

The Boyfriend Experience

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The Boyfriend Experience

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Summary

"Why would I tell you every little thing I do?" Hux says. "Stars, Kylo, we aren't dating."

There's a short, horrifying pause before Kylo says, "Aren't we?"

Notes

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

Hux decides to have the shuttle commissioned shortly after Kylo steals his third TIE Fighter. Steal isn't the right word, maybe. He's allowed access to them, per Snoke's orders. He's just supposed to *ask* first, which he never does. That, and the fact that every ship comes back damaged almost beyond repair, and once not at all. A petty officer shakily tells Hux about the TIE shortly after he enters the bridge with his second caf of the day. Hux forces himself not to roll his eyes and informs the petty officer to prepare a ship damage log.

"Also," Hux says, just when the petty officer thinks he's been blessedly released, "Start an official request for a command shuttle. Upsilon-class, I think."

"Yes, sir."

Hux turns his gaze to space, the black expanse of cold that Kylo has thrown himself recklessly into again.

It's been about two weeks since they slept together.

Slept together isn't the right word, maybe. Fucked, definitely. Worked out their strange, nonsensical sexual tension, absolutely. It was inefficient to keep going about the way they were, pretending the attraction wasn't there. Hux is not so proud that he won't admit his baser needs. Hux has always been attracted to power, which Kylo has, and so it didn't surprise him to feel the ache in his pelvis when he and Kylo brushed together while walking the cramped halls of the *Finalizer*. What surprised Hux was how eager Kylo was when he suggested they have sex. Well, at first he thought Hux was making fun of him, but once Hux grabbed for his cock through the thick fabric of his uniform, Kylo understood very quickly that Hux was serious. From there, he fell apart. They both did. Kylo was so eager, so attentive, so ready to please. Asking, "Does this feel good?" in such earnest Hux wouldn't have dared lie to him. And he was virginal. He shook inside Hux, eyebrows threaded so tightly together, unsure. It was all very thrilling, how much he responded to Hux's mouth.

And then it was over, which was fine. Hux certainly felt much better after. He went back to his duties, Kylo went back to sniping at him, though maybe with less vigor than before. It's over. Hux is more than okay with that.

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The TIE Fighter comes back damaged, to the surprise of no one. The engineers tell Hux it's salvageable. Still, it only reinforces his earlier decision to commission the Upsilon-class. He intercepts Kylo on the way back to his quarters. Kylo has a very predictable routine after a mission: he locks himself up for days. Hux isn't sure he eats, or even sleeps, for that matter. He might meditate, but Hux has stopped trying to understand the Force and everything that comes with it. He doesn't have that power. That's all he needs to know.

Hux steps from the lift and falls in line with Kylo just as they pass the med bay. Kylo acknowledges him with a slight nod, says, "General."

"You brought my ship back damaged," Hux says.

"*Our* ship," says Kylo.

Hux scoffs. "This ends now. Next mission, you'll be taking your own shuttle."

Kylo doesn't slow in his step, but he does turn to Hux as they walk.

"My own shuttle?"

"Yes." Hux fishes his datapad out. "It's far more practical, and you might be less inclined to break something entirely your own."

He pulls up the finished design of the shuttle and Kylo stops walking. Hux has to pause with him. Kylo is hard to read with his mask on, so in the seconds of silence, Hux can't be sure he's looking at the datapad at all. Then Kylo says, "Who designed this?"

"I did."

Hux can tell by his tone that Kylo approves, likes it, even. That makes something swell in Hux's chest, but he ignores it quickly. He knew that Kylo would like the design—it's sleek, black wings just over 30 meters, SJFS-200a sublight ion engines. The sort of intimidation the First Order needs.

"Impressive," Kylo says.

He stands there a moment, like he's expecting something else to happen. Hux waits for him to just say what he wants—more weaponry? Until it becomes clear Kylo isn't going to say *anything*. The fine hairs on the back of Hux's neck stand up like a warning. The best thing he can think to do is leave, so he does, and Kylo doesn't follow, but damn if Hux doesn't feel his eyes on him for too long.

Then, about four hours later, there's a surprisingly timid knock on Hux's door. Surprising because the knock comes from Kylo, who brushes past Hux and takes his helmet off, standing in the center of the room with a stance a bit too wide.

