

I Will Always, Always Find You

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I Will Always, Always Find You

by [7dragons7](#)

Summary

It's hard to wake up in the Country. Hard to find purpose for each and every day that passes. Hard to wake up alone. No feline curled up at his head. No large form by his side. Asher rolls over to look at the empty space beside him and places a hand where Grant should be if he were here.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Chapter 1: The river always finds the sea

Everyone in Cloudbank knew Red's music. How could you not? She was one of the most inspirational entertainers out there. And there was a song of hers that really pinged with Asher Kendrell.

He'd heard Grant speak to him of their plan long before this song of hers reached his ears. And perhaps that's why it stirred something within him the way it did. Regardless, he could understand Sybil's fondness for the woman even if he had never met her himself.

Her song speaks to him now in these yellow fields littered with random assortment of farm houses in the great and grand distance. The Country. The past hour or so comes rushing back in a painful wave and he falls to his knees. The memories of the poison that had ravaged his body leave echos of pain. In his gut. His lungs. In every limb.

It passes.

He's alone out here. More alone than he's ever been in his whole life. Because even in the darkest hours there had always been a faithful feline companion. She couldn't come to the Country with them. He couldn't take her life either. So he left her to Process. Perhaps in some vain hope that she could get away. That they wouldn't bother her even if he knew that was a lie. Maybe, he thought, she'd find a way to Royce and...

Asher runs his hands through his messy blonde hair. Why did it all come to this? A single mistake. A grave error born out of jealousy had caused their entire world to come falling down upon them. He doesn't blame anyone. Not really. Not Royce for his plan. Not Grant for agreeing to it. Not Sybil for her hand in its failure. Not himself for failing to say anything.

But it is a devastating thing all the same.

Perhaps the thing that he is most hurt by... It was Grant leaving him. The very memory of what transpired pierces his heart through. And after an entire night of barely keeping it together the floodgates open and Asher simply sobs. He simply can't understand it.

Eventually there are no more tears left to shed and the dry air with its dull breeze is starting to get to him. Asher picks himself up and begins heading in a direction. He glances around for a shot of white and red, calling out his husband's name. Grant and he did not die terribly far apart, time wise, but he had not caught sight of the man. What would he say to him if he did? He's not completely certain. So instead of waiting and musing over a man that may not show Asher presses onward towards one of the houses in the distance. He picks one in a random direction but opting for the furthest one away from all the others.

Twilight has set upon the sky by the time he reaches the home and finds, to his surprise, a familiar face sitting upon the steps. Her legs are lightly kicking and tapping against the wood as her gaze is skyward. Watching the beginning specks of stars light up the night. The sound

of grass crunching alerts her to someone approaching. And her eyes fall upon him and they stare at one another for a moment before she slowly picks herself up.

“Asher.”

“Sybil.”

Her bottom lip trembles for a moment but they don't look away from one another. And eventually she closes the distance. Her steps are shaky as she all but falls into his chest, wrapping her arms around him. She cries loudly into him, the words a bit incomprehensible but he gets the general idea.

“It's okay.”

And it is.

She takes his hand once she too has spent her tears. Her whole body trembles and her eyes are wet and puffy but her tug is firm as she leads him into the house that they'd both, curiously, managed to come across. It's a shockingly well stocked little place. Perhaps the Country is just like that. Plain clothing and simple furniture.

“I, uh, I had this silly thought we'd all end up here.” She grips his hand a little tighter and leads the way up the stairs. “So... I picked my room. But I figure you and Grant should have the master bedroom.” She points to the room at the far end of the hall. “I figure, maybe, Royce can have this one here. And then... there's a couple extra.”

Asher explores this master bedroom. It's simple in its furnishing. Filled with books of titles both familiar and not so. There's a desk that's littered with writing tools and empty journals. Perfect for a writer like himself... had he any heart to put pen to paper. Maybe he will some day.

Sybil hovers near the closet, constantly tossing a glance at him with her watery eyes. There's a question on her lips but she does not ask it. He's grateful for that.

Where is Grant? She wants to ask.

He doesn't know.

It's just the two of them for a time. They sit on the porch he found her on and watch the sky change colors. Not a lot is said between them. They're simply waiting for something. Anything.

Royce appears a day or so later. He hadn't realized they were sitting there until it was too late for him to turn around and go a different direction. But it was something he contemplated by the way his gaze darts away from them in quick succession. Perhaps even if he had noticed sooner he may have turned back towards them anyway. His shoulders slump sadly and he shoves his hands in the pocket of his white coat and approaches them. His lips from a thin line, the corners curving downward, just slightly, in a frown.

