

The following is reprieve from *way* too much drama in an already dramatic life. If character death, rape, amnesia, love triangles, love affairs, hypocrisy, and any other over-used dramatic cliché that I'm forgetting are required to keep you interested in a story, then please X out this .pdf and erase it, as it will probably corrupt your hard-drive with love-doveyness and warm and fuzzy feelings.

This is fiction, it's gay, it's got gay sex, and it's sardonic and dry. If that offends you or if you're underage then you're either in denial, smart enough to erase your internet history, or both.

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Uh, anything else I'm forgetting applies as well!

... So yeah!

Our Place in the World:
Getting the Draft
Chp. 5 Just a Little Adventure

If you knew John and I, you'd know that we're generally a low-key couple. We don't draw attention to ourselves aside from a PDA every now and then. So when John won the away game that day, and ran up to me in the stands and basically ate my face, I was just as surprised as the two million other people in the stands and the forty million people watching at home. It was romantic, yeah and I can't say I've never wanted him to do that.

But our hormones kind of got in the way of thinking of the repercussions.

I was pretty meh about it, we aren't in the closet, we never have been and we never will be, but like I said, we're low-key. We weren't planning to draw attention to ourselves and I doubt the PR guys of the team we're going to ever even mention us. But I'm not mad at John. I was pretty caught up in the moment too and John is always affectionate like that when he's on an adrenaline kick. But the media is going to go all over this-that's for sure. And I don't know what'll become of it.

So as I leaned against the wall, opposite the locker-room door, like I've done after every one of John's games since we were in high-school, my thoughts drifted through the possibilities of what could happen. Of course being my mother's son I thought all the bad shit first. I could imagine tons of people picketing games with signs that said "Fags don't play football" or "Rot in hell queers" and shit like that. I imagined the attacks from tabloids, political martyring, even death threats.

But then there's good stuff that can come out this too. We'd start a change of views people have on gays. You know the one, where people think all gays are, uh, 'sissy' as people have put it before. I can't account for myself, but John isn't a, uh, 'sissy'. I doubt we'd change *everyone's* views unless we pulled off the Super Bowl or something, but as long as the seeds of thought are placed, y'know?

John was the first one out. He had changed into gym shorts and white t-shirt. He came up to me and placed his hands on my arms and gave me a concerned look.

"You okay?" He asked as he kissed me.

"Yeah, I'm just trying to think of what might happen."

He smiled softly, "I'm trying not to."

I laughed at him.

His face lit up a little more, "Let's get going." He said.

We walked down the concrete hall close together, holding hands; I leaned into him slightly and put my head on his shoulder.

He kissed the top of my head and said, "I love you."

I kissed his shoulder, "I love you too."

"Always?"

I laughed, "Always."

After a few feet, we heard someone shout, "Harris!!"

We both swiveled around to see Coach Garland with unreadable expression, in fear for my life I clutched to John a little more.

"Follow me, both of you, now." He barked, he turned back into the locker-room.

John and I looked at each other, "We're in trouble." I gulped nervously.

I felt eyes on me as we walked through the locker-room. I wasn't looking anywhere but ahead of me, but I knew everyone had a problem with me being here. And I had a problem with that. But it could wait.

We followed Garland down the hallways and into the guest office. He walked around the desk sitting in the middle of the tiny room with white stone-tiles running up

the wall. He sat down in a metal folding chair and put his feet up on the desk. He stuck his hands behind his head and let out a long exasperated breath. He looked to me, then to John.

“Boys,” he said, startling me, causing me to jump, “Honestly, I have no problem with either of you or with what you did, John. Some of the other guys on the team do, but they don’t say anything because you’re good at what you do.” He put his legs down and leaned forward onto the desk and looked at both of us, “But the PR guys have a problem with what went down today.”

“So... what does that mean exactly?” I asked.

Coach leaned back again, “Nothing. I’m just warning you that those morons are going to be bothering you at some point.” Garland sighed, “I like you John, you don’t say much but you never need too. You play ball well. As long as you keep playing well I doubt anyone of importance is going to care about what happened today or even if it happens again.”

Coach shook his head, “I’m just disappointed that football has become more about image and money than the actual game. You play because you want to play John. And I respect that.”