"What do you want?" Hux asks.

Kylo turns, eyes so wide he looks sick with it, his want.

"Oh," Hux says.

There is a lucid moment where Hux understands that he should tell Kylo to leave, and never speak of this again, because what happened before was necessary—this would be just be falling into ludicrously dangerous territory. But that's all it is—a moment. It passes and there is another moment where Kylo drops to his knees and pulls at the buckle of Hux's trousers. Then another moment, where Kylo looks up at him, mouth plush, and Hux nods and says, "Show me what you can do."

The last moment is after, sweaty on top of the sheets, when Hux tells Kylo to leave. Kylo does without protest.

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He's not lonely. He's really not. Hux spends the majority of his time alone, but he doesn't mind. It exhausts him, being around so many people, giving so many orders, having to answer to Snoke's mysterious presence. Even if Hux has\ d the time for companionship these days, he doesn't think he'd pursue it beyond a casual fuck. Even if there are some nights that the universe seems to stop short right there in his quarters, like a cell, or something meant to suffocate, Hux knows who he is. What he wants. He has bigger plans.

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They are shot down by friendly fire. It's not a shining moment for the First Order. Signals get crossed occasionally, and it just happened to be the day Hux was onboard a transport shuttle with Kylo to see the progress of negotiations on an Outer Rim planet. Luckily, only he and Kylo are on board, and neither of them is injured. Despite his many, many faults, Kylo is a skilled pilot. He's managed to land the ship without it exploding spectacularly.

"Whoever gave that fire order is going to be shot," Hux says, and kicks the shuttle door open.

They're on a desert planet, of course. Hux shields his eyes from the suns with his hand and surveys the landscape, but there's not much to see beyond the beige sand and abandoned condenser units.

"You were supposed to update our coordinates," Kylo says behind him.

Hux shoots him a venomous glare. "I did, Ren. Perhaps if you have maneuvered quicker, we wouldn't be in this mess."

Kylo muscles past him without a word. His body is so out of place against the landscape, hulking, clad in black, fists curled. It's strange, now, to know what the body looks like naked, how it bends to touch. Hux fiddles with his comm while Kylo paces the sand, only to find they're out of range. Hux says as much to Kylo, then slams the comm onto the floor of the shuttle.

"I can make a signal," Kylo says, walking back onto the shuttle.

Hux doesn't ask how. He hasn't slept properly in days and feels the beginnings of a headache behind his eyes. He watches Kylo open the console near the pilot's seat and yank a wire free.

"You said you'd make a signal, not finish destroying the ship."

Kylo glances at Hux, a quick look that warns, *Don't*, and keeps moving about the cockpit. He doesn't ask for help, and Hux doesn't offer any. He sits on one of the transport seats, feels absolutely useless, which he loathes. Brendol had called him that a lot. *Useless boy*. Hux looks over at Kylo again and sees the concentration bared on his face, how set his lips are. Funny, Hux thinks, that he looks more at ease like this, put to a task.

He doesn't remember falling asleep. Hux wakes to a hand on his shoulder, Kylo's hand, and jerks upright. He has the same severe, wounded look on his face he always has, only now he's

holding...fruit. Desert fruit, to be specific. Hux blinks.

"What's this?" he asks.

"Food."

"No, I know that." Hux rolls his shoulders, Kylo's hand still firm on him. "Where did you get it?"

"There's food everywhere if you know where to look."

Kylo drops the fruit into Hux's lap and walks back over to the pilot's seat. His shoulder is cold now from where Kylo's palm lay. Hux can see a crude antennae sticking up from the console. He isn't sure how long he's been asleep, and doesn't ask. Long enough that Kylo managed some sort of signal and had time to forage in the desert. Hux peels the green outer shell of his fruit and notices Kylo has none.

"You aren't eating," he says, rather than asks.

"Not hungry," Kylo says. "A shuttle should be arriving soon to get us."

Kylo turns back to Hux, and Hux notices for the first time how dark his eyes are, like empty space.

"Eat," Kylo says.

