

softly as the morning sunrise

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softly as the morning sunrise

by [Onyxim](#)

Summary

Noel doesn't like Cody at first. Then, he does. A lot.

Cue angsty, gay inner monologue.

Notes

I'm a music ed major and I wanted my boys to be college musicians so here you go

also I know - I havent even finished my other fic and I've started on another one??? what fucking piece of work. I really did lose inspiration for "these walls" guys so hopefully this can fill your tmg needs until I fucking get over my writer's block

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

blue rondo á la turk

Noel doesn't like Cody right away.

In fact, he annoys the hell out of him. During concert band rehearsals, when the director's giving instruction to the brass section and Cody is clowning around in the back of the band room with the other percussionists, Noel just wants to chuck his whole saxophone at him. During jazz ensemble, when he doesn't give any heed to the other members as they tune and he just plays nonsensical rhythms on the drumset, he wants to scream.

No, he doesn't like Cody at all. He thinks he's annoying as hell, talks too damn much, and showboats like a typical percussionist. He's the new kid, transferred from some school in Canada or something. Everyone knows each other here, so he's probably just trying to make a name for himself, so Noel kind of gets it. But that doesn't make it any less fucking annoying.

So how he ends up in an ensemble with this fool, he doesn't know.

During the third week of school, Dr. Curtis assigns the music department their ensembles for department recitals. They've got until midterms to perfect it, where they'll perform in front of the entire department for a grade. Noel ends up with himself playing alto sax, Devon on keys, and Cody on percussion. Dr. Curtis leaves it up to them to decide what piece they want to play.

He finds out that Cody is nearly as insufferable in an ensemble of three people as he is in a group of thirty. Their rehearsals are in the morning, before classes start (that's the only time the damn band room is empty), and Noel is already irritated that he has to roll out of bed at 7AM and drive across campus to the performing arts building. He's so tired that, on the first day of rehearsal, he leaves his instrument in his dormroom, and has to go back and get it. He does not like the morning, and the morning does not like him.

Cody, the weirdo, is smiling cheerfully, sticks in hand, when Noel arrives to the band room.

"Morning!" he chirps, and Noel wants to roll his eyes, but from sheer willpower he doesn't.

"Morning," he mumbles instead, wincing at how rough his voice is. Devon is already seated at the piano, and from the looks of how he's slumped over and staring blearily at the keys, he's exhausted too.

Noel begins the slow process of unpacking and assembling and tuning his sax, all the while Cody fiddles with his drumset setup, rearranging and moving the drums and throne before he deems it satisfactory.

"It's between [*Take Five*](#) and [*Blue Rondo à la Turk*](#)," Noel announces, passing out the sheet music he'd printed out the night before. "Can't decide. Up to you, Cody."

"Why me?" Cody asks, with this confused puppy dog look that gives Noel a weird feeling.

"One's in 5/4 and the other's in 9/8. Devon and I have played them both before. We got the easy parts. "

"Oh."

"I vote Blue Rondo," Devon grumbles from the piano, "*Take Five* might put me to sleep."

Noel sympathizes greatly. Take Five's piano part is more like background noise than a melodic line.

"Okay. I wouldn't mind that." Cody taps experimentally on the bass drum pedal. He's still beaming.

Weird ass dude. At least he's got moxie.

"How fast we taking this?" Cody pats his sticks on his thighs at a moderate tempo. "'Bout here?"

"Yeah, sure." Looping his neck strap around his neck, he repeats Cody's tempo by snapping his fingers. "Okay. One-two-three one-two-three one-two-three..."

After about forty minutes of rehearsal, Noel decides to call it a day and the trio begins to pack up their belongings.

"I don't think there's much we need to rehearse," Noel says honestly, latching his case shut. His mind is still fuzzy with drowsiness, and he can't wait to climb back into bed and sleep until his afternoon classes. "Sounded fine to me."

"Agreed," Devon says. He's sliding his sheet music into a beat-up folder. "Dude, I can count on both hands how many times I've played this shit."

Cody shrugs. He looks a little pensive, which means there's probably a question coming, and goddammit Noel just wants to *sleep*. "I mean, yeah, it's really easy. But. . ."

Noel groans inwardly. "But what?"

"I feel like we could play something more. . .challenging." He reaches over to turn the snare off on his snare drum. "All I'm doing is playing the cymbal for ninety-percent of the song, you only get the melody for like two seconds, and Devon sounds like he's tired of playing it."

Noel feels annoyance curling in his stomach. "I get that. But recitals are in two months, and who knows how often we'll get to meet up. We need something quick."

"Yeah, but then it's not fun, you know?"

From the piano bench, Devon coughs, looking apologetic. "Yeah. . .this piece gives me fuckin' nightmares."

Noel throws his hands up, tired and agitated. "Fine. Fine. If you find another song, we'll do it."

Cody smiles brightly at that, and Noel wants to punch him.

Noel wakes up abruptly to the sound of his phone buzzing on his dresser. Spock, who had apparently been sleeping peacefully in his bed across the room, grumbles something that sounds like "oh my God, shut up."

Noel resists the urge to chuck his pillow at him and mutters an apology instead.

What the hell, he thinks, grappling for the device. He squints at the screen. There's a missed call from Cody, followed by a text.

Cody (4:06 AM): found one: <https://youtu.be/Tm-o8GIMtHQ>

Of course.

Noel (4:08 AM): more dave brubeck? really?

Cody (4:09 AM): I like the drummer

Noel (4:10 AM): fair enough. I'll listen to it when i get up. Go the fuck to sleep man

Cody (4:12 AM): practice in two hours. :P

Noel (4:13 AM): practice?

Cody (4:14 AM): diving

Noel can't help but scoff a little at that.

Noel (4:15 AM): no wonder you're so happy in the morning you spend most of it in a fuckin pool

Cody (4:15 AM): yep :)

Noel decides not to respond after that, feeling his eyelids get heavy. He slides back into a deep sleep easily - dreaming of homework he forgot to do, jazz, and Cody, dripping wet and stepping out of a pool.

when sunny gets blue

Chapter Notes

title inspo: <https://youtu.be/7toKjKtbeeI>

Timestamps for mentioned songs and music terms are in the end notes!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Noel is a music business major. He spends a lot of time in Marlon, their campus' performing arts building. He practically lives there, in the practice rooms and studios, oftentimes staying until 2AM, when the building closes. It's home to all of the musicians, dancers, and thespians on campus.

So it's no surprise that Noel runs in to Cody at literally every given moment.

Cody, who Noel has now realized is in most of his music classes with him, stops to talk to him at every chance he gets. The guy's a vibrating bundle of energy, as are most percussionists, and strikes up a conversation out of literally thin air.

It's annoying at first. There are times of the day when Noel is feeling sociable, and times of the day where he's tired and cranky, but Cody either doesn't pick up on that or simply doesn't care. He'll stop him with a bright, "How's it goin', buddy!" in the whitest way possible, or a "What's up, man?" with a lopsided smile and a fist bump. What a frat boy.

He has to admit, though, he does feel a little better after he talks to Cody. Just a little.

Orchestra is at 7:30PM. For orchestra, Noel plays clarinet instead of saxophone, because there aren't a lot of pieces that require an alto sax section. Here, Cody is plays keyboard percussion rather than drumset or snare - marimba, bells, vibes.

The sheet music for the semester's first concert lies on a table in the back of the band room. One particular piece catches his eye, making him raise an eyebrow. [Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra](#), it says. The parts are for the string section of the orchestra, so he wouldn't be in it, and a solo marimba player. Cody is the only percussionist he knows whose primary instruments are keyboard percussion, and Noel wonders if it's going to be him performing.

(He kind of hopes so.)

Noel gathers his parts for B-flat clarinet and returns to his seat, shuffling through the papers. None of the pieces look familiar, but his parts are easy enough, with the exception of a solo he has in a piece called [Zampa Overture](#).

The orchestra members meander about the room, assembling their instruments and tuning, quiet and easy conversation falling between the sections as they examine their new music.

"Hey," come a soft voice from above him, and Noel smiles.

"Hey," he returns coyly, lifting his eyes from his music. "How's it feel being first chair this semester?"

Aleena shrugs, sheepish. She's holding her violin by the neck in one hand, the other delicately holding the bow. "Scary. I'm not good at leading."

"And you're concertmaster, too," Noel points out. "So you basically lead the whole orchestra, right?"

"Not really. I'm just Curtis' glorified assistant manager." She glances around. "Lot of new people this year."

Noel twists a little in his chair, eyes instantly going to Cody, who's behind the assortment of chairs set up for the rest of the orchestra. He's leaning over a set of timpanis, tapping the drumheads with his fingers and frowning intently - he must be tuning. His hair's falling over his forehead.

"Yeah," Noel says, his voice distant.

Aleena follows his line of sight and smirks. "Oh, he's cute, isn't he?"

Noel nearly answers that. "Stop it."

"Stop what?" she asks, innocent.

"I'm not trying to date anyone right now."

"But you would look so *cute* together!"

"What - this is the first time you've seen him!"

Aleena shrugs again. "I can sense the love in the air."

He shoves her playfully, grinning. There was no stopping her - she's been trying to set him up since freshman year.

"You can, huh? How's it going with you and Kelsey, by the way?"

That does it. Aleena's eyes widen. "I'm not - I haven't - "

"Uh-huh, sure," Noel says, glancing in the direction of the girl in question. She's standing next to the instrument lockers, talking excitedly with another flute player, hair bouncing around her shoulders as she describes the events of a seemingly interesting story. He turns back to Aleena, who is staring longingly. "I saw how close y'all were at Steve's place, all cuddled up on the couch."

"I barely remember that," she says indignantly. "I need proof."

"I'm sure I can find some pictures. Wait, what do you need proof for?"

Aleena blushes, her eyes cutting away. "No reason."

"Nah, quit playin', you just trynna have some pictures of her sitting in your lap."

"Noel!" She slaps his arm and he laughs.