Sybil throws herself at him as well. This time not with the bundle of apologies like she'd given Asher. But tears all the same. Royce doesn't return the hug but he allows her to touch him. The journalist does watch the other man's eyes closing tight for just a moment, before they open and lock onto him.

"Where is Grant?"

Asher grits his teeth some before shaking his head some. "I don't know."

That is not a satisfactory answer to the other man but he doesn't press and instead allows Sybil to guide him into the house so she can show him everything as she'd done with Asher just the other day.

The former journalist lets out a slow breath, finding his hands clenching and unclenching a bit. *Where is Grant?*

Asher buries his face in his hands and tries to take slow and deep breaths.

"Thank you for seeing me on such short notice, Mr. Kendrell. I know you're a busy man and so I won't take up too much of your time."

Asher's hand is taken by a larger and stronger one and he's given a very pleasant smile. One which he returns with what he can only hope is charm. The Administrator is a difficult man to get in contact with but Asher has managed it, somehow. And he's beyond delighted at this turn of events.

They speak over tea in Grant's office. He raps off questions and Grant answers them. Sometimes the Administrator will make a quip and they'll engage in something that has nothing to do with the interview for great lengths of time. Embarrassing, really. Asher should know better than to get so sidetracked and distracted. But... Hell, Grant Kendrell is so easy to talk to and engaging. As they speak of the city the journalist finds he's on the edge of his seat, wanting to know so much more.

The hour that Grant had so kindly scheduled for them to speak comes and goes and a handful more pass them by. It's only at a passing glance at his watch does Asher realize just how much time has passed. He's mid sentence when a curse flies out of his mouth instead. Something that makes Grant's lips quirk upward as he sips his tea.

"Mr. Kendrell, I am so sorry for taking up so much of your time like this. I... I don't know where the time went." Asher scrambles for his notes, noting that he asked about half of what he meant to. Damn... What the hell is wrong with him? He presses fingertips to his temple trying to think of how to rectify this situation that he's created for himself for being so easily taken in by a few pretty words.

"It's quite alright." Grant assures, setting his cup down. "I take it you got everything you needed from me?" There's a lilt to his voice, something akin to amusement. Like he knows

the answer.

Asher lets out a laugh, though it sounds weak even to his ears. “More than enough to piece together a fine article about our mysterious Administrator, to be sure.” *Liar.*

“Well... I look forward to this article of yours. But if you find yourself needing a few more questions answered I’ll write the number to my direct office line on my card and you can give a ring any time.”

Asher pulls his scarf up a bit to hide his expression. He is truly incredibly grateful for this lifeline that is being thrown to him. He can’t lose sight of why he wanted this interview to begin with. To find out the secrets of their city. To know all there is to know and write about it.

Naturally he contacts Grant again. And Grant indulges him and they have another interview over dinner. Asher stays on point this time. The remainder of his questions get asked and answered and genuinely leave him more puzzled about things. But as for the subject of Grant, he has more enough to write a fine article about him. Perhaps he’ll have to go digging elsewhere to find the secrets he desires.

“Why are you so interested in the history of our city?” Grant asks as they finish up their meal.

Asher stirs his fork around the remnants of his meal, pondering how to put it without coming across as displeased with things. He loves this city he truly does but...

“I just want to know how we got... *here.*” Asher says his words carefully.

“Here?” Grant raises a quizzical brow.

“Here. The complacency.” He says that word very carefully, testing it so to speak. “Surely it wasn’t always so. There’s a history and a story and I long to find it.”

The Administrator offers a smile. “I’m sure you will.”

Asher writes his article and it’s a big hit. Anything at all about the elusive Administrator Grant Kendrell is a big story and the people of the city are talking about it weeks after.

But a journalist always has another story to write. He’s doing something far less interesting this time around. Some monument piece that just got constructed. Asher gladly took something a bit easier to do a bit more personal research.

He runs across Grant shortly after the article is released and the Administrator sings its high praises. He takes Asher to lunch where they’re free to talk and there’s no probing questions, just polite and fine conversation.

They exchange personal numbers, an act which has Asher stuttering as realization begins dawning on him in regards to what is happening.

Was this a date?

Upon returning home he gathers up his cat and holds her close. He breathes slow into the short fur, settling his nerves. Surely this can't actually be happening. Grant is a good deal older than him and he shouldn't mix acts of kindness with any sort of affection. Has that not gotten him into enough trouble by now?

Asher attempts to bury such thoughts. An act which unravels a few days later when Grant calls him to invite him to dinner. It is the first of what would be many.