He feels so strange, so human, sitting here alone with Kylo, holding the fruit he got for him. The gesture seems like a basic survival tenant: eat. And yet, Hux reads a tenderness into it that he doesn't want to—it's just there. He's sure they have those disgusting ration bars onboard somewhere. He's sure Kylo didn't need to go out into the desert to search for food, and he's sure that Kylo wanted to.

Hux takes a vicious bite of the fruit to drown out his own thoughts. The bite, he thinks, isn't quite loud enough.

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Time goes by faster than it should. Hux spends the whole fast-forward on a specific cycle: caf, less sleep, delegating, ignoring the way Kylo watches him when he thinks he's not looking, then fucking Kylo into the mattress like it's his job. Learning that Kylo likes to be fucked is something that surprised both of them, one oddly stuffy night when Hux slipped a finger into Kylo's hole without thinking and Kylo came so hard the *Finalizer* altered course by half a degree. Since then, Hux has taken the most ridiculous pleasure in driving himself as deep in Kylo as he can.

Anyway. It's become unprofessional. What Hux had planned, what he meant for, was a quick, professional session to ease the tension. But now Kylo is standing closer to Hux than necessary, sometimes putting his hand on Hux's bare thigh after they fuck. The sex is good, so good, but Hux has a feeling it's about to make his life a whole lot harder.

Things get easier when Snoke sends Kylo on another mission. Kylo is gone for weeks. Hux sleeps a bit more, but it's not good sleep. Sometimes he has dreams he has to pretend he doesn't have. There's silence for a while. Then Kylo comes back. It's the usual routine, of course: he goes straight to his quarters. Only this time, Hux gets a call from the med bay asking for Kylo's whereabouts.

"He refused treatment," the doctor says over the comm.

Hux had been going over documents in his office, back curved in his chair. He stands, now. "What treatment?"

"The computer alerted us to a deep bruise and a few cuts, but Commander Ren did not report for treatment."

"I'll see to it he gets the proper care," Hux says.

This isn't his job, technically, though Snoke might tell him that it is. For as valuable as Snoke waxes Kylo to be, for as valuable as Hux knows he *is*, Kylo seems to care so little for his own health Hux thinks he's suicidal at times. Reckless, for sure. Hux forces himself to spend another hour working before he goes to Kylo's quarters, tension between his brows. He knocks once, knowing full well that Kylo won't open before keying the override on the door. Kylo is standing there shirtless, and yes, Hux can see the most vicious bruise on his ribs, dark mottled purple. There are streaks of blood but he can't tell where they're coming from. Kylo notices him, eyes wild, too bright, like he's in some sort of trance. Hux just sighs.

"Refresher," he says. "Idiot."

They're allotted only so much water, but special exceptions can be made, and this is one of them. Hux knows better than to try and get Kylo to the med bay when he's in this state. So, he runs him a bath. Hux sets the timer on the faucet, removes a glove to test the temperature of the water and stands back up, shakes his hand dry. Kylo stares at the bathwater and says, "I'm not a child."

"Obviously, and yet you behave like one." Hux pulls his glove back on. "Get in the bath."

Hux grabs the standard-issue first-aid kit from the medicine cabinet. This won't be as good as proper care in the med bay, but it's better than nothing. When Hux turns around again, Kylo is fully nude and stepping into the bath. His body bends as one long angle, peppered with bruises and freckles. Kylo winces when he gets into the water. He knees bend comically out of the bath. Hux can see now that the cuts are superficial, except for one near his collarbone that needs a bacta strip. He sets the first-aid kit on the floor next to the bath and feels the sudden urge to leave.

"Stay," Kylo says, as if he heard.

Hux hesitates, which is his first mistake, half standing, half bent. He finally stands, but only to sit near the edge of the tub, watching as steam rises from the water.

"I have things to do," he says.

"You always do."

Kylo gives a tired glance to the first-aid kit but only sinks farther down into the water, exhaling. His hair petals around him, lips submerged. He looks too big for anything, even himself.

"Pathetic," Hux says, quiet, though maybe not quiet enough. "This is a one-time courtesy."