"I was joking! But y'all look cute together, just go for it." He rubs the sore spot on his arm - violin players are *strong*.

Aleena raises a perfectly manicured brow. "Ha! I could say the same for you. You probably want Cody in your lap, too."

His mind short-circuits. "That - what? No I don't - "

Thankfully, he doesn't have enough time to splutter out the rest of his response, because Dr. Curtis walks in and rehearsal commences, the members scrambling for their seats.

Rehearsal goes well. Dr. Curtis dismisses the woodwind and brass players for the evening, so the string orchestra and Cody can work on the concerto. Part of Noel wants to hang around to hear it, because hearing Cody play timpani is nowhere near as exciting as hearing him play marimba, but he decides against it.

God, when did he become so fond of the guy? Just last week he hated him. Or did he even really hate him in the first place? Maybe he was just jealous that Cody made friends so easily, and was just so sociable, unlike Noel, who even on a good day didn't feel like starting conversations with strangers.

The thought makes Noel frown. No, he wasn't jealous. He couldn't hate Cody for being an asshole, because he truly wasn't, but he was still annoying, a ten-year-old kid in a twenty-something-year-old body. No one should have that much damn energy in the morning.

Noel decides that he doesn't want to go back to his dorm and decides to take up residence in an empty practice room. He needs to brush up on his clarinet technique, and the woodwind soli line in [*Finlandia*](#) sounded a little weird.

He spends about forty-five minutes going through all of the pieces. He's debating on whether or not to grab his saxophone when there's a polite knock on the practice room door.

Confused, Noel stretches to see if he can get a glimpse out the window, and then the door opens and Cody peeks his head in.

"You sound really good," he says. "I didn't know you played clarinet."

Noel shrugs. "Most saxophonists do. What's up?"

"Well. . . I. . ." Cody seems to scramble for words. "I wanted to see if you wanted to practice with me," he finishes, stepping fully into the room almost sheepishly.

Noel raises his eyebrows. "I don't know how well a clarinet and a timpani go together, man."

"I can play a little piano. 'S nearly the same as marimba, same keys and all that."

"So, what, you wanna help me practice my music?"

"Sure."

Noel stares at him.

Sighing, Cody says, "Look, I'm just lonely, alright? I don't have anyone to hang out with and I really only know you here."

As weird as it is, Noel kind of understands. He doesn't really talk to a whole lot of the people here, either, despite being here for three years. Well, Cody talks to damn near everybody, he sees him talking to people all the time. But are those people even actually his friends? Yeah, somehow, that makes Noel kind of sad for him, because he tries so hard.

Noel gives him a smile he hopes is friendly and not pitying. "Okay. Well, I need a little help with this one part in Zampa, because the rhythm is weird as shit."

Brightening, Cody closes the door behind him. "You've come to the right person. I am the rhythm master."

Noel scoffs as Cody leans over his shoulder a bit to examine his sheet music. "Uh huh, sure."

"I am!"

"Had you even ever played in 9/8 before *Blue Rondo á la Turk*?"

Cody plucks the music off of the music stand. "Dude. My concerto is in 11/8."

Noel grimaces. "Gross."

"Exactly." His eyes flit about the page as he searches for the line that Noel had mentioned. "Wait. This part here?" He asks incredulously, pointing at the measure.

"Yep."

"Dude."

"What? I'm not good at rhythm unless I listen to the track first."

Rolling his eyes, Cody takes a seat at the upright piano. From this angle, Noel can't see Cody's body below his neck, because the keyboard of the piano is facing the wall. Cody settles the sheet music onto the stand, clears his throat, and plays the line perfectly.

"Show-off," Noel mutters.

"It's the double-dotted quarter notes that are probably tripping you up," Cody says, playing it again slowly. "Just imagine the sixteenth notes as grace notes."

That makes sense. "Huh. Okay, thanks," he says. He pauses. "Yo, how the fuck are you playing and talking at the same time?"

Cody grins. "Taught myself. If I wanna teach music I gotta learn how to speak and play. It was really fucking hard."

"At least you're able to do it. Sucks being a woodwind player sometimes." Noel tries and fails to imagine talking while playing his saxophone.

"Well yeah, it's kind of hard to talk when you've got something in your mouth."

Noel *definitely* does not think of that in a weird way. He doesn't. He feels like he should say "pause" for good measure, just so Cody doesn't take his sudden silence in a weird way.

Thankfully, Cody is completely oblivious to the confused gay turmoil currently taking place within Noel's body and asks, "Anything else you need help with?"

"Huh? Oh, uh, yeah. You mind playing the melody from Finlandia with me? Just wanna make sure I'm in tune." Noel passes him the sheet music.

"Sure. Wanna come over here so you can see it too?" Cody scoots over on the piano bench.

Dammit.

Noel slides cautiously onto the seat. His thigh brushes Cody's.

Cody pretends to be disgusted. "Ew, dude."

Noel smirks. "Not my fault you're so damn thick, bro. No homo," he adds. "Must be all that diving."

Cody giggles and shoves at him. "Shut up. It's a small seat. Besides, you gotta have muscle if you wanna dive like me."

"Uh huh, sure. Just play the thing, man."

Wetting his lips and bringing his clarinet to his mouth, Noel waits for Cody's cue. Noel is pleased to find that he had, indeed, been in tune. To spice things up, Cody plays the chords of the key signature, and it sounds like a pretty piano-clarinet duet. Cody's forearm sometimes brushes against Noel's when his left hand travels further down the keys. Noel tries not to think about how muscular it is.

They quickly approach the end of the *solis*. Noel takes his clarinet away from his lips.

"Holy shit," Noel says, thoroughly impressed. "Why aren't you our pianist for the trio?"

"Because where else would you find a kickass drummer?" is Cody's teasing response, and his lopsided grin does things to Noel.

His smile is genuine. "Fair point."

Spock is sitting at his desk when Noel walks in.

"What are you doing still up?" Noel asks, setting his clarinet case on the floor. He toes off his shoes.

"Some production stuff," Spock says, clicking around on his laptop. "I just downloaded Ableton and I've just been playing around with it. Where've you been? It's like 2AM."

"Marlon. I stayed to practice with - " he stops himself. "Uh. I stayed to practice."

Spock's knowing grin makes him squirm. He turns fully in his chair, draping an arm over the back of it. "Practice, huh?"

"Mhmm." Noel isn't normally so nervous about talking about his personal life with Spock. But *this*? This was difficult for him. Feelings. What even *was* he feeling? Lust? Some sort of weird, convoluted affection for this guy he's only really known for like two weeks? Maybe he's misinterpreting things. Basic acts of kindness don't equate. . . whatever his brain thinks this is. He feels like a fucking high schooler, crushing on whoever reveals themselves to be a suitable partner. He'd misjudged Cody - he really does seem like a really good friend, but Noel's poor brain wants so much more than that. Or does it? Hello, intimacy issues.

Maybe he just hasn't been able to really talk with someone, especially someone as bright and amazing (woah) as Cody, someone who makes him feel so. . .refreshed and untethered.

He's getting ahead of himself. *Way* the fuck ahead of himself.

"Practice with who?" Spock asks idly.

"Nope," Noel says.

"C'mon, who is it?"

"I'm not telling you 'cause it's not even like that." God, does he seem so lonely that his friends get this excited when he starts talking to someone new?

"Ohh so there *is* someone! What's their name? Do I know them?" His careful avoidance of pronouns makes Noel smile a little.

"Not telling you, man."

"Aw." Spock turns back around in his chair, mumbling, "Well, at least I know you're getting your dick wet."

And at that, Noel chokes on his own air.

Chapter End Notes

Soli - Plural for "solo," indicates that the entire section has the solo.

Concertmaster - "The concertmaster is the leader of the first violin section in an orchestra and the instrument-playing leader of the orchestra. After the conductor, the concertmaster is the second-most significant leader in an orchestra, symphonic band or other musical ensemble. Another common term in the U.S. is 'first chair.'"

Also, most saxophone players either started on clarinet or can also play clarinet. The fingering is about the same.

You don't have to listen to these to read the fic, but here they are anyway. :)

Cody's concerto: <https://youtu.be/Tm-o8GIMtHQ> (picked this one specifically because we played it a few years back and I can totally imagine Cody doing it)

Zampa Overture (Noel's solo): 4:16 - 5:07 <https://youtu.be/DZ2H6vu0xjE>

Finlandia (Beginning is Cody's timpani solo, 5:20 - 6:18 is Noel's woodwind soli):
<https://youtu.be/841vM-y6Eug>

st. louis blues

Chapter Notes

it's getting gayer guys

title inspo: <https://youtu.be/YBCzHbQYGeg>

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They spend their next rehearsal going over [St. Louis Blues](#). Devon, who is slouching tiredly over the piano again, brightens instantly when Cody slides the sheet music onto his stand.

"Oh my God," he exclaims. "This is *way* better."

Noel scoffs from where his hands are buried in his saxophone case, searching for a reed that isn't chipped.

Devon turns on the bench to shoot him an apologetic look. "Sorry, dude. It's still Dave Brubeck, at least."

"I'm resting for a lot of measures," Noel comments mildly. He finds a reed that's got a hairline split down one side, but deems it acceptable enough for one rehearsal until he can buy more. "What you trying to say, Cody?"

Cody has the nerve to look sheepish from behind the drumset. "Well, in Dave Brubeck's quartets, the saxophone's always the main focus. Y'know? I figured that Devon and I could use a little bit of recognition. We both have solos."

"So what am I supposed to do? *Dance*?"

"Sure. It sounds kind of like a tango. Maybe you can mince a little," Cody says smugly.

Devon snickers. "Yeah, start milly rocking."

Noel shakes his head. "Nah I'm good, I'll just stand there I guess. Or write my own solo. I fuckin' *suck* at improv, though."

Cody smiles.

"Oh my God, you can't be good at that, too," Noel groans, greasing the cork and sliding the mouthpiece onto his sax.