Coach got up and walked behind us, I thought he had left the room but I felt his hand on my shoulder. If John didn’t have a hold around my waist I would’ve jumped three feet in the air.

Garland let out a hearty chuckle, “Relax son, I’m on your side. You’re a good man too, I saw the way you talked to Dan, and I haven’t seen him act like that since we picked him up a couple years ago.”

His hand left my shoulder and we turned to see him walking out the door. We both followed him out. He had his hands in the pockets of his khaki shorts. We went past the row of lockers still occupied by a majority of the team.

“And I’ll make sure you ride with us from now on, son.” Coach said loud enough for the entire locker-room to hear.

I looked over to John, “Is he talking about me?” I whispered.

“Yes.” Coach barked making me jump again.

John gave me a broad smile, “It’ll be nice to get some sleep on the bus.”

“Thank you sir.” I said.

John and I were sitting together on the bus, I was reading my book and John was reading the team's playbook. Or at least I thought he was. He started rubbing his leg against mine. Whatever happened to tapping someone's shoulder? I flipped down my book and looked up to him grinning from ear to ear.

"What're you grinning about?" I asked quietly

"I'm happy that you're sitting here." He whispered.

"I am too but that's not why you're grinning."

"We won our first game, the coach doesn't hate us, and you get to sit next to me on the bus for the rest of the season. I haven't felt like this since college Daryl. I forgot how good it felt."

"Now that you mention it, you got that glow I remember you having."

"Glow?"

"Yeah, you it had every time you won a game, I'm pretty sure it's the only reason I ever agreed to do as you pleased in the backseat of your car."

"Are you kidding me? You get a boner for my car about as much as you get a boner for me."

"Touché, muscles and muscle cars are my Achilles Heel."

"And besides, my fondest memories of adolescence are of us fucking in the back of my car. My favorite was at the Drive-In Movie theatre while we were watching--"

"Bloodgates 4! I remember that!" I interrupted "They had that really hot sex scene with--"

"Flynn McAllistair, that guy was hot."

"Fuck yeah he was, that Scottish accent drove me crazy. Isn't that how we ended up in the backseat?"

John nodded and yawned.

"Sleepy Big-guy?"

He nodded again.

I pushed up the armrest and got up. John swung one leg onto the seats and sat back against the window of the bus. I sat back down against John's chest. John wrapped his arms around me and locked me into place. John stuck his nose in the back of my head

and took a deep breath. His perpetual five-o'clock-shadow scratched against the side of my neck as he bent forward to kiss it. I turned my head to make our lips meet. His arms loosened and I scooted forward so I could lay my head on his chest. When I got in the right spot he constricted me again. I felt his heart beat on my face and listened to his soft breathing. I fell asleep not too long after that, feeling that as long as I'm in John's arms, nothing could hurt me.

The next day I was back in the woman's place. But since we don't have one of those I had to fill in while John was checking in on his gym. Anyway I was cleaning the kitchen. I was humming along to the jazz tune my favorite station on the radio. I was scrubbing out some lasagna explosion on the side wall of the oven.

And then someone was trying to break down my door.

Or at least it sounded like that. Whoever wanted my attention is going to get it.

"I'm coming!" I shouted.

I got up and wiped the grease off my hands on a rag nearby. I tossed it on the counter and walked towards the door. I wiped the sweat off my forehead as the slamming on my door continued.

"For fuck's sake I'm coming!"

I peered through the peephole and all I saw was a thick neck.

"Who is it?" I said through the door.

The guy just knocked on the door, lighter this time.

I let out a frustrated "Blah" and wretched open the door to see Dan.

"Oh, hi Dan, what's-"
He lightly pushed me aside and went into the house, "... up?"
I raised an eyebrow, "Would it be cliché if I sarcastically said 'Come in'?"

Dan walked into the living room and picked up the TV remote and fiddled with it for a few seconds, turning it to the news. I turned off the radio as I walked in to join him. He pointed to the news cast, showing the clip of when John ran up to me in the stand at the football game. Then they switched to an overcast of a large crowd being separated by police outside a building. I grabbed the remote from Dan and turned up the volume.

"... Are trying to separate the two groups picketing outside the player's business; Stepping Stones Gym, the original protesters have seemingly forgot that they were protesting Harris and have started almost violent arguments with the support group. Both

sides are showing no signs of backing down any time soon. I'm Clark Hurst, reporting for—" I switched off the TV.