They start out rather business-like. Asher has a brimming curiosity for the world and Grant indulges him with some of the intricacies. The history. But there are still some things that aren't explained and no matter how hard Asher pries Grant won't give him a satisfying answer. When he pushes harder a look ghosts across the older man's face that gives the journalist reason to pause and he ceases his assault for knowledge.

This isn't business, after all.

As the dinners continue, once a week it seems, the conversation becomes less about that and more about each other. Small details that begin to paint a picture about who they are. Even the small things are a bright stroke against the canvas. Favorite colors, foods, even animals. Asher is always eager to speak of his feline companion.

"Her name is Tacitus."

"Tacitus?" Grant chuckles. "She has a lot to live up to then." He takes Asher's phone to see the picture he's showing off. "I've seen her before, have I not? She's usually on your shoulders in pictures."

Asher smiles, perhaps a touch sheepishly. "She is... She sits on my shoulders while I work in the office. I leave her behind for interviews and such, of course. It wouldn't be appropriate to bring her along to such things."

"But think of what you could ask people if you had a cat in your lap the entire time." Grant advises with a hearty laugh. A laugh that Asher can't help but join in with.

"A fair point." He takes his phone back to gaze upon the picture of his cat. On her back, paws up. Mouth open in a disgruntled yawn. Perhaps not her most flattering shot but... "Would you like to meet her?"

Grant glances towards Asher's bag as if the cat is stowed away in there somewhere. "Now?"

Asher feels another bout of laughter take him once more. "No. No... I mean... after. We could go to my place."

It's bold. And, yes, he would like for Grant to meet his cat. But... He also wants something more. He wants to know what this is.

The Administrator leans forward some, his gaze piercing and analyzing. And it makes Asher regret his request. The wheels of his mind spin as he attempts to form the words to

backtrack. His cheeks feel warm with unbridled embarrassment. Stupid thing to ask, really.

“I’d love to.”

Asher drops his silverware, scrambling for a few moments and trying not to make a scene in this nice place with present company.

“Oh. That’s good. Good then.”

His thoughts are a jumble after that. Why did he offer this? He has not prepared himself for anything like that. His apartment isn’t prepared for that. Nothing is tidied up. The sheets should be changed if he’s having someone over. Is it too much to expect that something like that will even happen? Grant just wants to meet his cat. Obviously... But who comes over after a night like this to meet just a cat. It’s like a code or something. He was obviously offering something and Grant accepted.

This is stupid, he decides, taking a large sip of his wine as if that will dull the anxiety any. This is not his first time bringing someone over. Nor being with anyone. He’s not a teenager anymore. Maybe because this feels different. He wants this to be different. He doesn’t want this to be one of them slinking out at dawn.

He wants...

“Asher?”

He’s being ridiculous.

“Asher?” Asher’s vivid blue eyes flicker back up to meet Grant’s concerned face. “Are you alright?”

The journalist gives a faint smile in return. “I... think my home might be a little messy...”

Grant’s smile is big and wide at this comment. “Well, I’ll try not to hold it against you.”

His home is not as cluttered as he remembers it being when he finally finishes fumbling with his keys and gets the door open. But every out of place item is caught keenly by his gaze.

Tacitus jumps on his shoulder the moment Asher enters the apartment. She makes an unhappy sound at Grant and the journalist lifts his hands to pet her and in hopes silence any further rudeness on her behalf. “Here she is... Let me make some coffee before you two get acquainted.”

The coffee does get made but Tacitus and Grant don’t get a chance at a proper introduction. Asher finds himself pushed up against his own counter, eventually being lifted to sit upon it. Warm lips meeting his in a hungry kiss that he eagerly meets with enthusiasm and all his worries melt away.

The night doesn't go much further than that and Asher does believe that's okay. He sits dazed upon his own countertop, thoughts going a mile a minute while trying not to fret about Grant's furrowed brow and why he put on the brakes so suddenly. Is it him?

"Sorry... I haven't... it's been a while so I--" The journalist apologizes, a bit breathlessly, but Grant shushes him immediately and takes his hands and places a kiss upon the knuckles. A gesture which leaves Asher feeling incredibly faint.

"I need to show you something."

"Okay." Asher says and then after a beat. "Now?"

Grant, despite himself, chuckles softly. "No, not now. Soon though." Those brows furrow once more and the man heaves a heavy sigh. "I just... We can't continue until I show you. Until I know for sure."

Asher can't follow. He couldn't possibly. "Okay." That's all he can say. "You tell me when and I'll be there."