"Percussionists reign *supreme*, baby." Cody does the ba-dum-tss thing. "Multi-talented over here. I can give you private lessons."

Noel (wisely) decides to ignore whatever implications may be behind that. "Whatever fool." Noel slings the neckstrap around his neck. "Play me a fuckin' beat."

Alright. He can admit when he's wrong. It's a really, *really* fun song to play, despite Noel having to stand and do nothing for many measures, but watching Cody and Devon trade looks when they're switching between solos makes Noel warm inside. Cody was right - playing a song that he'd played a thousand times before felt like a fucking chore. At least now he has something to practice besides concert music. He wants to join in on the fun, however, and asks Cody after Devon departs (he has a class right after rehearsal) if he really can give him lessons on improv.

"Really?" Cody asks, genuinely surprised. "Uh, I was actually bluffing a little back there. I'm not super great on, like, improv with actual *notes*."

"Well then we'll both mutually benefit from it, yeah? You can probably just play some chords on the piano and I'll make some stuff up and you can tell me if it's good. I just don't wanna be standing there like a fuckin' scarecrow while y'all are playing."

Cody hums. "Okay. How about after rehearsal on Monday? Like last time?"

Oh, right. They were going to be alone in a practice room again. Noel had kind of imagined this taking place after their trio rehearsals, in the open space of the band room, but. . .yeah, he can do that. Close proximity and all.

"Sounds good," he says. "Thanks man."

"No problem." Cody hefts his percussion bag over his shoulder. "So what do you usually do after this?"

"Go the fuck back to sleep."

Cody barks a laugh. "Fair enough. Do you eat breakfast or anything?"

"No. I'm usually too tired. Not a morning guy." Strangely enough, though, he feels quite awake today.

"I'm about to head to the Commons because I don't usually eat before practice. Wanna come with?"

Noel is taken aback. He hasn't known Cody for long. There's no way he impressed him enough for a. . .a *breakfast invitation*.

"Uh, sure. I drove my car here. I can follow you there."

"Awesome. Come on, we'll lose the good parking spots."

Noel follows Cody's car (of course he drives a fucking Mazda) to the Commons, where they wait in one of the relatively short lines (it is 8AM after all) for breakfast. Noel settles on

waffles, something he hasn't had in months because he stopped waking up early enough for breakfast hours, and Cody gets a loaded omelette that makes Noel full by just looking at it.

"Protein," Cody explains when they settle down at a table in the far corner of the cafeteria, "and I'm hungry as shit."

They talk about nothing and everything. Noel learns that Cody was originally going to stay in Canada for school but was offered a better scholarship by coming here. He really misses his parents and Facetimes them every Saturday. He started diving in high school but decided that music was his true passion, and he wanted to pursue a degree in music education to teach kids all the things he didn't learn. His favorite snack is snap peas. He unironically listens to meme rap on Soundcloud. He can also play the trumpet. ("I'm not really that good at it," he says shyly, but Noel somehow doubts that.)

It's bizarre, making small talk and actually learning about someone. Noel hasn't made any "new" friends in quite some time - he's been friends with the same people in all three of his years on campus. He'd almost forgotten what it felt like to just talk without going in any particular direction - something he hasn't been able to do as he and all of his friends have become busier.

Noel also learns that when Cody laughs he throws his head back and his legs come up off of the chair, he runs his fingers through his hair to push it back from his face when he's listening to Noel talk, and he never breaks eye contact with him.

(His eyes are green like emeralds.)

Noel concludes that, as he and Cody are going their separate ways to their parking spots, it's nice. It's really nice, to have a friend like Cody.

He returns to his dorm not knowing what to do with himself. He's not tired anymore, and he's got about four hours until his first class.

He pops his AirPods into his ears, turns on some [Joe Sample](#), and decides that today would be a good day for a morning walk.

Noel (5:46 PM): I need some help

Aleena (5:46 PM): ???

Noel (5:47 PM): It's about Cody

Aleena (5:47 PM): that cute twunk that you're totally crushing on??

Noel (5:48 PM): Ew don't say "twunk." that's fuckin nasty

Noel (5:48 PM): I'm just confused. it's weird af. like the romantic shit. i can't do it

Aleena (5:50 PM): wdyam? like being intimate?

Noel (5:51 PM): I guess. Even though words like that really fuck w me

Aleena (5:52 PM): yeah i get it. im bad at that too. it's hard being vulnerable

Noel (5:52 PM): I dont wanna jump the gun either. like he's genuinely a good dude. but what am I even feeling? this can't be love.

Aleena (5:54 PM): it's something. But you won't know unless you try

Noel (5:55 PM): I guess I'll think about it. there's a such thing as like, casual dating, right?

Aleena (5:56 PM): yeah it's called fwb

Noel (5:57 PM): oh my god. i mean it's not like I'm NOT wanting to do that, but idfk man.

Aleena (5:58 PM): you kinda want something more?

Noel (5:59 PM): and I don't really know how to do that. shit comes with attachments I can't handle

Aleena (6:00 PM): that's how I feel w Kelsey. but I think we'll be okay. if he really likes you back he'll understand.

Noel (6:02 PM): yeah. Thanks Aleena.

Aleena (6:02 PM): np. go cuff that bottom

Noel (6:03 PM): as long as you snag that top

Aleena (6:04 PM): 😊

Chapter End Notes

The song Noel's listening to: <https://youtu.be/PN9IwY5AwzY>

It's a really cute song that reminds me of love.

Extra notes:

Most music ed majors (like myself) play multiple instruments. To teach music you have to bE music. Basically we take a semester-long class on each orchestra section. So yeah, I made Cody also play the trumpet, sue me.

You can also usually tell what a person plays by the way their hands are and Cody definitely has "I play a brass instrument" vibes.

I don't normally ship Aleena and Kelsey but in this particular universe I like them together, just for the sake of the story. I don't really see them interact irl so I have no idea how they'd like. . .be. Y'know? I may need some help with that.

carmel

Chapter Notes

i have posted this five times but AO3 was glitching the fuck out so sorry if there are weird mistakes

and don't worry guys it'll get jucier, ive already got the next three chapters written :^)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Gay crisis aside, he and Cody get along really well over the next couple of weeks.

It's actually insane how much their friendship has progressed, and Noel theorizes that it's due to the pent-up social awkwardness that has built up within him over the years. Years of. . .not exactly being alone, but not really connecting with anyone in the way he and Cody have.

After rehearsals on Mondays, Cody keeps his promise and teaches Noel improvisation techniques, and Noel scrounges up a short but neat little solo for *St. Louis Blues*. They spend a lot of their time together in the practice room. Cody will usually praise him from his spot on the piano bench, varying between, "That sounds so good," and "Dude you are just *shredding* it over there."

It's not awkward being around him anymore. It's actually quite. . . comforting. Noel can be himself, and Cody accepts him willingly.

It's great. It's great and Noel is content, more so than he has been in a while.

"You ready for the recital?" Cody asks him one night.

They're in the percussion practice room. It's larger, like a classroom, with two rosewood marimbas and various other percussion instruments. Cody is working on his concerto piece.

"Hell yeah," Noel tells him honestly. Their recital is next Wednesday. "We sound fantastic. I think we're gonna kill it. Easy 'A,' dude."

Cody mumbles something to himself and writes something down on his sheet music before he responds, smiling. "Yeah, see? If we'd played Blue Rondo we'd be fuckin' miserable. Aren't you glad we picked something different?"

Noel smirks. "Yeah, yeah, you were right, it's way better."

Pleased, Cody resumes where he left off in his piece, mallets tapping steadily against the marimba's wooden bars. Noel tries (and fails fucking miserably) not to pay attention to how

firm Cody's arms look while he's playing, or the little concentrated frown that takes over his face when he's staring at sheet music.

For this piece he plays with four mallets - two in each hand. It looks *extremely* fucking hard. The percussion section really doesn't get enough credit. Noel is a woodwind player, so during concerts he always sits in the row behind the flautists, facing the audience. He doesn't ever know what's going behind him. For a long time he imagined that the percussion section had it so easy, just whacking things with sticks, not ever needing to tune, only playing one solitary instrument.

Watching Cody showed him how truly difficult it is to be a percussionist. Cody showed him his move chart for his Percussion Ensemble pieces and all Noel could do was gape, because he was a woodwind player, and he never even had to move from his *seat*, let alone move entire instruments across the stage between songs.

Cody had just shrugged. "Hey, you guys have it bad too. Woodwind instruments are the most fucking confusing-looking instruments in the orchestra, dude. My shit's all laid out with keys and whatnot - you guys have like little buttons you have to press. How dope is that?"

Bless his heart.

Cody messes up and groans loudly. "Goddammit."

"You're sounding great, dude," Noel comments honestly. "Can't wait to hear you up on stage."

"Oh, don't even mention that," Cody grumbles. "I hate performing solo. I'm *so* nervous. I'm gonna get up there and throw up."

"Nah, you'll be fine."

"Seriously, dude. I also have to read a short biography about the composer. I'm gonna hurl on the mic, calling it now."

Noel can't help it: he cackles. "Dude if you fuckin' throw up into the microphone I will initiate a standing ovation."

"Say fuckin' less. Ten bucks and I'll chug a bottle of ipecac backstage."

It shouldn't be so funny, but it is. This is shit Noel laughs at but doesn't talk about with his other friends. He couldn't laugh about the sound of retching coming through the loudspeakers of a theater, or how funny it would be if Cody bowed afterwards and exited the stage like nothing happened, leaving behind a little puddle of puke.

"I hope someone throws flowers into it," Cody wheezes, wiping a tear, and yeah, how are they *not* made for each other?

Tuesday night rolls around, the night before their department performance, and Noel is so worked up that he can't sleep.

He's not sure if he's excited or nervous. Noel has always loved performing in front of people - if he hadn't chosen music business as his major he would have chosen music performance. There was something about showcasing his all of his hard work in one performance, showing the audience the end product of hours and hours of time in the practice room. He takes immense pride in his coolheadedness onstage.