"I have to get down there." I grabbed my house-keys and my wallet off the coffee table and started walking out, I stopped when I realized, "The subway won't get me there fast enough." I turned to Dan, "How'd you get here?"

Dan gave me a grin and held up his car-keys.

I grabbed his arm, "C'mon."

"I've had just about enough of this." I stated.

I was looking out the glass walls of my office in the gym. The police were doing a good job of keeping the groups apart but it wouldn't be long before a riot broke out.

"This shit is pathetic." I mumbled.

I stared out the window a bit longer and left my office. The phone was ringing off the hook. Poor Stacey could barely keep up. I locked the doors, to keep people from getting in. A lot of my morning regulars stuck around to see what was up. I hoped it wasn't like this at home. I have to figure out a way to stop this.

But first I have to find out who's tugging on my shorts.

I looked down to see a wet-haired little boy in board shorts and white t-shirt. He couldn't have been older than six.

"Mister, have you seen my mommy? I got lost."

I bent down on my hind legs, "Ah, no, but I'm sure we can find her. What's your name buddy?"

"Nate Baker."

I smiled. "Okay Nate, I'm John. Let's go see where your mom is."

I held out my hand and he grabbed one of my fingers. I stood up and we walked over to Stacey at reception. The phone was still ringing off the hook.

"Stacey." I said trying to get her attention.

She held up a finger while she was still answering the phone, putting people on hold.

I sighed and bent down and unplugged the phone. When I stood up Stacey was still talking to the phone.

“Stacey.” I said again.

She put a hand over the receiver. “Just a second John.”

“Stacey.” I said one more time, she looked up and I help up the end of the phone cord.

“Oh.” She said. “What’cha need boss?”

“Look up Baker.”

She typed up in her computer and clicked a few buttons, after a few seconds she came up with “Gina Baker, she’s still around here somewhere. Her tag hasn’t been checked out of the parking lot yet. She could be outside or still inside.”

Shit.

I bent down on my hind legs again and said to Nate “Looks like your mommy thought you left. She’s probably out there looking for you.”

Nate took one look at the crowd and tightened his grip on my finger. “That’s too many people. Why are all those people there?”

“Well, uh, Grown-ups are silly. Some of them have a problem with me; the other people are sticking up for me.”

“What did you do?”

“Do you swim in the pool often buddy?”

“Yeah” He nodded.

“Do you remember a guy with brown hair that goes in there sometimes too?”

“Yeah!” His eyes lit up a bit, “He plays with me sometimes. Is he your friend?”

I chuckled, “Yeah, he’s my bestest best friend!”

“Bestest isn’t a word John.” He said in a whiney voice.

“Well Nate, sometimes the way you feel about a person can’t be said with real words.”

“You should make a better fake word then John.”

I laughed, "You're probably right. Bestest isn't very original."

"Can we look for my mommy now?"

I nodded, "Sure, hey, I have an idea."

"What?" He asked.

"This!" I quickly picked him up on his sides and placed him on my shoulders. He squealed and laughed the entire time. When his legs got situated around my neck he grabbed onto my hair as reins. "Comfortable up there buddy?"

"You're really tall John." He said. He bent forward and I looked up. Our eyes met and we grinned at each other, then he said loudly "I can see forever!"

"Man, I wish I could see forever."

We started walking around the complex. Stacey showed me a picture of Gina so I'd know what she looked like. We stopped by the juice-bar and I got him a juice-box. He sat it on top of my head while he sipped on it.

After a while he said, "You didn't answer what I asked."

"Hmm? Oh yeah. Nate, I care about my friend the way regular mom's and dad's care about each other. A lot of people have a problem with that."

"Why?"

"They think it's wrong for two boys to like each other like that."

"Do you think it's wrong?"

"Buddy, what I feel for him feels more right than anything I've ever felt in my life."

"Wow. Think I'll feel like that someday?"

"I sure hope so Buddy, everybody should be able to feel what I do at least once in their life."

"What *does* he make you feel?"

I stopped to think about it. I smiled broadly because actually, it was a really simple answer.

"Happy." I said.

“Happy?” He asked as we started walking again.

I reached up and tickled his sides, “Is that an echo I hear?!” He laughed and kicked my chest with the backs of his feet.