Grant presses his lips to Asher's forehead, smoothing down his hair. "I know."

The Administrator doesn't contact him for a few weeks and all he can do is try not to fret terribly about it. But fret he does. Keeping tabs on the Administrator is an impossible task so there's no reading tabloids about the man. Such stories don't exist save for the one he wrote. So Asher tries to go back. There's nothing there either. Save for the occasional photo throughout the years of Grant with various young blondes on his arm at various city events.

Man knows what he likes and Asher can't fault him for that. If this is to be temporary... if he is just another one of many that will come and go like the seasons it'll still be... It'll still be an experience. For better or worse. Asher, for his own good, closes the tabs on the computer and continues his work.

A text reaches him one night just as he's stepping onto the steps of his apartment. It's been a long day, he must admit and he nearly ignores it completely in favor of just falling flat onto his sofa. But something nags at him to stop. And so he stops. He digs into his pocket for the device and pulls it out. Grant's name flashes in bright text and Asher feels his heart skip an actual beat.

Are you free?

Yes, of course.

Where are you?

Just about to unlock the door to my apartment.

I'll come pick you up. Bring Tacitus.

Asher moves quickly, tossing his bag down the moment he enters the apartment and scoops up his feline companion before she can even assert herself on his shoulders.

Grant picks him up in good time and they drive. Where they go the journalist can't say for certain. Somewhere in Fairview? It's familiar but not a place he journeys too very often. Grant takes his hand and leads him into a building. And then into one of the many rooms in that building. It's dim within and there is already someone in there. It's a man with a mop of dark hair, smoke from his cigarette exhales from his nose as he huffs somewhat irritably at the sight of Asher.

"Another blonde, Grant?"

Asher grits his teeth but says nothing. No need to go and start a fight. He has no idea where he is or why. He's nervous but probably not for the right reasons. Grant pays the other man no notice either and presses forward.

And then Grant shows him... *everything*. He tells him everything. And it is a lot. It's a lot to take in and absorb. The magnitude of it. There is also a wrongness... a terrible terrible sin of what the intent of all this is. And yet... What Grant is saying rings true as well. It's something they've discussed at length over the course of their many evenings together.

When everything changes nothing changes.

Cloudbank needs help. The people need help as they are incapable of helping themselves. Stuck in a constant loop that is draining the world they live in of creativity and passion. And there is a wrongness of what Grant wants to do. They are, after all, talking about murder. Asher has to close his eyes a bit and shake his head. That's too hard of a thing to parse. He wishes he had time to think about it more.

"I want you to join me in this. To be our voice. Constructing a history while we save our home."

It sounds so pretty when you put it that way. Asher bites his lip, wringing his hands together.

"We could learn so much together. The past. The future. But..."

"I can't tell anyone." Asher finishes. His gaze meeting Grant's for the first time since this conversation began. "I can't tell anyone about this." In fact... if he declines he doesn't actually think he gets to leave. Not knowing what he knows. And that fact, surprisingly, doesn't scare him the way it should. Perhaps because he already knows his answer. He knows where he wants to be.

"Correct."

"Can I ask you a question, Mr Kendrell, off the record?" Asher wets his lips.

"You may..."

“Is this... Is this why that night, you wouldn’t...? Because you didn’t know if I’d accept. And you didn’t want to do something with someone who might not be here a few weeks from now? The risk of an even greater attachment was too much...?”

This time Grant doesn’t meet his gaze. “I didn’t want you dragged into this. But I didn’t want to let you go either. But truthfully, Asher, you... Everything about you... Our eyes were going to be on you one way or another.”

“Ah.” Asher’s lips part some, honestly a bit surprised. He’s on the list then. The list Grant just told him about. But more valuable as a member of theirs. Perhaps, dare he hope, of even greater value beside Grant. His heart clenches tightly as he thinks too boldly of himself. Maybe...

“I’m sorry, Asher. I--”

“Don’t... Please. I want...” Asher moves to pet the cat on his shoulder, seeking comfort in her as he sorts out his thoughts. “I want to be by your side. Wherever that path may lead I would like to be there.” Everything he’s been told is so much. But if Grant is beside him... it should be okay. No, it surely will be. “You’re confident in this plan?”

“Completely. As is Royce.”

Royce must be the man back there. Royce... Bracket? Or something like that. That name is familiar but he’ll have to think on it more later.

“Then I am confident too. I want this. I want to--” This powerful devotion. It’s come about so quickly. So powerfully. And yet... He’s never felt this way about anyone in his entire life. “I want to do this with you, Mr. Kendall.”