His thoughts wander to Cody, and to how he'd confessed his stage fright. He wonders if Cody is nervous about this performance. As much as they'd joked about it, Cody expressed an extreme displeasure for performing in front of people, despite the department as an audience being decently small compared to an auditorium full of people. But Cody mentioned that he didn't even used to like playing for his parents, and that was just two people.

Noel thought *he* was a perfectionist, but in Cody's mind, it seemed, if he messed up one thing, the entire song was ruined.

Against his better judgement, Noel grabs his phone. It's 1AM. No way Cody is awake. But he tries anyway.

Noel (1:39 AM): You up?

It takes a second, but his phone buzzes with Cody's reply.

Cody (1:42 AM): unfortunately

That can't be good.

Noel (1:43 AM): Are you nervous? About the recital

Cody (1:45 AM): man I've been awake for four hours thinking about how I'm gonna fuck it up

Noel (1:46 AM): I get that. but we'll be okay. If anything it'll be me or Devon. people are gonna notice if we hit a wrong note

Cody (1:48 AM): I know, but I just can't stop freaking out. That solo, dude. fuck

Noel (1:50 AM): Just know that if you mess up nobody's gonna really remember it by the end of the song. I think you're gonna kill it. you're so talented and the whole department knows it. everyone performing tomorrow is nervous af and no one is gonna call you out for fucking up.

Wow, is Noel expressing *emotion*? Jesus. Cody really *has* changed him.

Noel (1:53 AM): Just relax. And if you need some comfort I'll be there.

He hits send. He rereads his own message. Then he thinks, "Oh fuck," and adds:

Noel (1:53 AM): and Devon. Devon gets it way more than I do.

Smooth, Noel. Fuckin' smooth.

Cody (1:55 AM): thanks. I promise I'll have myself sorted out by tomorrow. I'm just being stupid. I appreciate it though. goodnight

Noel (1:56 AM): Yeah. don't think about it too much man

Cody (1:57 AM): thanks Drake

Noel smiles, because he knew he'd like that joke, turns off his phone and falls easily into sleep.

They're back behind the shell, and yeah, Cody's freaking out.

There's a guitar player on the other side, playing their solo. Out of respect for them, Cody's freaking out very quietly.

Well, quiet enough that no one else but Noel and Devon can hear him. It's not a panic attack. More like he won't stop jiggling his leg from where he sits, fiddling with his drumsticks and sighing. He looks a bit pale.

"Doing okay?" Noel asks as lowly as possible, close to Cody's ear.

Cody shrugs. "I guess. God, I hate this." A quiet, sarcastic snort. "A percussionist with stage fright. How fuckin' bizarre."

He's right. Percussionists are known for their showboating. But Cody was brought up as a classical musician. It's no wonder that he's fixated on having a perfect performance. He did not start out playing drumset, he picked it up during his time in college, and he doesn't play it often, never performed on it. Of course he's afraid of messing up.

Noel can offer nothing but a, "You'll be fine, stop worrying," and a hand on his shoulder, and Cody leans into him a little. Devon gives him a wide-eyed look that says, "Woah, what?" Noel ignores it.

There's an eruption of applause from the other side of the shell, and against his arm Noel can feel Cody stiffen.

"You got this," Noel says one last time, packing as much encouragement into that one statement as he can, and then their names are being announced over the speakers.

Naturally, they fuckin' kill it, drunk on adrenaline and the way the stage lights shine on them. Noel's hands are shaking but it's the excitement barreling through his veins that makes them tremble against his sax. From the corner of his eye he can see Devon staring intensely at his sheet music, his hands a blur as they jump around the piano.

When Noel is resting and waiting for his next entrance, he turns to look at Cody during his solo. Cody's hands are flying, his eyes scrunched shut in concentration, hair falling in his face. He's sweaty from the lights and from exertion but he's absolutely glowing, the *thud-thump-crash* of the drumset carrying around the room.

Noel has heard Cody's solo a thousand times. But this time. . .he adds something. It sounds almost desperate, a crescendo that starts in the bass drum and climaxes on the snare, the snap of the drumhead against the wooden tips of his sticks striking Noel somewhere in his belly.

Striking green eyes snap open on a final, crisp note, cuing Devon and Noel back in, and Noel realizes as he's putting his mouthpiece back to his lips,

Fuck, I'm in love.

Noel's post-performance energy isn't as intense as it usually is this time around, his sudden revelation making him think too hard, but it certainly is contagious. Cody's smile is bright as he excitedly compliments Noel and Devon both.

"Did we really just *murder* it out there?" Devon asks, flushed and grinning. "Dude, after his we're definitely gonna have groupies."

"Have fun signing autographs," Noel says, smirking. "I'm sure there're just tons of chicks waiting outside for you to sign your name on their tits."

Devon punches him playfully. "You never know." Before he leaves, his eyes dart smugly between he and Cody with a look that says, "I'll give you guys some alone time," and then he departs to go sit in the audience and watch the other performers.

Noel's about to follow suit when Cody's hand grabs his arm.

"Hey," he says, his voice gone softer than Noel's ever heard it. "Uh, thanks for like, encouraging me. I actually had a lot of fun out there."

Noel smiles. "Sure, man. And look, you didn't puke, so I call that a victory."

Cody laughs. "Yeah, I guess so. Hey, to celebrate, did you wanna come with me to a party tonight? I got invited and, I don't know. I don't want to go alone. That'd be fuckin' weird."

"It *would* be fuckin' weird," Noel says idly. "Guess I could tag along. So you don't look like a fuckin' weirdo."

Noel doesn't quite believe what has just come out of his own mouth until Cody gives him a warm grin that makes his stomach flutter. "Cool, man. Thanks."

As Noel turns to join the audience, it dawns on him that he just agreed to going to a party with someone he's crushing hard on. A *party*. Something he hasn't done since freshman year.

Noel Miller, he thinks to himself as he settles into his seat, *you are fucking whipped*.

Keyboard percussionists (specifically marimba players) can play with either two mallets or four mallets. Percussionists also often move their instruments around onstage during concerts if they end up having to play more than one during a song.

Also, department recitals aren't a HUGE deal but they're also a huge part of your grade. Everyone has to do a department recital every semester. However, this is not a Junior or Senior recital, which Cody is going to be doing.

Terms:

Flautist - flute player.

Move chart -

Chapter 5 comin' soon 🙄

something

Chapter Notes

title inspo: <https://youtu.be/YBCzHbQYGeg>

im glad you guys like this fic so much. i wanted to wait to drop this chapter but i got too excited 🥹 i love y'all

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Noel's never been much of a party person.

Sure, he's never *minded* parties, but he hasn't attended one since freshman year. Mostly because all the parties he'd been to took place in some kid's small ass apartment, with a fuckton of people he didn't know. Oftentimes he went with Aleena, just to chase off the assholes that hit on her and didn't know when to quit. Other times he went with Spock, but Spock was decently popular, and usually disappeared after about half an hour.

But tonight, Noel is here with Cody, and he guesses that Cody has always been a party person.

Cody, who clasps his hand and drags him around the party to introduce him to some of the other members of his percussion ensemble. Cody, who never leaves his side or abandons him, not even to piss ("Can you make sure no one opens the door while I'm in here?"). Cody, who is quite drunk, and betting to a group of guys that he can do ten cartwheels in a row across the front lawn in a straight line.

Noel's only had a few drinks, two or three (four?) bottles of Seagram's, a few shots of Peach Amsterdam. He smoked a little. Yeah, he's a little crossed. Mostly to loosen him up. Make him sociable. It works, sort of, but he mostly just giggles at Cody and follows him around while he turns into a high-class frat boy.

He feels good. He feels good just holding Cody's hand and not thinking much of it. He feels relaxed and happy and sated.

Cody's touchy-feely when he's drunk. Squeezing Noel's hands, shoving him when he makes him laugh hard enough, touching his back when introducing him to people. It's a subtle touch reserved for just him and, well. Maybe it isn't just the alcohol making his face warm.

Once they've both had their sufficient fill of socialization Cody yanks him towards the front door and they spill out onto the front lawn. It's quieter out here, the music from the house distant and muted. Cody totters a bit before righting himself, his smile dopey. He's clutching an entire bottle of Bacardi in one of his hands.

"Whooo!" he calls into the night. "Dude what a fuckin' good day. Hasn't it just been fuckin' *great*?"

"It's been awesome man," Noel says. "Where do you wanna go now?"

"I'm fuckin' *starving* dude," he groans exaggeratedly. "We should go to, like, McDonald's or somethin'."

"Hell yeah," Noel agrees, because he's got a fat case of the munchies and McDonald's is within walking distance. "Wait, what about your diet?"

"Doesn't count if I'm drunk, dude," Cody says, and rolls his eyes like it's obvious. "Duh."

Noel shrugs, grinning. "Okay. But you gotta leave the bottle. We can't just walk up in there with a bottle of liquor."

"Oh yeah." Cody squints at the bottle in the darkness before shrugging himself and lifting the bottle to his lips and taking several large swigs. Noel doesn't bother looking away from the way Cody's Adam's apple bobs as he gulps.

"Well don't fuckin' hog it all," Noel says, grabbing for it. "Pass that shit, brother."

Cody burps and gives it to him.

"Nice," Noel says and takes a couple swigs himself. Ugh, it's *gross*, Noel has never liked clear alcohol, but he can't be bothered to care. He drops the bottle into the grass with a dull "thud."

"Dude, you can't fuckin' *litter!* The *environment*," Cody gasps dramatically, but he's already making his way towards the sidewalk.

"Man *fuck* the environment," Noel says as loud as possible. It echoes around the neighborhood, which makes Cody laughs so hard he doubles over, and it's the only sound Noel ever wants to hear.