“John stop!” He squealed

I let him go. “Okay buddy. And to answer your question, yes. He makes me happy.”

“How?”

I love how curious kids are, “He makes me happy because of... little things. Like the way he smiles. Or the way he laughs, the way he talks to me, or when he calls me Big-guy. Whenever I see him happy, I feel so warm inside that I want to burst. And... I do sometimes.”

“Burst? What happens when you burst?”

I looked up to him, “Ah, well, that’s something you’ll find out when you’re older.”

He looked up, as if to weight my answer as acceptable, then he just shrugged and I laughed. I stopped and looked around the nearly empty complex. I could hear the crowds still shouting outside. I need to end this soon.

“Well buddy, I don’t think your mom is in here.”

“Where do you think she is?”

“She’s probably caught in the crowd like I thought.”

“How’re you going to find her?” He asked sadly.

I looked up to him, “Do you need to use the bathroom?”

“Why?”

“I have an idea, but it might take a while for it to work. So do you need to go potty?”

He nodded.

“Okay, let’s go potty first.”

I kicked open the door to the back-alley of the gym. I had Nate cradled in my left arm and he was hanging onto my neck with his arms. A police officer had his cruiser

parked in the back to make sure no one would sneak in. I walked up to the officer who was leaning against the hood sipping a smoothie I had the staff provide.

“Hey John, who’s the kid?”

Nate dug his face into my neck, “His name’s Nate, he got separated from his mom. She’s not inside so I’m pretty sure she’s caught in the crowd. I’m sure I can find her, but I need a megaphone. You guys carry those, right?”

“Uh, yeah, I’m pretty sure we got one in the trunk, one sec.”

I put Nate down as the officer checked the back of his car. He pilfered through his trunks’ contents. He slammed it closed and the officer walked up to me and handed me a megaphone. It had a shoulder-strap onto it. I put it around my neck and under my shoulder.

“Thanks officer.”

He nodded, “Don’t do anything stupid. I could lose my job if you do. Not to mention letting you take the kid with you.”

“He’ll be okay,” I knelt down to Nate, “right buddy?”

He nodded at me and smiled.

“Okay buddy, let’s get going.”

I walked under the fire-escape and jumped up to grab the ladder. It slid down with its loud rumble that happens when rust builds up. I couched down and lifted up Nate and held him up to the ladder.

“Go ahead and climb up buddy, just wait for me when you get to the top.”

“What if I fall?” He asked nervously.

I smiled to him, “Then I’ll catch you.”

He did fall. But like I said I would, I caught him. He climbed up the second time without troubles and we scaled the fire-escape within a few minutes.

The crowd looked a lot bigger from the roof. It looked a lake of people crashing against the line of policemen which had been pushed back nearly to the point of contact between the crowds. This was going to get ugly soon.

I wasn’t going to let that happen.

I held up the megaphone, pulled the trigger and shouted “Hey!”

My voice carried through the parking lot, but nothing happened.

I yelled louder “Hey!!”

It didn’t happen at once, but the voices died down, one after another until everyone became silent. Nate was hiding behind my leg. I think the height and the amount of people scared him. I put down the megaphone and bent down to Nate.

“Hey buddy, it’s okay. Do you want me to carry you?”

He nodded timidly.

I smiled and picked him up in my arm, he wrapped his arms around my neck and sat on my forearm. He dug his head into my neck

I held up the megaphone again, “Gina Baker, I found Nate, he’s safe. Please find a police officer and ask them to escort you to the building’s entrance. I’ll meet you there.”

As we climbed down the fire escape, the crowd remained silent. The silence was nice. I dropped down the few feet separating the ladder from the ground, Nate dropped and I caught him. I walked up to the officer and handed him back his megaphone.

“You should take advantage of them being quiet. This *is* private property after all.”

The officer grinned and nodded, I left him as he started talking to people over a walkie-talkie. When I walked over to the back door, a car pulled in through the alleyway. Daryl got out of the passenger side.

“John.” He said as he shut his door.

Daryl jogged over to me, but stopped short when he noticed Nate in my arm. He looked up to me and raised an eyebrow. I grinned at him and he laughed a little. He looked down to Nate.

“Hey kiddo, where’s your mom?”

Nate looked back to Daryl, smiling brightly “John found her!”

