Elliot. Like Kurt, Rachel didn't originally come from money, but she was famous by the delicate age of 19. A model. After her original plan of becoming a movie star at 16 didn't pan out, she moved to Paris. Through a lucky turn of events she met Coco Chanel, who praised her "American Beauty" and helped her secure a job in print modeling. A couple years later she was at the forefront of the advertising revolution and was even starting to dabble in film.

Elliot was different. Officially he was Samuel Elliot Evans III, just like his American father. His mom though—still very proud of her French heritage—insisted that he go by his middle name while living in Paris. "It will make you fit in, people will respect you," she told him. Both his mother and his father came from wealthy families, and would pass it on to him when he grew up. He was born rich, and likely to die that way.

Of course the money didn't stop the scorn that came his way. Both Rachel and Elliot were often pushed out of the elite social groups because of their American roots, so they created an unlikely friendship. When Kurt first walked into La Belle Époque in a confused and likely drunk state, he was thankful when they invited me over to their table.

The three of them didn't go there every night, but often enough that the people began to look familiar. This particular night, though, something was a little off. Everything was slightly more chaotic than usual, and that was saying something. Rachel was busy flirting with a man in a very expensive looking suit and Elliot was deep in conversation with another someone I had never seen before. Not knowing what else to do, I tried to flag down a waiter for another drink.

It didn't matter how many waiters passed Kurt that night, each one glazed over him. There was one who finally nodded in his direction, indicating that he would be there shortly. He was short but well built with hair slicked back expertly. Kurt studied him as he attended to a woman at the table next to mine. As she addressed him, his eyes shone with her words. Mesmerized. He was probably new to the city. It was endearing at best, but a little too eager for Kurt's personal taste.

Kurt was snapped out of thought when Rachel leaned backward into him, laughing uproariously.

"Hey! Keep to your side. There's plenty of space for you and...who is this exactly?"

He extended a hand around the petite brunette, "Henri. I am sorry I startled Rachel."

Kurt harrumphed in response. It was rude, but he was already irritated to begin with. After Rachel gave Kurt a look, he checked himself and began again. "I'm sorry." I took his hand "Kurt. And how do you know Rachel, Henri?"

"She was modeling yesterday, and I am one of the junior artists. We happened to pass by each other yesterday."

Kurt raised my eyebrow at Rachel, and she shrugged in response. Kurt knew all too well that this one would likely turn out to be just another one of her pets. Most of the men here tried to take advantage of her, seeing her as a wide-eyed, flippant little model girl. In reality, Rachel was one of the strongest and most independent people Kurt knew, and she tended to turn the tables on the men who tried to take advantage of her.

As Kurt turned away from the two, the waiter Kurt had flagged down earlier was making his way over to his table. He approached with what appeared to be thinly veiled excitement. Kurt swallowed a smirk after seeing his eagerness, but held himself back realizing that he didn't want an upset waiter spitting in my drinks.

“Bonsoir Monsieur, Qu’est ce que je peux rendre pour vous?” He asked. The accent was strong and obvious. Kurt answered in English the moment he recognized it.

“You’re American?”

He laughed nervously and wiped his hands on a cloth hanging from his back pocket. “Yes, is the accent that bad?”

Kurt shrugged lightly, his mood softening. “Not terrible, no. Try swallowing the words a bit more, and keep the sound in the back of your throat. It might help.”

He repeated the sentence again, this time he didn’t look at me and scrunched his forehead in concentration. “Better?” he asked afterwards.

Kurt nodded. He grinned in response and almost said something before remembering what he was doing in the first place. He straightened out, and cleared his throat. “I’m sorry. What can I bring to you Mr. Hummel?”

Kurt frowned, mildly upset that he was still being recognized by strangers. He was longing for his days of anonymity back, but every day it seemed further and further away. Kurt paused for a second, realizing he hadn’t actually thought of what he wanted to order yet.

“I’m not actually sure. What would you suggest?”

The waiter looked slightly taken aback. He stood thinking for a moment, eyes down and the tip of his tongue barely visible between his lips. After a few brief moments he looked up, “I’m going to pick up a bottle from the back. One moment please, sir.”