They stumble out of McDonald's carrying two bags of food, walking back towards campus. Cody hadn't even pushed open the fingerprint-stained double doors before he was stuffing a McChicken into his mouth, moaning.

"Oh my God. This is the best thing I have ever tasted," he whispers. "Oh my fucking *God* dude."

"Yeah? You tired of eating fucking eggs and whey protein?" Noel pops a fry into his mouth. The salt explodes on his tongue.

"I don't use whey protein," Cody huffs. There's a glob of mayo on the corner of his mouth. "I'm a diver, not a bodybuilder."

"Sure you aren't," Noel teases and pokes one of Cody's firm arms.

Cody makes that magical laughing noise again, cringing away from his touch. "Stop, dude, I hate when people do that!"

"What, do this?" Noel sidles up as close to Cody as possible, raising his voice to a high falsetto and wrapping his free arm around Cody's bicep. *"Oh, Cody! You have such big strong arms! I want you to just carry me off into the sunset!"*

Cody snorts and giggles, and Noel wonders if it's a trick of the light coming from the streetlights they walk by, but he swears he's blushing.

They end up in Noel's room, Noel sprawled across his bed, Cody sitting in his desk chair and attempting to put Noel's clarinet together.

"It's not working," Cody whines, his clumsy fingers attempting to fit the pieces together.

"Nah, dude, you gotta - " He sits up, his head swimming. *Fuck*, he's drunk. "Ya gotta grease the cork first. 'R else it won't fit."

"That's what she said," Cody says and collapses into a fit of giggles, nearly dropping the clarinet entirely.

Rolling his eyes, Noel makes a grabby hand motion. "C'mere."

Instead of just handing over the instrument like he'd anticipated, Cody clambers onto the bed with him, so they're sitting shoulder to shoulder, thighs brushing together. Cody, as always, is completely oblivious to how Noel stiffens almost immediately.

"Don't you just shove this piece in there?" Cody says.

I'd love to shove my piece -

"Yeah, just. Here, gimme it." Noel assembles it with relative ease. Fixing the reed onto the mouthpiece and securing the ligature around it, he smoothly plays a B-flat major scale.

Well, it sounds decent to him. He's pretty drunk.

Cody gawks at him like it's the most amazing thing he's ever seen. "Woah, dude, you're so talented."

"Shut the fuck up, all I did was play a scale," Noel says, shoving him a little. "You see me play all the time."

"No, but *dude*," he insists, "you're *so* fuckin' talented. Like. I don't think people tell you that enough. Like how dope of a musician you actually are. It's fuckin' mind-blowing."

Cody's looking at him like a work of art, his half-lidded eyes sparkling. It makes Noel's heart seize.

"Wow," is all he can say, awed, "thanks, dude. I really appreciate that."

"Just telling you what you told me," Cody says, shrugging, referring to yesterday night's text conversation. "Thought you needed to hear it."

Noel doesn't know what to say. He's bad at this, at accepting compliments. As he scrambles for something to respond with, Cody takes the clarinet from him.

"So you just kinda put your lips on it and blow?"

"Err - " Noel fights valiantly not to say something lewd, "pretty much, yeah. But put your top teeth on the mouthpiece and curl your bottom lip. Like this. . ."

And whatever face he makes must be absolutely hilarious because Cody bursts into laughter.

"I'm being *serious!*" Noel says and shoves him again, giggling. "Just do it and you'll see what I mean."

Cody complies, still chuckling, and blows. He's not holding any keys, so the note that comes out is high and squeaky. Noel feels vaguely sorry for the people that live on either side of his dormroom.

"Here. Hold these keys down. . ."

Noel moves his hands over Cody's, leaning into him further to fix the pads of his fingers over the correct keys. Cody's breath is measured and steady in his ear. When Noel backs away, he's pointedly staring in another corner of the room, blushing.

"There," he says, his voice a little lower than he intends. "Now try."

Cody jolts out of whatever daze he's in and plays a perfect B-flat.

"Good!" Noel hums. "Look, now you're a clarinet player."

Cody looks at him.

(His eyelashes are really long.)

Noel looks back.

(Why does he suddenly feel so *sober*?)

And then Cody leans in.

Chapter End Notes



i guess i'll hang my tears out to dry

Chapter Notes

title inspo: <https://youtu.be/-II-IqSxCHo>

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Cody's going to kiss him.

Holy fuck holy fuck *holy fuck*.

Their lips brush and it sends fire down to Noel's core, an electric jolt that feels more like a taser.

Shocked, Noel backs away. "Woah," he says, the surprise in his voice sounding way worse than he feels, but the utterly defeated look on Cody's face *destroys* him.

"I - " he chokes out, his heart slamming into his shoes.

"Fuck," Cody says, his eyes wide, "*fuck*, I'm sorry, I just - "

"No, it's - " His hands are shaking.

"I shouldn't have done that. I'm sorry. I - I misread, of course you aren't - " Cody inhales shakily, his eyes wet, and a hard ball forms in Noel's throat.

"Aren't what?" Noel asks desperately.

Cody opens and closes his mouth. Then he shakes his head, hopping off of the bed and dropping the clarinet onto the mattress. "Nothing. I - forget it. I'm gonna - I'm just gonna go."

"Cody," Noel says, voice thick, but he doesn't know what to say. He fucking doesn't know what to say. What the fuck is *wrong with him*?

Cody's hopeless expression makes him nauseous. Then he's walking quickly towards the door - leaving and closing it behind him.

Fuck.

Fuck.

When Noel wakes up the next day, he feels like shit.

It's light outside. Spock's back is facing him from across the room, fast asleep. It must be pretty early, then, if he's home.

Squeezing his eyes shut in hopes that the headache will go away, Noel groans quietly and sits up. He doesn't remember falling asleep. He doesn't remember getting underneath his covers. He doesn't remember -

"I misread, of course you aren't - "

Cody.

He scrambles for his phone. He needs to talk to him.

He glances at the time. 7:07 AM. Cody's definitely awake. He wonders if he should call him, but settles with texting him instead.

Noel (7:07 AM): Cody?

Noel (7:07 AM): Can we talk?

He waits. Ten grueling minutes go by. No response. "Delivered." Not read. His stomach sinks.

Noel (7:18 AM): I'm sorry. Are you okay?

He waits.

Noel, you fucking coward, he thinks. Literally the moment you've been waiting for and you back away? Why would you do that?

He *knows* why. He knows the implications behind that kiss, the new feelings it would bring. Cody's very. . .forward with his emotions, it seems, drunk or not. He knew what he wanted. He read the signs. He went for it.

Noel. . .doesn't know how to do that. Doesn't know how to go for it. Because he doesn't - *didn't* - want to unlock the chest of emotions and feelings that come with. . .a relationship.

Even the word makes him squirm.

But. . .he wants that. He wants that with Cody, he realizes. Feelings. Attachments. And he'll do anything to learn and grow with him. To be better. *Vulnerable.*

Oh, God, what has he done?

He looks at his phone again. 7:30 AM. He's probably at practice, right? Noel's sure he can find the poolhouse on campus.

That settles it. He's going to find Cody.

The poolhouse is an absolute bitch to find.

It's tucked away, away from all of the other buildings in some obsolete corner of their campus, but Noel finds it. He sees Cody's Mazda parked closest to the entrance and practically slams on the brakes, nearly passing the parking lot.

He parks and jogs into the building, his heart thudding. There are voices nearby, somewhere down the hallway. Noel follows the sound, walking past two sets of locker rooms, and finds the pool, sunlight filtering in through giant windows close to the ceiling and making the water sparkle. The air smells stiflingly of chlorine. A few other divers are practicing on one end of the pool, others doing laps on the far left side. He doesn't see Cody amongst them.

His eyes search frantically for the brunette. He walks around the perimeter of the pool, getting weird looks probably due to the fact that he's fully dressed in a room full of people in speedos.

It quickly becomes clear that Cody is not here. Maybe he missed him and he'd already left. Maybe he saw Noel and fled. His stomach sinking, he returns to the hallway, leaning against the wall in defeat.

The men's lockerroom door opens with a creak.

"Noel?"

He looks up.

Cody's standing in the doorframe, his hair tussled and wet. He's got a towel slung over one shoulder, a duffle bag on the other. He looks a bit pale and Noel wonders briefly if he's as hungover as he is.

"Hey," Noel says, because he's suddenly forgotten everything he'd wanted to say.

"I - " Cody fidgets, shifting on his feet. He lets the door fall shut behind him. "What are you doing here?"

Noel holds back a flinch. "I wanted to apologize."

Cody looks taken aback. "Apologize for what? I'm the one who should - "

"No. I am." He steps closer. He hopes he doesn't look as nervous as he feels. "That was - look, it's not your fault. You just. . .surprised me."

Cody doesn't say anything, but his eyes are misty. He clutches his towel a little harder when Noel gets closer. They're nearly toe-to-toe now, and Noel tries and fails to get his breathing under control.

"I . . ." The words get stuck in his throat. "I . . .*like* you, Cody."

Cody's eyes widen. "What?" he asks, his voice trembling.

"I like you," Noel says, much more confidence in his voice. "I. . .*really* like you."

And the absurdity of the situation is the only thing keeping Noel sane, the fact that they're standing in the middle of a hallway that reeks of chlorine, Cody's hair is dripping water onto his white shirt, they're both hungover as hell and looking worse for wear and here he is, confessing his love.

"You're just fucking with me." Cody's still got the lost puppy dog look, like he can't believe what's happening. And it hurts. It hurts that Noel could have made him second-guess himself.

"I'm not," he says simply.

Noel leans in first this time.

Their kiss is soft, chaste. They both can't quite muster up the courage to move, but just the gentle press of their lips together is enough. Noel feels electric, his nerves buzzing beneath his skin.

It's -

Cody gives a shuddering little sigh, a noise that's full of choked emotion, and brings his hands up Noel's back, clutching his shirt.

"I'm sorry," Noel says. "I'm sorry I hurt you."