Grant takes his hands and places a kiss upon the knuckles once again. “As one.”

Chapter 2: And it would seem we'll never be apart

Chapter Summary

I just forgot I never updated this :V

It's hard to wake up in the Country. Hard to find purpose for each and every day that passes. Hard to wake up alone. No feline curled up at his head. No large form by his side. Asher rolls over to look at the empty space beside him and places a hand where Grant should be if he were here.

Every day that passes the question that grows more painful in his chest. The soft whispered question feels like a bellow in his heart. Why did you leave me? Tears that feel like they should be spent come easier these days.

He told Red in his final message to her that he'd rather spend an eternity in the Transistor than live a life without Grant. Alas...

It's as he's rising from the bed does he hear the sounds of arguing. They're fighting again. It's usually about small things hiding the truth of what they feel. Royce blames Sybil for this. For lying to them. Sybil blames Royce for his plan and dragging them all into it.

Asher is so tired. He descends down the stairs and the arguing, since he got dressed till when he descended, has gotten deeper in its blows. Seems, at last, that they've gotten to the heart of the matter.

"It should have only been the two of us. Certainly not you. Or you." Royce puts an accusing finger at him. Bracket trying to start a fight with him. Asher doesn't have the will to bite back. Everything he had has been taken from him. Missing and lost in a world that has no place for any of them anymore. What does it matter what any of them say to one another?

“Perhaps you’re right. Perhaps you should have gotten me when you had the opportunity. How different things might have been if it had just been the two of you.”

That silences Royce at once who had been looking for a fight not... that. It silences the both of them. Sybil closes her mouth at once and looks at her feet. Her fingers clutching at her skirts. And Royce’s fingers twitch, uncertain how to respond. He’s always been a bit awkward at conversation in general but the wind has been officially taken out of his sails with that.

“Asher... you don’t believe that, do you?” Sybil bounces back quickly, hurrying to his side. “You... You did so much. You hid everything beneath your words. Your hands typed stories and solutions. You...” Her arms circle around him, holding him tightly. “You are important and you are loved.”

Her words are crippling and everything within him feels weak. Brittle.

“We all were necessary. We were one.”

They saw each other nearly every day. They had their dates, dinners, discussions about work and then more often than not separated for the evening. Sometimes, rarely, Asher would go to Grant’s house and they would spend the night together. The journalist relished in these meetings and longed for them to occur more often. But they were busy men. More so with their new and budding responsibilities.

It wasn’t for lack of want or desire just... work had to come first. And there was also a need to be discreet. Grant, after all, was an Administrator who kept a very low profile. The buzz of a relationship was not something any of them needed right now and Asher had to go out of his way within his work place to make sure such rumors stayed squashed. His work, already beginning, by deleting any notes and promising stories. It’s as if that information didn’t exist.

It was a sort of bittersweet feeling... deleting his own existence from Grant’s life. But necessary... All for the greater good. It’s why all their meetings always appeared under the guise of work. Grant, for all intents and purposes, was his source for work and it made things easier.

Despite it all Asher could easily say he was happy.

Grant wanted him to come to a grand opening ceremony of some kind. A bridge, probably. The people loved bridges. Asher had at first declined. He did not like going to those sorts of things but Grant insisted, it'd be an easy article and less of a work load in the coming days. Asher, because Grant was asking, agreed. He dressed nice got all his proper journalist tools and made his way to the fancy new bridge.

He took names, interviewed a few faces, didn't scowl at Royce who blew cigarette smoke in his face when he tried to get an interview from him. It was well deserved he was purposely poking at the other man who disliked these events more than him. Funny enough... He couldn't find Grant. Asher couldn't help the small pout that formed but was allowing the benefit of the doubt that he suddenly got busy.

The event began and ended and he never caught sight of the Administrator. He supposed he could have asked Royce, Royce probably knew. Sybil too but... He simply tucked his notes in his bag and made his way to the trains. Disappointment festered and he checked his phone for the hundredth time tonight to see if he had any missed messages. He did not. With a sigh Asher stuffs his phone back in his pocket and waits at the crosswalk, starting at the sudden double tap of a car horn that's right beside him. The journalist squints through the headlights of the car and walks over to the driver side. "Grant?"

"Need a ride, Asher?"

The blonde huffs, pouting clear as day. "Have you lost track of the time? You missed the whole thing, Mr. Kendrall."

"Did I?" The man questions, feigning disbelief and glances at his car clock. "The time seems right to me." Right on time to pick him up. Yes yes. Very funny. Asher can only bristle unhappily. "Alright, alright... I did get caught up with work. I didn't mean to leave you there by yourself. Come on, I'll take you home."