Kurt watched him go, picking up a few empty plates and glasses on the way. Rachel tapped Kurt on the shoulder. “Henri and I are going to go for a walk by the river. Will you be okay?”

He nodded, “Of course. I’ll see you tomorrow, then?” Kurt asked as he stood up from his seat, making way for the two of them to get out.

“Tomorrow? Yes.” She kissed him on the cheek, “Bonsoir, Kurt!”

Kurt waited until they were out of sight before he sat back down. It wasn't much later before the waiter came back, delicately handling a bottle of red wine and a glass. He presented the bottle to Kurt, who studied the label carefully.

"This is a red Bordeaux wine that was bottled in '25. Apparently that was a very good year. I haven't tried it yet, but I've been told that it's exquisite," the waiter told Kurt.

"Okay, I will take it... what did you say your name was?"

The waiter beamed at Kurt's question, "Blaine Anderson, sir," he said as he uncorked the bottle. He poured the wine into the glass with careful precision as he continued, "I am a huge fan of your work. Your book is what inspired me to move to New York before I came here."

"Mmm?" Kurt hummed as he took the glass from Blaine.

Blaine's face fell at Kurt's understated response, but he quickly recomposed himself and waited for Kurt to try what would be his third drink that night.

Kurt brought the glass to his lips and took a small sip. He sat for a moment, staring into the distance before he offered a small smile to Blaine.

"Thank you, this is very good."

"Of course, sir. Would you like for me to bring anything else out for you?"

Kurt shook his head. "No thank you."

Blaine opened his mouth as if to say something, but shut it again a second later. He offered a small nod and smile before turning around to see if there was anyone else that needed him in the quickly emptying lounge.

"Blaine?"

Blaine whipped around at the sound of his name. "Yes, Mr. Hummel?"

"Why did my story make you want to move to New York?"

Blaine lifted his eyebrows, not expecting such a personal question. He thought for a moment, trying to think of something intelligent enough to say to someone he admired so much.

“Well... I’m not completely sure. The book...it made me want to go and experience life in the way of the main character. He *lived*. My whole life I wanted something like that, but didn’t know how to get to it. Once I read your book, it seemed like I could find it in New York.”

“But you didn’t stay there,” Kurt answered automatically.

Blaine shook his head, “it didn’t do for me exactly what I expected. I ran out of money. A few months ago I had the chance to come here, so I took it.”

Kurt nodded, appearing to sink back into thought. There was a prolonged silence, and just as Blaine was beginning to question if he should leave, Kurt spoke up again.

“Do you think you are still living?”

Blaine hesitated. “I’m not sure.”

Kurt looked directly at him, his eyes narrowing in interest. He looked at Blaine intensely, seeming to come to a realization.

“How much longer are you here tonight, Blaine?”

Blaine checked the clock hanging on the opposite wall. “Another twenty minutes and then I’m done tonight.”

The corner of Kurt’s mouth curved into a smile. “Okay. How about this: after you are done, meet me outside of the entrance. We’ll see if Paris can offer more than New York did for you.”

Blaine’s mouth fell open. He was positively, absolutely sure that his mind was playing tricks on him. *Kurt Hummel* did not just ask him to meet outside of where he worked. The one person that had influenced his life more than anyone else was directly asking for his company. Blaine was speechless at first, but eventually managed to squeak out a small “Okay,” before hurrying back towards the kitchen to collect himself.”

Behind him, Kurt laughed to himself and finished off the glass of wine Blaine had brought him. He nodded a goodbye to Elliot, who was still talking to the stranger after all this time, picked up his jacket, and headed for the door.

Chapter Two

Blaine found Kurt right where he said he would, almost directly outside of the building. He was smoking a cigarette and staring directly out onto the dark street. The streets were still damp from the rain earlier in the day, and the light from the lamp posts reflected in the puddles that lined the streets.

Now that he was getting a proper look at him, Kurt was everything Blaine had thought he would be: tall, lean, and somewhat intimidating. Blaine watched him let out a slow stream of smoke. Kurt was oblivious to Blaine's presence, and the darker haired boy stood shyly a few feet away.

It wasn't until Kurt had finished his cigarette that Blaine walked up closer to get his attention. He coughed lightly, causing Kurt to turn around. When he did, he offered a closed mouth smile as he flicked the stub into the gutter.