Cody pulls away and his eyes are shining. "Fuck you, dude," he says, but there's mirth behind it, "I felt like shit all last night."

"I know."

"I thought I fucked up."

"I know."

"I thought you were straight."

That makes Noel pause. "Wait, *really*?"

"Yeah, you just - you're like the straightest guy I know."

Noel hums. "Guess I'm only gay for you, then."

Cody's smile is weak, but there's genuine happiness behind it. "Yeah. Me too."

They're quiet for a while. The air is so thick with "now, what?" that Noel could choke on it. They have a lot to talk about. But, once again, Noel isn't sure what to say, or how to say it, how to tell Cody that he's shitty at this kind of thing. He doesn't want to ruin this - whatever *this* is.

Yeah, they really should talk about it.

"So," Cody drawls, his voice sounding careful.

Noel braces himself for the inevitable. "Yeah?"

But Cody only smiles and says, "Breakfast?"

Chapter End Notes

and the gay turmoil continues

time alone with you

Chapter Notes

title inspo: <https://youtu.be/YBCzHbQYGeg>

i HIIIIIGHLY recommend listening to this song for this chapter. the fuckin chorus man :

'All night, star bright
Shines down on me
It's all good, it's alright
You're all I see
At times, may find
Our hearts grow heavy
It's all good, it's alright
You're all I need...

hell yeah. just.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Cody's just. . .

He's just *eating*. Like nothing has happened. He's tucking into his omelette, smiling at Noel with his eyes in that beautiful way and talking. Like *nothing has happened*.

Noel is confused. He has so many questions. Are they dating? Is *this* a date? What does Cody even like to *do*? Is it too soon to kiss him again?

Cody puts his fork down. "Dude."

Noel jumps. "What?"

"Stop freaking out, you look constipated."

Of course he looked like he was freaking out.

"Sorry," he says, and why does being around Cody make him so *sheepish*? "I'm not, uh. . . good at this kind of thing."

"What kind of thing?"

"Y'know. . ." He flails his arms in an attempt to gesture at himself and Cody. "*This*."

Understanding falls over Cody's face. "Oh. Well, that's okay, because I'm not either. I mean, I think I am sometimes, but. . ."

Noel nods. "Yeah."

"So don't worry about it. We'll both work on it. That's what *this* - " he mimics Noel's flailing, "- is for."

Noel swallows hard. Fuck, Cody's too good for him. "Okay," he says. "Yeah."

Cody just smiles that bright smile and digs back into his omelette.

Two weeks goes by. Midterms are finished and Fall Break is approaching rapidly.

Neither of them really mention their new relationship (Noel's starting to get comfortable with the term) but something has definitely shifted in their dynamic.

It feels - it feels like there's something underlying in the way they kind of linger after a kiss. Or when Noel sees Cody watching him practice and his eyes are kind of half-lidded. Or when they're alone in the practice room and they find themselves sitting together on the piano bench shoulder-to-shoulder, the tiny intake of breath Noel takes when their hands brush together.

It's something. But neither of them put a name to it.

Fall Break arrives. Noel asks if Cody is going back to Canada to visit his parents.

"Nah, that'll be winter break," he says. "I'm staying on campus for fall break, unfortunately."

"Oh?" Noel says, suprised. "You're not gonna have Thanksgiving with your family?"

Cody kind of shrugs and directs his eyes to the ground. "No. I decided I'd rather see them for Christmas, so at least they won't have to spend money on four plane tickets."

Noel's never seen someone look so homesick in his life. "Well, I'm not doing anything either, really, if that makes you feel better."

"You're not?"

"Nah. My parents don't really do anything big anymore, all my family members live too far. They just chill by themselves."

"Oh." Cody's face takes on a reddish hue. "Well. . .Marcus will be out of town visiting his family if you wanna. . ."

Noel is confused for maybe half a second before his eyes widen.

Cody's face gets redder. "Uh. If you wanna. . .*stop by*. Or something."

Oh.

Oh.

"Uh," Noel says gracefully, his own face heating up some. This wouldn't be like being alone in a practice room. This would be a *room* room. With a door that *locks*. He clears his throat. "Yeah. That'd be nice."

"I mean, you can't stay the night, because I think they'll be doing room checks every morning, but - yep."

Two grown ass men, blushing about the possible idea of sex. This is Noel's life. But dammit if Cody didn't look impossibly adorable while he was flustered.

"I'd really like that, Cody." He gives what is hopefully a warm smile and Cody visibly relaxes.

"Oh, good. Maybe we can, like, have dinner or something."

"Yeah, our own little Thanksgiving feast," Noel says with a playful leer in his voice, wagging his eyebrows.

Cody, if that's even possible, gets more flustered and giggles, shoving him away. "Ew, dude, stop."

And damned if Noel couldn't resist kissing him on the cheek.

He's panting. He's also very sweaty - what's going on again? His vision's kind of blurry. He blinks to try and focus and sees a shape - the shape of someone sitting on top of him?

He blinks again and the shape becomes clearer and it's - *oh*.

It's Cody, naked and gasping and arching and riding him for all he's worth.

"Fuck," Noel says, both out of surprise and ecstasy, squeezing his hands where they lay on Cody's hips. "*Fuck*, Cody."

Cody doesn't say anything but he looks down at Noel and his eyes are practically glowing, his lips parted, breathy moans escaping him.

Fuck - it's too much - how long have they been doing this? He's so close already, pleasure pulsing through his body like a lazy wave.

"*God*," he gasps, and Cody's hands tighten where they're splayed out on Noel's chest. He moves faster, swiveling his hips and groaning. There's a crescendoing noise falling out of his mouth that Noel belatedly recognizes as his *name*.

"Fuck," Noel grunts, "fuck, Jesus fucking Christ oh my God I'm gonna - "

He wakes up.

Holy shit.

He's panting and sweating, but Cody is not on top of him. Nope, he lays alone, soiled boxers and all. Oh, gross, that feels *disgusting*.

He sits up gingerly and realizes that he'd been sleeping on his back rather than his side, which makes him roll his eyes. He slips out of his bed and sees Spock, curled up under his covers and - why is he wearing headphones? He looks dead asleep. Why would he wear his headphones to -

No.

Oh *no*.

A wall of embarrassment slams into Noel.

As he's doing the walk of shame to his own bathroom, Noel tells himself to remember to apologize profusely to Spock when he wakes up.

The first day of Fall Break begins. Half of the campus' population empties itself and many students drive or fly home to their families for the week. Noel signs the form saying that he'll be staying on campus and then he's got nothing to do for the rest of the day.

Well. He *could* do something. *Someone*.

Slow the fuck down, he thinks to himself, a vivid replay of his dream suddenly appearing in his mind's eye. *Goddamn horndog*.

Besides, he's pretty sure that Cody is at practice. He's probably doing laps or something, or maybe doing those weird stretches he sometimes sees him doing. Maybe he's practicing his diving. Gliding through the water and breaking through the surface of the pool, droplets of water clinging to his skin, down his muscles and trailing down to the waistband of his speedo -

Fuck it.

Noel relents and heads into the bathroom for a very long, but eventful, shower.

Cody (12:20 PM): I'm bored, wanna come play my ps4

Noel (12:21 PM): be there in 10

Their controllers lay discarded on the mattress. Mortal Kombat X's character screen music plays somewhere in the background, and it's starting to get a little annoying, but Noel can't bother to remove himself from his position above Cody.

It's too warm. He wants to shed his hoodie but he doesn't want to scare Cody off. Make him think he's pressuring him into his first time, despite how much Cody seems to be enjoying himself, squirming and shifting under Noel. He wonders if this was maybe his plan all along, to woo Noel with the promise of thrilling gameplay, only to end up underneath him. Noel finds that he doesn't care.

He can't really remember how they got here. They were playing, the match ended (Cody won), and then Cody was looking at him, his eyes flicking down the Noel's lips, and then they were kissing. And touching. And then Noel was laying Cody back down onto the bed and rubbing little circles onto his hip with his thumb and pressing his tongue between pliant lips and that was that.

A throbbing sensation down below reminds Noel that he would give nothing to just end their neverending make-out session and just go for it. The way Cody's hands travel up and down his back, his thighs on either side of Noel's hips, the tiny thrusts that he tries to hide - he has to want it too, right?

Noel shoves that thought far, *far* away, deep into the recesses of his mind, because he will absolutely lose his shit if he keeps thinking about it. For now, he indulges in the soft press of their lips and their leisurely pace. They're content like this, basking in each other and their forgotten 1 v. 1 match on the TV.

It's soft and slow like love.

Chapter End Notes

it's time to get horny fellas

blue in green

Chapter Notes

title inspo!!!!: <https://youtu.be/PoPL7BExSQU>

here's 2,000 words of sexy stuff as a lil reward for y'all :')

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They spend the next few days mostly talking and joking about nothing, interspersed with soft touches and kisses. Noel learns that Cody enjoys watching bad movies, so they sidle up on the bed together and browse the worst movies Netflix has to offer. Cody decides to up the ante by showing Noel the case of White Claws and half a bottle of Jameson he has stowed in his closet.

So now Noel's mildly tipsy. He's a little lightheaded, but it's okay because Cody's sprawled out on his lap, giggling madly at the atrocious acting taking place onscreen. Noel runs his hands through Cody's hair. It's long and soft and kind of reminds him of a dog.

"Stop petting me, dude." Cody sloppily slaps his hands away. "I'm not a fuckin' animal."

Noel smiles. "Sure you are. Bet if I find a good spot you'll purr."

He says it without thinking that it doesn't really make any sense but Cody blushes anyway.

"Stop it. Watch the movie. Is this not the best thing you've ever seen, dude?"

A character trips and falls and a guy in a costume "eats" her. An awful, post-edited blood splatter paints the screen red. Noel feels vaguely disgusted, and wonders why Cody insists on watching garbage for fun.