"I don't want to go home. I wanted to spend time with you, Grant."

The Administrator's expression softens and he beckons Asher to get into his car. "Then lets spend some time together."

Good.

Grant takes them to his house and right away Asher feels like something is amiss. He can't put his finger on it. Grant's home which has always been exceptionally neat, feels... off. Not quite cluttered but fuller than usual.

"Did you get new books?"

"A few, yes."

Asher moves towards one of the shelves and plucks a title that speaks to him. "This is one of my favorites." He muses and thumbs through it. Grant only makes an intrigued hum but doesn't inquire further.

"The plants are different. You used to have lilies."

"I just moved them."

There's a desk he knows he'd seen somewhere else in the house. A globe too. It's like a small room of things had been moved into the main room. Some things are boxed as if they're going to be donated or stored.

"Redecorating one of the rooms?"

"Yes, actually. Would you like to see? It's nearly finished."

Intrigued, Asher follows him to the upper floors and glances around curiously to the one office. Perhaps the office of one of Grant's former flames. So he'd always assumed. It's cleared out now with a completely different desk and a very comfortable chair. There's even a computer there. Journals and notebooks sit neatly and fresh pens.

"A new home office for yourself?" Asher inquires, running his fingers along the surface of the desk. "Got tired of the other one?"

Grant doesn't answer. He simply shrugs his shoulders.

"Well. I like it. Very in style. Sybil would be impressed with it."

He thinks no more about it or the strangeness of the house. He's here to spend time with Grant. And they do indeed spend time together. It's Friday night and Asher is coaxed into staying all weekend.

He's so sore by Sunday afternoon and still so greedy for more. It's been lounging and eating in bed and it all feels so very *very* decadent. He's never experienced anything like it. He's so... in love. So happy. He feels Grant wrap his arm around him and drag him closer once again. Asher can't even deny that he wants another round. Grant slides into him easily. Brings him pleasure effortlessly. In no time at all he's gripping the silky bed sheets and moaning the Administrator's name with reverence.

"I have to call off tomorrow." Murmurs Asher when they've finished. His words are answered by Grant's soft deep chuckle. "I'll send her an email and I have to finish the article about the bridge no matter what." Even if Grant is taking him from behind he has to get it done. The exhausted and spent journalist rolls over and feels around for his phone. Their clothing scattered about from Friday night and he feels around for his phone. He's looked at it a couple times since coming here but he's mostly ignored it.

His brows pinch at the feel of something hard and square. Not a phone but...

Asher reaches down further to unlodge whatever this is from their clothing. It's a small square velvet box. And his heart absolutely stops when it dawns on him what it is.

A ring. It's a ring. Oh... Oh god... Oh!!

He sits up and clutches the box tightly to his chest, feeling his breathing pick up as a swarm of emotions takes hold of him. Anxiety and excitement grip his insides in equal measure. He's not sure what to do.

"Asher?" Grant places a warm hand on the small of his back.

"Sorry... I found something of yours... I..." Asher turns on the bed, pulling the covers up around him a bit more. He feels exposed. Vulnerable. "I'm sorry. I didn't look at it."

Slowly he extends his hand and holds out the velvet box.

"Ah. I forgot that was in my pocket." Grant admits, taking the box and opening the lid, away from Asher so the contents cannot be seen. He glances at Asher and gives a warm smile. "I really did mean to make it to that ceremony."

"You were going to propose to me there? In front of everyone?" Asher asks, disbelief in his voice.

"Not in front of everyone, exactly. Public proposals are..." he waves a hand. "But yes. Some people may have seen and if they did so be it. You're not my secret, Asher, I want you to be my husband."

The words cause everything to still inside the journalist. His eyes wide and disbelief running through him. It's just... so sincere. So blatant.

"We needed to be discreet in forming our new organization. But now... There's no need to be. We are one. I want us to be one."

Not just the Administrator's fling. Not just seeing each other until the end of it all. Married. As one. Husbands... It's more than he could have ever hoped. Dared to dream. Tears can't help but fall. He was already happy. This...

"Okay." he says through gasps of air. "Okay... I will marry you, Grant Kendall."

Grant smiles, bright and warm. He removes the ring from the box and slides it onto Asher's shaking fingers. It's beautiful... plainium, he imagines. Bright blue stones embedded within it. They match your eyes Grant said. They make love again. Much slower, savoring each other so completely.