He stands and removes his gloves, rolls his sleeves, and grabs the soap from the bath tray. He refuses to look at Kylo. Hux douses his hair with the soap, pours the gel over Kylo's shoulders and lets it mix into the bathwater to create suds. Then he grabs the sponge and wipes it once across Kylo's back, just to test it. Kylo grunts immediately, but not from pain. Hux moves the sponge again. He lets it dip under the water this time, up now, across the shoulders. Kylo relaxes visibly, Hux can literally see his muscles softening under the skin. He smells like rocks after the rain. Hux washes Kylo's back but refuses to move to his front. Instead, he lets his fingers drift down to the bruise on Kylo's side, fingers skirting over the skin. Kylo flinches.

"You'd bounce back much quicker from these missions of yours if you'd let medical take a look at you," Hux says, to say anything at all.

"I'm just tired," Kylo says, and sounds it. Oh, he sounds exhausted, and Hux doesn't like how that makes him feel something akin to sympathy, or pity, or any other number of emotions he doesn't need anymore.

"Sleep, then," Hux tells him. "Preferably not in the bath."

Kylo's shoulders rise in a quiet laugh.

"Are you my mother?" he asks.

Hux forgets sometimes that Kylo had parents, seemingly ones who loved him, who raised him. The only thing Brendol ever raised was his fist to Hux's face. Hux has a lot of questions then that he shouldn't ask, isn't supposed to get answers to. The thing is, he thinks Kylo might tell him if he asked. Snoke talks a lot about how he *found* Kylo. Found him. As if he'd been lost. Looking at him now, Hux thinks the man looks just as lost as ever. Hux is thinking all this, overtaken by it, when he realizes how close Kylo's mouth is to his. Kylo turned his head at some point, Hux hadn't even noticed, and now he's just hovering there, waiting. If Hux moves forward at all, they'll be kissing. Then suddenly they *are* kissing. Hux isn't sure if he moved or not, but it really doesn't matter at this point, because they're kissing, and Kylo's mouth is so warm, tastes like the edge of something Hux tried long ago. His tongue is this wet, beautiful thing tracing the length of Hux's own. There's the sound of water shifting, and that's what brings Hux out of it. He pulls away, sponge lost in the water, and stands. The water is soapy and tinged pink from Kylo's blood, and Kylo looks like he just got punched in the face for no reason, lips parted, eyes white.

"Be more careful next time," Hux says. "I don't want to have to do this again."

He rolls his sleeves down, collects his gloves, and is perfectly willing and able to leave when Kylo says his name. The *X* echoes off the walls of the refresher. Hux turns. Kylo says nothing else, but then he doesn't have to. Hux walks out feeling like there's an itch at the soles of his feet he'll never be able to scratch.

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Kylo brings him a caf one day. Hux is sitting in his office, holding two datapads, when Kylo sets the caf on his desk.

Hux says, "What the hells is this?" and Kylo looks at him like he's grown a second head.

He leaves without saying anything else, and Hux sips the caf suspiciously.

There are other oddities, too, like Kylo yielding to him in a meeting. Yield isn't the right word. Kylo still disagrees with him at every turn, but this time he gives Hux the room to speak, rather than raising his voice or severing an officer's arm with his lightsaber and effectively ending the meeting altogether. Sometimes, Kylo greets him on the bridge and sounds like he actually means it. Hux supposes there are small things on his part, as well, which is only natural. Things like discreetly checking Kylo for injuries after he's come back from missions. He catalogues the colors of the bruises Kylo collects and watches them fade from purple to yellow. Sometimes Hux seeks Kylo out and then can't remember what he needed him for at all, so they just talk, occasionally without bickering, but most always with Kylo stalking away.

This goes on for about a month, then Hux is on the bridge alone when a captain asks him where Kylo is.

"How should I know?" Hux says.

The woman stares at him, stutters. "Well," she says. "I mean, you're usually together, sir, so I thought—"

"We are most certainly not," Hux says, voice dropped an octave, eyes narrowed.

He doesn't even know what she needed Kylo for, because she slinks away without finishing her thought, and then Hux angrily orders extra drills for all the troops.

A day later, Hux proceeds to prove her wrong by accompanying a few of his lieutenants to some meetings on a different Battlecruiser in the Agamar System. The meetings are productive, but dry, boring, and take up more time than Hux wanted them to. He returns more exhausted than he left. The *Finalizer* greets him the way Hux knows her to, running efficient, barely changed. Hux sees Kylo near the training room doors and nods to him, a formal hello. Kylo turns on his heel and walks the other way. Hux doesn't get the chance to be annoyed before he's being updated on the Resistance and their latest attempt to infiltrate their security system. He almost forgets that Kylo might be ignoring him, until it becomes very obvious that he is.