"Oh yeah. Looks great. Doesn't look like they fuckin' edited it from their iPhone 4 at all." Noel rolls his eyes and interlocks his hands with Cody's, where they rest on his chest. He notices that Cody's hands are a little bigger than his.

Cody just giggles again and pokes him in the stomach. "C'mon. Bad movies are the best. They have a secret quality to them."

"Man the fact that you sit around all day and watch shit like this explains a *lot* of what you do."

"Fuck you, you know you love 'em."

He scoffs. "No, I love y - "

He stops immediately, his heart banging against his ribcage.

Cody's eyes are wide, his eyebrows raised.

Oh, God, why did he say that? How old is he, *twelve*? They've only been together for like a month. You can't love someone after a month. Right? Yeah, he said it way too soon. He's gotta save face.

"Uh," Noel says. "Yams. I love yams."

To his credit Cody bursts into laughter. "No, no, I know what you were about to say."

"Oh, do you?"

"Yup. You said you love me." He makes kissy noises.

"Stop it, dude," Noel says, grimacing. Is his face warm? It's probably the alcohol.

"Nope, you *loove* me. I can't believe it. I've made you soft."

"I'm not soft," he says, but it's weak.

Cody sits up, beaming. "Well, if it's any consolation, I love you too."

Noel could *explode*. "You - you do?"

"Yeah. Stop freaking out, I don't think it's not too soon to say it." Cody's hand squeezes his. "I know you're gonna overthink it, but don't."

The look in Cody's eyes say "I love you but you're a dumbass" and Noel can't disagree with that. Although the whole "vulnerable" thing has been coming easier for him lately, he's still not quite all the way there, but he'll keep trying. For Cody.

"Okay," he says, just as softly. "I'll try."

"Good enough for me," Cody says simply, and kisses him.

It's a deep kiss, one that prompts Noel to open his mouth and move his hands toward Cody's waist.

"Why do these breakthrough moments always happen when we're drunk?" Cody mutters against his lips.

"Don't know," Noel murmurs back as he's pushing Cody down onto the mattress. He goes easily, looking at Noel from underneath his eyelashes. "But it's working."

"Mmhmm," is all Cody says, and then they're kissing again.

The movie is eventually forgotten. It plays on in the background as Cody's bringing his legs up around Noel's hips, knees bent and feet planted on the bed. Hands on his back press him

closer still and the warmth of Cody's thighs is heavenly. Noel feels home, here, tongue entangling with his. It's nice.

Sly fingers dip underneath his waistband and he shudders.

It's *really* nice.

He doesn't stop Cody's wandering hand this time. The last few times they'd done this, Noel had pulled away, muttering something along the lines of "I don't want to rush anything" or some other bullshit excuse. Cody would just smile politely, say something like, "Okay, I understand," then they'd spend a while laying together and Noel would think about how Cody is too good for him.

Now, he doesn't care. Maybe it's because he's drunk and the thoughts that are usually telling him to "slow down" are quieter, or it's the fact that he's hard and has been fantasizing about this moment for days, but he doesn't give a fuck anymore. He wants Cody. He wants to show him how much he loves him.

And when Cody's hot hand closes around his dick he makes an appreciative sound in the back of his throat.

Cody pulls away, his eyes somewhat dazed. "You want to - ?"

"Yeah," Noel breathes, and Cody makes a noise in return.

Cody's hand moves and *squeezes* and he groans, burying his face into Cody's neck. He can't quite believe what's happening, but at the same time it seems so real, like he's hyperaware of the way Cody's thighs tighten around his waist like he'll run away, the heat of Cody's body through his T-shirt.

He kisses his neck, finds a spot behind his ear that makes him gasp. It's a small sound, almost like he couldn't control it, but it makes Noel wants to hear *more*.

He wonders if biting there will evoke the same response. He tries it. Cody's hand stutters, his body shuddering.

Yes.

"Cody," Noel says as he's pulling away, though he's not sure what he's asking for. His name sounds ragged coming from his mouth.

Cody seems to get it, somehow. He pushes Noel back so he can wrestle his shirt off. Noel follows suit, tossing his shirt somewhere on the floor and kissing Cody with renewed vigor. The skin on skin contact sends a new spark of want down his spine. Cody's soft and warm and Noel wants to worship every inch of him.

They grind together, heavy breaths giving way to quiet noises. Noel resumes his task of marking up Cody's neck, and a distant, rational part of himself reminds him that Cody may not like hickies, but the primal half only growls, leaves a line of little red bites along the planes of his chest and down his stomach, kissing and licking and *claiming*.

Cody's hips shift when he gets closer to his waistband. Noel tucks his fingers underneath the elastic.

"Can I?" Noel asks.

"Yeah," Cody says, and there's a cute little flush running down his chest. "Please."

(Fuck.)

Noel sits up and pulls his shorts down muscled thighs. God, what a sight he makes, laid out like that. He decides he should return the favor, wrapping his hand around Cody's dick and jacking him slowly, returning his mouth to his neck.

This time Cody makes tiny little desperate noises in Noel's ear, his hands clenching in the sheets and his hips bucking.

"Noel," he gasps.

"Yeah?" Noel asks, his voice gravelly and soft.

Cody's mouth brushes the shell of his ear. "*Fuck me*," he says, and yeah he's definitely drunk, because there's no way Cody would *ever* say that sober, but Noel's not gonna question it.

"Do you have, uh?" He trails off, because he knows Cody knows what he's asking for.

"Under my pillow."

Noel scrounges up the small bottle and the weight of the situation dawns on him all at once. Shit, they really are doing this, aren't they?

"Are you sure?" he asks.

"Yeah," Cody says immediately.

He frowns. "I'm serious. Are you - "

"Noel." He rolls his hips up into his, widening his legs a little. "I'm *sure*."

Noel has to immediately regain his composure there, that primal thing inside him stirring hungrily. "Okay," he says, following the movement with his eyes. "Turn over."

Cody obliges (he doesn't miss the interesting little shiver that goes through him) and - holy shit. God, if he could fucking take a picture. He probably plays around with the soft, plush cheeks presented to him for about thirty seconds before Cody looks over his shoulder and says, "Really?"

"Sorry, couldn't help myself." Noel uncaps the lube and drizzles a plentiful amount over his fingers.

(This is moving so fast.)

He takes a minimal amount of time introducing Cody to his fingers. He focuses on how Cody makes a certain sound if he moves his fingers this way, how his muted cries into his pillow are somewhat melodious, a deliciously breathy upward inflection in them. It's then that he wishes he could see his face, see the way his lips part around his sighs and whimpers.

When he's had enough and Cody's trembling and making little aborted thrusts into the mattress Noel pulls his fingers out. Cody flips back onto his back, pupils blown wide, flushed prettily down his chest. Noel barely waits a second before he's sinking in, slowly, to accustom Cody to him, shaking with the effort - holy *shit* he's so close already, his entire being brimming with fire.

Cody's mouth has dropped open but he's silent, stiff. His hand flails for Noel's hip, stilling him.

"You good?" Noel grunts, squeezing his eyes shut against the fluttering around his dick.

"Don't move yet," is all Cody says, eyes scrunched shut, and Noel worries belatedly that he hasn't given him enough prep. He waits. With Herculean strength, he waits.

Cody's still shaking a little, but he cracks his eyes open, half-lidded and misty (fuck, *fuck*, that's so hot). He breathes, "Go slow," and fuck, yeah, he didn't prep him enough. Guilt seizes him, but he stows it as he grinds his hips in small thrusts.

Soon Cody's hands are sliding up his back, one gripping his shoulder and one lingering at the base of his neck. "You can - you can go faster."

Noel doesn't want to admit to the relieved groan that falls from his mouth. He pushes his hips in deeper, burying his face in Cody's neck, revelling in the tight heat around him, the hot breaths puffing against his ear.

Cody makes more grateful noises, little breathy moans that stoke the fire in Noel's gut. They're soft, so not to alert the entire floor, and Noel can't wait to get his own place so he can fuck him properly, let him be as loud as he wants.

(Thinking about a future together scares him a little.)

(Focus, Noel.)

The way they fuck is quiet and gentle. It's - God - it's indescribable. The bed creaks only slightly but it sounds like gunshots in his ears. It almost makes it too real. Their pace is so slow it feels intimate, kissing and moving in tandem, hands exploring and clutching. It kind of freaks Noel out. But then Cody breathes his name like a prayer and grinds up into him and he stops thinking about it again.

Noel moves his hands from where they're wedged on the underside of Cody's knees and Cody's legs come up and around his hips, his ankles locking together on the small of his back. It makes the angle better - so much so that Cody's eyes roll a little and his head thumps back onto the mattress, watching Noel like he's everything he needs.

(*Fuck.*)

Noel kisses him, forces all of his love and adoration through his lips and he hopes that Cody *knows* - knows how much he makes him feel, how he'd do anything for him. He loves him more than any song and the sounds he makes are sweeter than any note, his own little symphony here beneath him, writhing and moaning.

He wants Cody to know, to convey it to him somehow - and he must get the message, because Cody makes a high, desperate whine, his back arching and his thighs tightening around Noel's hips. Foreheads pressed against one another, sharing breaths that yield quiet noises, Noel's hand squeezing Cody's length roughly, they crescendo together, higher, louder -

"Close," Cody gasps, faraway, "m' close."

- and he's holding him, trembling, groaning and panting in his ear, his wrist moving faster, pulling him higher higher *higher* -

Cody comes with a whimper, tensing around Noel, who tumbles after him soon after, and it's so, so good.

Chapter End Notes

i should really include a plot at some point...but when I started this i didnt anticipate it going in any particular direction. i just kinda started writing. oh well

gemini

Chapter Notes

title inspo: https://youtu.be/XXBaqM_8T6o

here's some filler while i work on the other chapters

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Noel wakes up the next day, and it's Thanksgiving.

His mind's fuzzy and muddled, the last remnants of alcohol clouding his brain. It takes him a second to realize that he isn't in his room, and he's butt ass naked. It takes another second to realize that there's an arm draped over his waist, a leg intertwining with his.