It's only after, when he's heading to work on Tuesday, fussing with the ring on his finger, that he realizes that office Grant showed him was for him. That the house was changing for his eventual arrival, his and his cat. The realization nearly brings him to tears again.

The wedding, even when thinking back on it, was bigger than he expected. He thought it would be a small and quiet affair but... Grant is the Administrator. He knows so many people. People who would want to, at the very least, be invited. And so it's a huge affair.

It's a big deal, he realizes. Politically. Socially. He will always be known as Asher Kendall. The Administrator's husband. Such a thought makes him faint. He's standing there in the dressing room of the hall of the ceremony and he feels weak.

Sybil affectionately pats at his cheeks before giving him a gentle kiss on the nose. "You look sharp, Asher. Even I want to marry you and you couldn't be further from my type." She sticks her tongue out at him cheekily before softening and reaching out to adjust a few pieces of his outfit. She straightens his tie and then moves to adjust his cat's ribbon. Grant had taken great strides in allowing him to keep his cat with him whenever possible, sensing the importance of the feline within his life.

It's one of the very few things that hadn't been breached between them. He just knew... Asher couldn't be more grateful.

The ceremony is beautiful. The party after is incredible. Sybil really outdid herself this time. His evening is full of people he does and does not know congratulating him. Most are here for Grant who they quickly move on to. Everyone has the same quip more or less, Asher finds. “Finally settled down.” “Caught yourself a blond one, you old dog.” And so on and so on. It doesn’t bother Asher. It hadn’t before it certainly wouldn’t now but it is exhausting. So very exhausting.

Royce is perhaps the most surprising interaction he’s had all night. The man comes up to him, lacking a cigarette for once, and offers his hand. Asher takes it a bit apprehensively and he’s pulled into what can only be called an awkward half hug. But when Royce speaks it’s the sincerest and clearest he’s ever heard him.

“Congratulations... yeah. I knew, I think, when we met. I had doubts, of course, as anyone would. But... you’re still here. Working hard. I’ve known Grant most of my life, you know. This Grant though... The man right next to you. He didn’t exist till you appeared. It’s good. It’s really good.” Royce clasps his shoulder, letting it linger perhaps longer than necessary before he moves on to speak to Grant.

What he says to Grant Asher will never know. The words just spoken to him are still replaying in his ears. He can hardly believe they came from Royce of all people. Royce’s approval, something he was content not to have, really makes him feel like he’s a cemented welcome member of the Camerata. Finally... Finally it feels right.

Once most of the guests have moved along to eat and dance and do whatever it is guests do at events like these Asher looks towards his husband. Grant looks back. And they share a smile, fingers entwined with one another.

“I love you, Grant.”

“And you, Asher.”

And they would tackle the world as one.

Chapter 3: Like the moon that makes the tides

Their home in the Country is unbearably silent. None of them really speak to one another. They live this existence apart from one another. Their united front once upon a time has crumbled in the face of this new advisory. It's truthfully unbearable.

Asher has thought of venturing outside. In the end he never does. It doesn't feel right out there. No more than it does within, of course. But the four walls are more comforting than the wide expanse that presumably has people they betrayed and murdered somewhere out there. What to do if they were confronted by any of them? Perhaps that makes him a coward. Perhaps that further indicates that he is one. After all, he fled too. Unable to stand being alone he followed Grant and denied Red her justice. For all the good it did, in the end. He is alone here in the end.

They stand in a small enclosed group. Their outfits of blaring white and bloody red. They watch silently as Royce pulls the Transistor out of the body and absorbs the trace.

"There. Simple."

That's what Royce says. And it was. It was so simple to take a life. To watch. No one says anything at all and they go their separate ways when the deed is done. The body taken care of. Over the course of the next few days he will have to compose a story of how this celebrity chose a life in the Country and that is where they will remain for the foreseeable future and the public, as it does, will eventually forget them.

Grant and him go the same way, as they always do. Asher, to his credit, is steady on his feet. He doesn't shake or tremble. He wanted to remain strong in front of Royce. That he belonged in that group. But he is in a daze. For the entirety that they walk back to the car, his hand loose in Grant's larger one. For the entire ride where his hand continues to be held. And then as they both undress and prepare for bed.

"Asher." The journalist blinks, responding to his name with a flutter of lashes and looks up at the man calling him. "Are you alright?"

He nods. He nods quickly and looks back down, doing the buttons to the front of his nightshirt. "Of course."

He thinks idly, as a passing thought, what he just witnessed. It could have been him. But it wasn't. Instead he's the one standing there watching.

It isn't until Grant pulls him close to embrace him within the comfort of their bed that he does tremble. The cracks start to appear and he clutches the older man tightly.