Kylo can disappear, for days, so easily that Hux is jealous of it. Hux has gone cycle after cycle without seeing a trace of him. Now, though, it's as if Kylo wants Hux to see him, to know he's around, before flitting away like he was only a shadow. Hux ignores him, because he has to, because the thought is so ridiculous he refuses to give it a moment to even form in his mind. It all becomes too much the day Hux walks onto the bridge and Kylo makes what must be direct eye contact with him before walking out. There aren't too many people on the bridge this early into the cycle, and Hux feels like it's so *obvious*, even if no one really looks. It's enough to make them look like children, and Hux can't even fathom what Kylo is so furious about. All he knows is that it's profoundly irritating. He wants things back to how they were, with Kylo bringing him caf for no reason and sharing good silences in the late hours of the ship's cycle, Kylo on his hands and knees begging to get fucked.

Hux doesn't excuse himself. He just turns and follows Kylo out in long strides, boots thumping. Kylo hasn't made it very far down the hallway.

"Ren," Hux says.

There's a pause, Kylo turning. Hux wishes, not for the first time, that he didn't wear that damn mask.

"Can I help you, General?"

"Are you...?" Hux doesn't want to say it, he doesn't. But then he does. "Are you seriously avoiding me?"

"No," Kylo says, so clipped that it's obvious he's lying, he *is* avoiding Hux.

"Are you going to tell me why, or continue to skulk around like a child?"

They've stepped off to side of the hallway, even though no one really comes around during this time. Hux would rather not make a spectacle in full view of whoever might be lurking. Kylo lets out a huff of modulated breath, as if Hux has been the exasperating one in all of this.

"You left," he says.

Hux stares. "I don't know what the means."

"The Agamar System," Kylo says. "You left without saying anything."

Hux feels like he's been dropped into some weird dream, or that some part of his brain has shut off. He's missing something here, but he doesn't know what.

"You're angry," Hux says, slowly, "that I left for the Agamar System?"

"You should have said something!" Kylo's voice has grown louder, gruffer. "Isn't that what you're supposed to do?"

"What I'm supposed—what are you talking about?" Hux says. "I don't know why you're angry. Why would I tell you every little thing I do? Stars, Kylo, we aren't dating."

There's a short, horrifying pause before Kylo says, "Aren't we?"

Hux says, "No," with more vigor than he intends, the response automatic, then snaps his jaw shut. Kylo's shoulders droop, then tense. Then, he leaves. He turns and goes and Hux is still standing there wondering what in the hells just happened.

He spends the rest of the day in a haze. Kylo is nowhere to be found, which doesn't surprise Hux in the least. He's never been part of such a ridiculous conversation before. Hux makes his rounds on the bridge because he has to—they've been following a Resistance ship for the better part of a month and now have the justification to shoot it down, and Hux doesn't like anything to happen that isn't under his watch. After, he locks himself in his office and goes over documents he's already gone over. Kylo's disappearance bothers him, and it shouldn't. Hux couldn't see his face, but he could tell how wounded Kylo was when Hux told him *No*. Good, Hux thinks, what an idiotic thing to ask, anyway.

Hux scrolls through old files on his datapad and comes across the command shuttle he commissioned for Kylo. It's a beautiful shuttle. Hux is proud of his work on it, more proud that Kylo has yet to ruin it on a mission. He used to play with ship designs before he rose in the ranks as a kind of hobby, something he never took too seriously because he didn't particularly enjoy it. This one, though, he enjoyed. Suddenly, the last few months piece together so quickly in his mind Hux gets a headache. This ship he designed specifically for Kylo, the food Kylo got for him, the bath, the kiss, the sex, any of it, *all of it*. Something drops into the pit of Hux's stomach. He shoves his datapad aside and thinks about getting so drunk he won't be able to think for an entire day. He feels so utterly, absurdly angry. How did this *happen*?

Hux relieves himself from duty for this rest of the cycle, something he never does, and goes to his quarters. He has one drink, two fingers of whiskey that he drinks too quickly and nearly chokes on.