“Did he now?” He asked. He looked up to me and we shared a smile again.

“Do... you want to come inside?” I asked him, motioning to the door.

“Yeah, oh, uh,” He turned to Dan who was standing by the drivers side of his car, “Hey Dan! You want to come in?” He shouted. Dan smiled and nodded; he closed his car door gently and trotted over to us.

When we got inside I turned to Daryl, “Go let Gina inside, I’m going to get Nate another juice-box.” I leaned over to him and whispered in his ear, “The crowd scares him a little.”

“Got’cha.” He said, he leaned up and gave me a quick peck. Nate giggled furiously at that.

As Daryl walked off with Dan in tow, Nate said to me, “He kissed you!” Then he started giggling again.

I ruffled his hair, “We do that a lot buddy.”

“Nate!” I teary-eyed Gina came scrambling from Daryl’s side to the counter of the juice-bar where Nate was sitting at, sipping on his straw.

“Mommy!” Nate said happily, he placed down his juice-box and jumped down from the counter and ran into his mom’s arms.

She was holding him tightly, “Oh my God, I’m so sorry Nate. I didn’t mean to leave you alone.” She sobbed into Nate’s hair. Gina seemed to be taking this harder than Nate is.

Because Nate was looking at his mom like he was saying ‘What’s the big deal?’ but instead he said, “It’s okay mom, John was with me.”

She looked up to me, “Thank you, thank you so much.”

“It’s no problem,” I bent down and ruffled Nate’s hair up again, “Nate’s a great kid, you should be very proud of him.” I stood up, Daryl walked over to my side, I wrapped my arm around his waist, “Uh, it should be safer to go out the back, I can get a police officer to escort you to your car.”

“Actually John, the crowd’s pretty much gone.” Daryl piped up. “The cops were filing everyone out saying something about arresting everyone because this is private property.”

“Really?” I smiled, “That’s funny, because according to my deed, this is public property.”

“Yeah.” He said, “Funny.”

That night me and Daryl were settling into bed. It had been a long day for both of us. After closing the gym up and dealing with the cops and news people we came home, ordered a pizza and just crashed on the couch for the rest of the day.

“It’s so weird seeing myself on TV. I hope I can get used to it.” Daryl said as he pulled the covers of the bed up.

“It gets less weird.”

“I’ll take your word for it.” He stretched out on the bed as I got in.

We got comfortable, I held him in my arms, and I nuzzled my nose into the back of his head. Daryl shifted closer into me and let out a sleepy sigh.

“So I’ve decided something.” I said.

He turned over so he could look at me “What’s that?” He asked.

“I want to get kids.”

Daryl chuckled, “So do I. I already knew that.”

“No, I want to get them soon.”

“Soon? Like, how soon?”

“I was thinking sometime when the season’s over.”

“Well...” He sighed, “It’s... not like we’ll be pressed for money.”

“No.” I said.

“But... more than that. You’d make a great dad. Seeing you with Nate today was... well, I can’t really explain it, but it was great, a kid would be really lucky to have you as a parent.”

“You think so?”

He smiled, “Of course I do.”

“So... we get kids.” I smiled, “It feels good to say that aloud.”

“And you can say it as much as you want.” Daryl yawned, “But I’m sleepy, so can we pick up this conversation on another day, preferably after the football thing?”

I kissed his forehead, “Sure.”

“I’m not against it,” He said, “but it’d be bad if we did it while we’re at the entrance to the media circus trapeze tent.”

“I understand, I’m just excited.”

“And that leads to you being impatient.”

I growled playfully at him, and he laughed, “Shut up and kiss me.” I growled, then I rolled over on top of him.

Today was a good day.

And tonight’s going to be even better.

In TV shows, this is what we call a “Character builder”. I like writing these because the over-all plot of my stories is something I’m never ever truly certain about what I’m going to do with it, but I know my characters really well, so writing about them is a lot easier, which is why this chapter came so fast!

I can’t imagine John raising a kid without smiling at the thought.

Anywho, I got my thingy to work again, so since I’ve given you *Our Place* fans some attention, I need to give some lovin’ to my *Silent Hill* fan base because I’m uber flaky and I procrastinate a lot. So until I give my *Silent Hill* guys something new to chew on, *Our Place* is on hold.

Don’t send your hate mail to eric.wythe@gmail.com.