"So, Blaine Anderson, what do you say we go to the party that inspired Fitzgerald's Gatsby?"

Blaine's eyes widened in surprise, "But we're in Europe. I thought the story took place in America?"

Kurt shrugged and started walking. The pace was a little faster than Blaine was used to, and he found himself almost skipping to keep up at times. When they had walked a couple blocks Kurt began again.

"There are Gatsbys all over the world. The book might be in New York, but it's not confined by that city. Aren't we all just a little love sick and heartbroken trying to hold on to what once was?"

Blaine furrowed his brow, "I'm not love sick or heartbroken."

Kurt chuckled, dipping his hands into his pockets, "what makes you so sure?"

"That I've never been in love?" Blaine thought for a moment, "I never felt it. I tried. I was engaged once..." Blaine trailed off, looking up at Kurt who'd suddenly lost some of his interest.

The two walked silently for a few more blocks. They twisted and turned between the streets, Blaine nearly losing Kurt in the process. A few times they walked down alleys so dark Blaine could not see what was

directly in front of him. Eventually they returned to a lighted path, and Kurt paused to pull something out of his jacket.

It was a small, shiny silver watch. He squinted at it before placing it back in his pocket, "We're making good time."

Blaine nodded and followed again after Kurt, who'd slowed down enough so that Blaine didn't feel like he was one step away from running.

"This girl you were engaged to, what was she like?" Kurt asked.

Blaine shrugged, "Nice family, pretty eyes, long brown hair."

Kurt raised his eyebrows, "how much do you remember about *her* though. The way she talked and how she acted. What made you want to marry her?"

"I never really knew. It just made sense. It wasn't until a few weeks before the wedding that I noticed I knew nothing about her. And so..." Blaine paused, quickly deciding if he wanted to share this delicate information with someone he'd only really just met. "I ran away. I don't think anyone knows where I am right now."

"Where to?"

"New York."

Kurt stopped in his tracks, Blaine nearly tripping over his feet to stop so quickly.

"I thought you said you moved to New York because of my book."

"I did."

Kurt bit on his lip, reaching into his pocket to take out a cigarette box. He pulled one out, placing it between his lips. He then offered one to Blaine, who politely refused.

After lighting it, Kurt continued, but didn't ask Blaine any more questions.

“I think we’re almost there,” Kurt commented softly. Blaine could faintly hear the sounds of a party not too far away.

A moment later, they rounded a corner, and Blaine’s eyes flew wide open. The sound and light almost appeared from nowhere, and the colors flashed before his eyes. Kurt placed a hand on Blaine’s arm and led him through the entrance.

Chapter Three

There in front of Blaine was the most extravagant party he'd ever seen: dancers, dealers, musicians, artists, businessmen, philosophers, women, men, and a few somewhere in between. He kept turning his head this way and that in an attempted to take it all in.

Above him swung chandeliers that appeared to be dripping of precious stones. Below him, the finest form of marble he'd ever seen. As Kurt took him from room to room, he caught sight of an enormous library, shelved to the ceiling with beautiful volumes that Blaine would have given anything to touch.

They went from room to room, stopping to talk to people here and there. They danced at once point, and Blaine feared he'd lost Kurt until he came swinging through a group of dancers.

Each room held something different from the last.

"How does someone manage to have all of this in the heart of the city?" Blaine asked Kurt.

Kurt only heard Blaine speaking, but didn't understand what he asked. He held up a finger, asking him to wait a second. He then shooed Blaine through a doorway. Once they were on the other side, he shut the door and the room grew quieter.

"I'm sorry, what were you trying to ask me?" Kurt asked.

"Um... uh I was just wondering how someone manages to have all of this space in such a small city."

Kurt laughed, "She just bought an entire apartment building and kept it to herself."

"She?"

Kurt nodded, amusement playing on his face. "Yes, a friend of mine. She's quite the business woman, but she loves her parties more."

"Is this what really inspired the Gatsby parties?" Blaine asked.

Kurt lifted shoulder, "I'm not sure, but I like to think so. I have seen Fitzgerald here many times, and when I read the book this is what I imagined."