"Ugh," he says into the room.

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When Hux decides on something, that's it, he's decided. He decided to become a general. He decided to kill his father and burn the memory of him to the ground. He decided to forgo emotions and sleep and become obsessive to the point he couldn't tell what he believed and what he didn't. And he decides to go to Kylo Ren's quarters.

He doesn't expect the door to open when he knocks, but the door hisses open for him, into the surprisingly well-lit room of Kylo's quarters. Kylo is sitting on a chair, dressed down to an undershirt and pants, looking for all the world like he hasn't thought about Hux once today since their little talk in the hall. Hux waits for the door to shut behind him before he speaks.

"We," he says, "are not dating."

Kylo's eyes darken. He stands, already looming in his anger. A lesser man might have taken a step back at this point, given the fact that he'd be facing an angry, emotional mystic. Hux is not a lesser man.

"Whatever you played out in that mind of yours, forget it."

"You—" Kylo says, voice gravelly from disuse.

The anger in his features fades suddenly, and the new calmness of his demeanor is actually more frightening to Hux than his anger.

"We *are* dating," Kylo says. "You didn't realize it."

Hux scoffs a bit too loudly. "I'm well aware of what dating entails."

"As am I."

"I find it difficult to believe you've ever had a boyfriend."

Stars, Hux hates that word. *Boyfriend*. Basic can be a beautiful language, but that word incites an anger in Hux he can't really justify. He isn't a boy. Neither is Kylo. They certainly aren't friends. The word sounds so weak and juvenile. Kylo looks ready to pull Hux's arms from his sockets again, lips thinned, but there's a stitch of hurt pulled from his brows, and Hux can't seem to ignore it. He can't seem to ignore Kylo at all, even when he tries.

"Is that it, then?" Kylo says.

"Yes," Hux hisses, then kisses him.

Kylo responds on instinct, mouth yielding, before his brain catches up to him. He pulls back.

"You just said—"

"Do you want to have sex or not?" Hux says, feels hysterical now, no idea what he's even proving.

The moment of hesitation stings a bit, but then Kylo nods, oddly timid. Sometimes he moves in ways that are small, almost fearful, and Hux doesn't understand them. He doesn't understand anything. Hux kisses Kylo again, relieved by it, relieved to finally know something. He wants. It feels strangely good to admit that, and something in the back of his brain switches off, and all Hux has to do is act. He and Kylo move with more urgency than before. As if this is the last time, though they both know it isn't. Hux shucks his jacket lets Kylo manhandle him to the bed, his lips so eager and earnest and wet. When Kylo is naked on top of him, Hux can see that his chest is heaving.

"Let me," Hux says, grabbing the lubricant from his hands.

He prods blindly behind Kylo to find his hole. Kylo holds himself open with both hands, a small sound escaping his lips when Hux finally fucks that first finger into him. It feels like it's been so long, *too* long, and it hasn't even been that long at all. Hux can feel Kylo's balls against his palm, the warm wet dribble of lube on his wrist. He's almost got four fingers in when Kylo starts bucking forward, cockhead red.

"Can I?" Kylo says, breathless.

Hux pushes his fingers lazily. "I don't know, can you?"

"Hux."

Kylo sits upright more, Hux's fingers slipping out. He rises to meet Kylo, but Kylo pushes him flat against the bed with a firm hand and uses his other to lube up Hux's cock and ease himself down. Kylo swallows him like he's hungry for it, and maker, Hux could watch him do that forever. Kylo arches once he's fully seated. Hux feels like he has no choice but to reach forward and squeeze Kylo's pectorals, feel the nipples pebble against his palm.

Hux is ridden. He sees nothing but Kylo. His hands drop to Kylo's hips and hold with the intent to bruise. There's a dull cramp somewhere in his left leg but Hux doesn't care, he doesn't care at all. He pushes up to meet Kylo's movements until his back bows off the bed, and when Kylo comes Hux is reminded of planets exploding—a beautiful flash of white and light he can't look away from. He doesn't try.

Later, Hux watches Kylo sprawl on his bed and starts to feel itchy, like his skin is on too tight.

"I'll go," he says.

"You could stay," Kylo says, voice even.