“I love you Grant.”

Not the words the Administrator expected to hear but he holds the other even tighter at them.
“And I you, Asher.”

What they’re doing... it’s for the city that they love. It’s for her people. It’s for Grant. And so he will see this through. Of course he will.

“The rest is up to you, Asher.” Grant informs him softly as they eat breakfast. “Over the next few days compose the equivalent of a eulogy. Deserving of their sacrifice to our cause.” Asher nods. “Only you can do this... Your words are beautiful.”

Despite the subject matter the flattery is not unappreciated. Sometimes... sometimes he can’t stand what he puts on the page. Things eventually start to look dull and uninspired with your own eyes. It’s nice to have someone look at them and compliment them. Oh yes, you’re still good at this task. Asher’s lips quick upward, just a touch, and his gaze falls away.

“I will give it my all, Grant.”

And he does. The first of many come out very well. He has to spin a new angle every time they put someone in the Transistor. Their organization gains renown though still known as a secret organization of Cloudbank that is helping. And what they do, what they have to do, does grow easier as the years pass.

Life is good. And they’re happy.

But some long to be just as happy.

Asher and Sybil are close, he must admit. Sort of like Grant and Royce. They have lunch and talk about their lives outside of work. Sybil has someone on the mind of late. A beautiful scarlet haired singer, appropriately named, Red. It’s a crush that Sybil has been nursing none too patiently. Red is also a very influential person within Cloudbank. She is a murmur within their circle but nothing more than that. Next to Sybil, Asher probably has the better idea just how influential this woman is. But knowing that Sybil cherishes her as she does he refrains from saying anything to... Royce, at least. He has, naturally, informed Grant who only replied they’d keep an eye on the situation.

Sybil, with all her charm, manages to befriend the songstress.

“I’m going to see her show tonight. Do you want to come, Asher?”

He shakes his head. “No, but thank you for the offer. I have dinner plans with Grant.” Sybil sighs heavily and shakes her head but there’s a smile on her lips.

“Sybil...” Asher isn’t sure how to broach this delicately. His sources only just managed to pluck this piece of gossip and he has it on good authority it’s accurate. “You know, right?”

“Know what?” She asks innocently, sipping at her tea and looking at her friend with big

curious eyes.

“Red, your friend, she’s seeing someone, right?”

Sybil laughs. “Don’t be silly. If she was seeing someone I’d be the first to know.”

That is indeed what he feared. The mysterious suitor exists but who he is exactly no one can quite nail down. Red’s keeping him a secret so it’s no wonder that Sybil doesn’t know especially if this close friendship that Sybil has with Red is one sided. There is, after all, a recently released song that is perhaps about someone he knows quite well. He says no more and doesn’t push the subject any further. He simply offers his friend a faint smile and continues on with their lunch.

They don’t speak of Red again. At least... not for a while.

Sybil mentions the songstress again during a meeting pinning her as the next target. Red’s popularity has spiked quite recently with her new songs. She’s a good target.

“Alright, we need a good time and place--”

“I already know.” Sybil says. “I can guarantee that she’ll be there alone. The perfect opportunity for us to strike. I promise. I even have some ideas about what you can write about, Asher.”

“Good then.” Royce says, blowing smoke out his nostrils. “I am needed back in Fairview but, uh, I guess I’ll leave the Transistor to you, Grant. You know what to do.”

Asher throws Grant a weary look but says nothing. He allows this to happen. He has no reason to believe that Sybil would be lying. Why would she be lying? The reason for targeting Red is clear to him he didn’t think...

Royce departs back to Fairview to continue his work. Not even bothering to wish them luck. Why should he?

Grant and he take the Transistor, caring for it for the time being.

Sybil leads them to the Empty Lot a few days later where she promises Red will be all alone.

Red was not alone. And the Transistor is taken from them.

End Notes

I showed up 7 years late to this party. I've had Transistor brain rot since I beat the game and now here I am.

Every chapter is written out and just needs some editing and proof reading (for whatever good that will do. I have no idea how to write good). So the story will be finished. No need to worry about that.

Used a Transistor song lyric for the title because I'm so incredibly basic and unoriginal.

Tacitus is named after Publius Cornelius Tacitus considered one of the greatest historians ever. History is what Asher is a nerd for anyway.

Royce's way of talking is impossibly hard for me to write so brace yourself with that nightmare later. It's not good and I'm sorry.

I have so many feelings about the Camerata and I love them so much. People with good ideas and enacting them as horribly as possible is my kink.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!