Blaine took a moment to look at the room they were in. It was a rich brown color, and its main feature was a glossy, black, grand piano sitting in the middle of the room. Blaine wanted nothing more than to sit down in front of it and to play music on the keys, which looked to pristine to have been in use more than a few times.

Kurt caught him staring at it, "do you play?"

"Yes, but it's been a little while."

Kurt gestured at him to sit down, and Blaine wavered. "Are you sure I am allowed?"

"Of course!"

Blaine still looked at the door warily as he sat down in front of the instrument. It didn't feel right to use it without even knowing the host of the party, but at Kurt's insistence he placed his hands on the keys.

"What should I play?" Blaine asked, hoping that Kurt would choose something he actually knew.

"Whatever you would like. I can't play any myself, so anything you choose will be a masterpiece."

Blaine thought to himself for a moment, before deciding to just play whatever came to mind. It was always more entertaining that way. He took a breath and began to play.

Kurt smiled at the first note, thoroughly enjoying whatever it was that Blaine was playing. He was cultured enough to recognize the classics, but this didn't sound like anything he had heard before. It was vibrant and melancholy at the same time. That was the only way to describe it.

He circled the room, taking a closer look at the paintings on the wall. He didn't want to make it seem as if he was giving all of his attention to Blaine. The last thing he needed was for someone else to walk in and assume that the rumors that had started circulating about what he did with other men to seem true... even if they technically were.

Meanwhile Blaine played with an intensity he didn't know he had. He thought about the past few years of his life, trying to figure out why it was that he kept running from place to place. He was looking for something but he didn't know what it was. He then thought about what Kurt was saying earlier, how everyone was walking around heartbroken.

Blaine wasn't heartbroken. He knew that much about himself. But he also knew that he was somewhat empty. There wasn't a love lost because he'd never had the love to lose. It was something he'd never found no matter how many women his father told him were the right ones for his family.

Right now he was just thankful for Kurt. He was thankful that Kurt was there as an idea back when he needed somewhere to go in the first place. Thinking that New York was filled with intelligent people like this author of whom he looked up to every day was enough to get him to move. Then of course there was the fact that *Kurt Hummel*, the person who he admired more than anything in the world, was now standing in the same room as him, encouraging to play the music he hadn't thought of in months.

Kurt was everything he'd wished he could be and everything he'd wished he could have. He was stunning and brilliant. Composed and someone who knew more about the world than he could ever hope to. He couldn't decide if he wanted to be Kurt or if he wanted to be with...no. That was something he couldn't even think about.

The music flowed throughout the room, and Kurt found himself relaxing fully for the first time in a while. Then, Blaine stopped playing abruptly, and Kurt turned to see him sitting in front of the keys, staring blankly ahead of him.

"What's wrong?" he asked with mild concern.

Blaine looked up, his eyes seemed unfocused. "Nothing."

Kurt sat down on a chair a couple feet away, "there must be something wrong. You were playing so beautifully before you stopped."

Blaine shook his head lightly, "The piano, the music. It clears my head, but it also lets me think more. I just realized..." he breathed in. "Sometimes you realize something you wish you hadn't, and then everything changes in an instant."

Kurt pressed his lips together, thinking.

Blaine turned away, shutting his eyes tightly and collecting himself. He wanted to change the subject as quickly as possible.

“So this woman who lives here, what is her name?” Blaine asked.

“Santana,” Kurt answered immediately.

“Where is she from?”

Kurt paused. “No one is certain, actually. I’ve heard Spain and Portugal, but there is a rumor that she came over from South America and lived in Europe dirt poor for her first few years here.”

“You said you knew her?”

Kurt nodded slowly, “yes. She doesn’t tell me about her past, only where she is headed.”

There was a short tap on the door and both men started. Before either had the chance to stand up, in strode a radiant woman dressed in a luxurious red dress, and sporting a headband with a few pitch black feathers. Her hair was long and technically out of style, but for her it did not seem one day out of date. Gloves covered her arms from finger to elbow, and she held a lightly smoking cigarette in her right hand.

“Speak of the devil,” Kurt said with light amusement.

Santana smiled, “Kurt! Just the man I wanted to see.”