"I could stay," Hux muses.

He does. Until the next cycle. He doesn't sleep, so Hux doesn't consider it spending the night, but he stays.

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The problem is that Hux is always expecting someone to leave, and someone always has, and he knows he deserves it.

Kylo doesn't leave.

"I'm not your boyfriend," Hux says to him one evening, voice low and authoritative.

"I know," Kylo says, in a tone that implies he does, in fact, not know that.

They're holed up in a meeting room going over plans for Starkiller. Hux knows that he doesn't have to whisper, but even saying the word "boyfriend" above a whisper has him convinced it'll cast some sort of spell, something mystic and powerful that he can't control. The other day, Hux had been working in his quarters when Kylo came up behind him and pressed his forehead against the nape of Hux's neck. They stayed like that for too long, and later Hux felt like his neck was burning. It seemed time to remind Kylo once again that they are not, in fact, dating.

Kylo pulls up some schematics on the datapad and Hux goes back into work mode, but this isn't over.

Later, he swallows Kylo's come down and wipes his mouth off, says, "This should have been a once-only deal."

"Sorry," says Kylo, and sounds like he means it.

Hux sighs and kisses him, and they both taste very bitter.

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A few stars die. The Resistance weakens, then grows. Hux sleeps more. There is something simmering under the surface of his skin, like water ready to boil. The feeling doesn't leave, even on nights when Kylo is just the sweetest for him, slutty and eager to give. Hux is waiting. Sometime later, Kylo has a fit. This isn't like his other fits, which come in anger at his own shortcomings and end with a good million in credits worth of damage, fits that Hux are convinced will see him bald before his fortieth birthday. This is something else, and Hux doesn't know how he knows this but he does. He pushes people, physically pushes his own men out of his way to follow the trail of damage to Kylo's quarters.

There, Kylo hasn't even made it to his own bed. He's sitting on the hard floor, arms curled over his legs, some feral thing ready to lash out. Hux approaches carefully. He crouches down a few feet away from Kylo and smooths a hand over his hair. It occurs to him that he is probably the only one who could possibly get close to Kylo right now.

"Was destroying the entire hallway necessary?" he asks.

Kylo looks up, though Hux can only see one of his eyes. He can see the angry, unshed tears there. He can see something so terribly unhinged it actually frightens him, something so lost Hux is afraid if he keeps looking he'll also become lost. Hux averts his gaze to the floor, heart caught in his ribcage. He should leave. He shouldn't be seeing this, has no right to. Hux begins to stand.

"Stay," Kylo says.

Hux pauses.

"Just—stay a minute."

"I can't help you," Hux says, and his voice doesn't come out angry so much as it does sad.

Kylo ghosts a laugh. Hux hates when he does that, like he knows something Hux should also know. Kylo stretches his legs out. His chest shakes as he breathes, and Hux doesn't know what happened.

"I know," Kylo says. "You're not my boyfriend."

Hux doesn't answer.

What he does, instead, is reach for Kylo's hand. There, half-crouched, half getting ready to stand and his calves cramping to hell, Hux grabs Kylo's hand and holds. The fat whites of Kylo's eyes somehow grow larger. Hux feels ludicrous. But, then, Kylo holds back, and there

is something warming in that, something oddly comforting that Hux wants to understand and thinks that maybe, one day, he might.

They go to bed later, Hux's quarters, and don't talk about it, which is fine. Kylo tucks himself under Hux's chin and holds him, and Hux imagined a lot of things for himself as a boy, but bedding a Force user certainly wasn't one of them. Boyfriend, Hux thinks, and snorts quietly. He runs his thin fingers through the black mass of Kylo's hair. Kylo is so solid. Impossible not to feel him. And Hux does. He feels Kylo, and also, for the first time in too long, calm. The itch under his skin has faded, though Hux knows it'll be back.

"Stay," Hux says into the quiet.

Kylo should be asleep, and Hux didn't phrase it as a question, but the answer comes anyway, as real and solid as Kylo is:

"Yes."

End Notes

That got a little sad at the end, because, like, you know. Thanks to Steven Soderbergh for the title inspiration but never let him know I wrote this.

I have a final due in three days but I wrote this instead because grad school is stressful! On twitter @stereoroo

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