Chapter Four

Santana walked up to Kurt and kissed him on each cheek, taking her time greeting him. The two were very comfortable around each other, and Santana would routinely touch his arm. To Blaine, even in this casual exchanged it seemed as if Santana felt that she was Kurt's defender.

Eventually, Kurt turned to Blaine.

"Santana, this is Blaine. He is a friend of mine."

Blaine couldn't help the grin that spread across his face when he heard the word "friend" escape Kurt's lips. Kurt didn't seem to notice, but Santana's eyes shifted, looking over from Kurt to Blaine and then back again.

"What kind of friend?" She asked with a masked smirk.

Kurt gave her a warning look, "just a friend. I only met him today."

She nodded, understanding. She held out a hand towards Blaine, "pleasure to meet you."

Blaine shook it carefully, "you as well."

"I was actually going to go out for some coffee, and heard that you had been spotted earlier. I thought I could use some company, but I see that you have your hands full—."

"Oh no no I'd love to come," Kurt quickly interjected. He noticed Blaine's face fall ever so slightly with those words and added, "that is if Blaine could join us. I did drag him here with me, after all."

"Of course," Santana turned around and headed for the door.

Kurt and Blaine fell into step behind her.

"Does she always leave during parties in her own home?" Blaine asked. He winced internally, realizing how judgmental he must have sounded at the moment, and immediately wished that he could take it back.

Kurt didn't seem to notice or care at the moment. "She does, yes. She throws the parties then leaves."

Blaine took Kurt's answer silently and continued on.

Ten minutes later, the three were sitting in a café sipping small cups of coffee in peace. Santana and Kurt were going on and on about an artist Blaine had only heard of in passing before. He felt too out of place to interject.

Instead he studied his surroundings. The café was warm and inviting. It should have felt too stifling for the heat of summer, but instead it just felt warm and familiar. The tables and chairs were made from a well crafted oak, and the walls were expertly decorated.

"So you're from America?" Santana asked

Blaine nodded, placing his cup down on the table.

"How'd you meet Kurt?"

"It was just earlier tonight. I was his waiter, and we started talking."

Santana raised an eyebrow and looked at Kurt, "You're going for the waiters now? Anyone you're forgetting?"

Kurt gave her a dirty look, "he's just a friend."

She snorted and turned her attention back to Blaine. "So tell me, Blaine, are you a three-letter man?"

Blaine's face twisted in confusion. "I—a what?"

"A three-letter man. Are you—hey!" She jumped in her seat.

"Stop talking Santana"

"What for? I'm just making this easier for the both of you!" She shot back at Kurt.

"I didn't ask for your help," he grumbled into his cup.

Blaine sat there, his eyes going back and forth between the two as the argued in front of him.

"I'm sorry, what were you trying to ask me?" he finally said, cutting in between what was looking more and more like it was going to turn into a physical fight.

Kurt looked about ready to tear the dark haired woman's hair off, but she turned to Blaine instead.

"Are you homosexual?"

Blaine nearly choked on his coffee, and managed to spill some from his cup onto the table. He took his time grabbing a napkin and wiping up the spill on the table. When he looked up Santana was still staring at him, waiting for an answer to her question.

"I'm sorry, what was that?"

She sighed heavily "Are you gay, homosexual, do you like to do the unspeakable underneath the sheets with men?"

Blaine had never felt his face get warmer than it did at that moment. His shirt suddenly felt too tight and he felt as if the few other patrons in the shop were listening specifically to him.

"I um, no. Yes. No." He paused, breathing a little, "I'm not sure?" He asked more as a question.

Santana rolled her eyes, "that means you probably are."

Blaine furrowed his eyebrows and frowned. Kurt looked horrified, worried that Santana might have managed to scare off one of the few people that he didn't have a problem being around lately.

Kurt suddenly stood up in a rush, looking a little flushed and very flustered. "I think that's enough questioning for tonight. Santana is was nice seeing you," he forced out.

He pushed in his chair and looked at Blaine

“And uh, Blaine. If you would like to, would you like to join me?” Kurt seemed to be in a great deal of distress, unraveling in front of Blaine. Gone was the quiet, thoughtful man Blaine had gotten to know in the past few hours, and instead he was replaced with someone as nervous as a school boy.

Blaine placed his coffee down on the table and stood up, “Yes, I’ll come.” He offered and curt, uncomfortable nod to Santana before following Kurt out of the door. Behind them, Santana calmly finished off her coffee and smiled after them, somewhat proud of what she had just done.

Chapter Five

Kurt was walking far ahead of Blaine, wringing his hands and talking quietly to himself. Blaine followed at a distance, thinking to himself about what had just happened with Santana.

Personally, Blaine had never even realized that something like homosexuality existed until he moved into the city. Even then all he heard were whispers and rumors, nothing concrete to base his knowledge off of. It seemed like something you didn't think about. It was too taboo, it wasn't right by any means.

There were small sparks here and there, like earlier today when he was playing the piano. He never wanted to think that he would ever be subject to those unclean thoughts.

While Blaine was fighting himself, Kurt was having his own inner turmoil. Kurt knew he was gay. Arguably he'd known it since he was young, he just didn't know what it was called. His dad, well his dad tried his best to understand, but eventually Kurt had to move away just to make it easier for the man to live with himself.

Kurt knew it was wrong, but every once in a while he could convince himself that it was somewhat normal, that he wasn't worth less than anyone else. He could even argue that it was sinful, but if he was being honest with himself he'd renounced any form of god years ago.

But now that Santana had decided to bring this in full light of someone he barely knew, albeit someone he truly did want to be around, it broke past everything he had been trying to hide.

Kurt found himself in the middle of a park. He threw himself down onto one of the benches that were scattered around, hoping that Blaine would choose to sit down next to him. He didn't want to push any boundaries that might scare Blaine away.

To his surprise, Blaine sat down next to him, leaving a foot of space between them. Neither of the men said anything for a while. Both of them were fighting tears, too busy in their own minds to realize each other's anguish.

Eventually Kurt managed to compose himself, and he looked over at Blaine, "I'm sorry she did that to you."

"No, it's okay. I needed that from someone."

Kurt looked at Blaine, seeing how his hands were shaking. He didn't say anything, but let Blaine slide in and out of his thoughts.

"I am," Blaine finally said, softly. There was a silence until he repeated himself, with a bit more force "I am gay."

Kurt's eyebrows raised in surprise. "Really? You don't have to say that for my sake."

Blaine sat forward, "I'm not. I actually have never said it out loud before, because I never wanted to accept it but I guess I can't run."

Kurt nodded, "I'm sure you've realized I am too."

Blaine laughed. It started as a small chuckle and ended in a full on, hysterical, laugh.

Kurt couldn't help but join in. the two sat on the bench laughing at each other, unable to stop for the longest time.

A few minutes later, when they both composed themselves, Kurt found himself looking at Blaine. They both felt lighter somehow, even if they still had this secret that they had to keep to themselves.

"Thank you." Blaine said to Kurt with full sincerity.

"For what?"

Blaine shrugged, "for helping me realize a lot in only a few hours. For the best night in Paris I've had so far. For helping me live..."

Kurt looked up, smiling at Blaine. "Yes, well thank you for not running away from me earlier."

"I wouldn't dream of it."

The two of them sat in silence for a while, more comfortable than before. "You really are something different aren't you, Kurt?" Blaine asked, closing the awkward distance on the bench between them.

“I wouldn’t say that, except for one minor detail.”

Blaine chuckled, “What’s that?”

Kurt came dangerously close, “I think we’ve kind of clarified what that is, don’t you think?”

Blaine hummed, taking in the entirety of Kurt’s face: the slope of his nose and the bright blue green of his irises. He stopped himself at the last moment from looking down to his lips, trying to keep some level of distance just in case.

It turned out that that wouldn’t matter. Kurt, taking a leap of faith tipped his head and leaned in, pausing for a moment to let Blaine pull away if he needed to.

He kissed Blaine softly. It was dry and sweet, and was a heartbeat too short. When he pulled away, he searched Blaine’s face for any signs of inhibition.

There weren’t any. In fact, Blaine smiled at him.

“I, uh, well...” Kurt finally said, a little less composed than usual. “Was that too much.”

Blaine shook his head. “No.” he responded, and leaned in for the second kiss that night.