With a fond warmth growing in his chest, Noel turns his head to find Cody's sleeping face. His mouth is partly open, snoring quietly. Noel feels little movements from his arms and legs. Cody twitches in his sleep. He wonders if he's dreaming about playing the drums or something.

He enjoys the sight a little longer before he realizes he's gotta pee. Slowly, he extracts himself from Cody's limbs. He's almost out of the bed before a disgruntled huff sounds from behind him and a pair of arms comes around him to pull him back.

"Cody," Noel says.

No response. The arms don't budge.

"Cody," Noel says again. "I gotta pee."

A grunt. The arms release him begrudgingly, before closing around a nearby pillow. Seemingly satisfied, Cody stills again, hugging the pillow close to him. Noel slides off of the bed and pads to the bathroom.

After he's finished, he returns to the room to find Cody sitting up and wiping his eyes. His hair's sticking up in fourteen different directions. It's then that Noel notices something *interesting*. He snorts, trying to stifle his laughter, but fails miserably.

Cody frowns at him. "What?"

"Look down."

"Wh -?" Cody stares down at himself and groans. "Oh, *fuck* you, dude," he says.

There's a line of cherry-red bite marks trailing down from his neck down to his waistline.

"Oh my God. Why would you do this to me?" Cody groans. "These better fade by the next time I have practice."

Noel climbs back into the bed. "Guess you'll have to skip it, then," he hums, "because I bet they won't."

"I hate you," Cody says immediately, but there's mirth behind it.

"Sure you do," Noel says back and kisses Cody's nose.

Cody smiles.

They get dressed (Cody in a hoodie that does nothing to cover one of the sizeable hickies on his neck, Noel in the same clothes as yesterday) and decide that it'd be nice to just order a ton of takeout and eat in Cody's room. They carry armfuls of bags up from Cody's car. Soon, they've got a spread of their feast laid out on the floor, which they dig happily into, and lay sated on the bed afterwards.

"That was the most millennial ass shit we could have possibly ever done," Noel comments. He's too full to move, starfished out on the mattress, sated and sleepy.

"That's what makes it so funny," Cody says. He's only half awake.

"You think other college kids do this shit?"

"Nah, they actually go home to their families." Cody hides it well, but Noel knows him, and hears the tinge of sadness that hides under his words.

Noel snorts. "Fuckin' nerds. Visiting their families and shit."

That gets a giggle out of Cody. "Yeah. Fuckin' dorks." He sighs. "Next year we should just order a feast of Denny's."

Noel's heart tugs a little at "next year," but he schools his face into an expression of indifference. "Yeah? The people who go to Denny's are always high as hell, though."

"Guess you'll have to smoke me out, then."

Noel sits up. "Wait, *really*?"

Cody shrugs lazily. "Sure, why not."

"Have you smoked before?"

"No. Well, I hit a dab pen once, but I didn't feel anything."

"Dude, if you're serious, I'll *definitely* smoke you out." He didn't have many friends he could sit down and smoke with - excluding Spock, who was almost always down to do it.

That, and stoned sex sounded absolutely amazing.

"Really? You'd share with me?" Cody says.

"What do I look like, a bum? Hell yeah I'd share with you, man."

Cody sits up too. "Well. . .there's nothing stopping us from doing it now."

Noel.exe blue screens. "Huh?"

"Yeah. I've always wanted to try. It can't be any different from being, like, drunk right?"

"It's a lot different. But I think you can handle it." Noel smirks. "I've been wondering what you'd be like high. Probably not much different, though."

"How so?"

"You'd still eat everything in your path."

Cody shoves him, and Noel laughs.

Noel holds his joint up proudly. "Rolled it myself. Shit's *clean*, ain't it?"

"It is." Cody squints at it and then shrugs. "Give it here."

"You sure you can handle it?" Noel lights it and passes it to him. The acrid scent quickly fills the tiny space of his car. "I got the good shit."

"Can't be that bad." Cody inhales deeply, closing his eyes. Noel notices how his cheeks hollow when he does it, and swallows thickly.

"There you go," he says. "Look at you."

Cody exhales and smiles as if to say, "See? I can do it," before he dissolves into a fit of coughs.

Noel laughs. "Yeah, not at all like a dab pen, is it? It's kinda strong."

"Kinda," Cody chokes out, holding his chest and giving the blunt back to Noel, "just a little."

"Try and hold it in longer," Noel says, "like this." He inhales, holds it for a second, and releases it slowly. Blue-tinted smoke curls around his steering wheel.

Cody nods, taking the blunt almost determinedly, mimicking Noel. He only coughs once this time. "It burns my throat," he says hoarsely as he passes it back.

"Hell yeah. Gotta feel the *burn*. Shit gotta feel like *fire* in your mouth."

"What, like a dragon?"

Noel blows the smoke out of his nose. "Hell yeah, like a dragon."

Cody takes the blunt again, perched between his index and middle fingers.

"You look hot when you smoke," Noel murmurs.

"Yeah?" Cody asks, one eyebrow raised provocatively. He inhales, his eyes never leaving Noel's and *fuck*, that's definitely hot.

"Yeah," Noel says. He takes the joint and takes a puff. "C'mere."

Cody leans towards him. Noel presses his lips to his and blows the smoke into his mouth. Cody hums as he inhales, before pulling away and smiling dazedly.

They pass it back and fourth for a while. It's not long before Noel's relaxing into the driver's seat, the gentle waves of his high crashing over each other and making his limbs tingle. Cody eventually melts into his seat as well, his eyes closed.

"You feeling it?" Noel mutters. "Feelin' spicy?"

"Think so." Cody blinks slowly, smiling drowsily. "Feel like I'm gooey."

"Gooey?" Noel snorts.

"Yeah. Like jell-o."

Noel reaches over and pokes Cody in the stomach, giggling. Cody squirms, slapping his hand away.

"Jell-o isn't gooey," Noel says. "It's jiggly."

"*You're* jiggly." Cody pokes him back.

"Fair enough."

He takes another hit, the heat of the embers warming his fingertips. It's getting really close to being a roach.

A few seconds later, Cody yawns. "I'm sleepy."

"Mm. We can go inside." Noel puts out the burning end, stubbing it in his ashtray. "We don't have to finish this. We can take a lil' nap," he says, because it sounds great after such a huge meal.

"Kay," Cody says. "That sounds good."

They amble out of the car and head into the dorm, their clothes smelling skunky and their eyes half-lidded. Cody's CA doesn't question it, thankfully, giving them an uninterested wave as they step into the elevator.

Noel reaches into Cody's pocket and fishes out his keys. He unlocks the door and they meander inside, stepping over food wrappers and containers.

"You alright?" Noel asks, because Cody has gone uncharacteristically quiet.

"Mhmm," Cody mumbles. "Wanna lay down."

"Yeah?" Noel grabs his hand. "Come on, I'll tuck you in." He says it as a joke, but Cody only gives him a blank look.

Cody crawls under his covers and closes his eyes. He takes up nearly the whole bed, so Noel scootches himself onto it as far as he can. Something tells him he should stay awake, though, so he settles with scrolling mindlessly through his phone and occasionally shifting his gaze over to Cody, who seems content to just sleep. Noel feels only vaguely worried before he remembers that not everyone experiences the same high. Noel always feels a little creative when he's high, wanting to do everything at once, inspiration overtaking him. He wonders if he should do his homework.

Cody lays still. Noel almost think he's completely asleep until his eyes open and he makes a small noise. "Room's spinnin'," he complains.

Noel touches his face. "How do you feel?"

"Sick." Cody buries his face into Noel's hand, his eyes slipping closed again.

That makes Noel frown. "Sick?"

"Mmmh." He falls quiet again.

Noel waits for him to open his eyes again, but he doesn't. He snuggles close to Cody, hoping in some way that it'll comfort him. He hopes that he's not greening out because that'd really suck. He faintly remembers his first time smoking.

He was maybe sixteen, he and his friends passed around a bowl in a garage, and he could only really remember feeling shitty and paranoid. He walked home for what felt like hours, the sidewalk stretching on and on. He'd spent the next few hours vomiting and panicking and hoping to God his parents wouldn't find him. It was horrible, and he didn't smoke for maybe two years after that.

Cody opens his eyes again, sitting up slowly. He looks kind of pale, like he'll pass out.

"Cody?" Noel asks.

"I feel weird," is all Cody says, swallowing convulsively.

"Oh." Noel's eyes widen because fuck he is *definitely* greening out. "Oh. Come on, grab my hand. Come on."

Cody's hand latches onto Noel's and Noel directs him out of the bed. They shuffle slowly to the bathroom ("I can't feel my legs," whines Cody). Noel flicks on the light and in the

fluorescence Cody looks white as a sheet, his eyes glassy.

"Still feel sick?" Noel asks gently, like he's talking to a toddler.

Cody directs his unsteady gaze onto Noel. "Uh?" he says, looking helpless and anxious. "I - how did we get here?"

"We walked."

"Oh." He numbly glances at the ground and then back up at Noel, looking distressed. "I feel funny. I don't - what's happening?"

"It's okay, shh, here." Noel directs Cody to sit next to the toilet. "Stay there, I'm gonna get you some water."

"Okay."

Noel ventures back into his room. Fuck, he shouldn't have - did he pressure Cody into smoking? He was so excited he didn't even really ask if it was something Cody really wanted to try. He was so fucking stupid.

He grabs a cold water bottle from the mini fridge, along with Cody's phone, which lays discarded on his bed, and returns to the bathroom.

Hoping his phone will ground him, he lets Cody hold it. "Focus on this," Noel says quietly. Cody looks at him with coherent recognition for maybe half of a second before it quickly dissipates into panic again. "It's okay. You're fine." Noel situates himself on the ground, sitting next to Cody and holding him.

Cody stares at his phone kind of blearily, like his eyes aren't focusing right. Noel sits there with him until Cody suddenly drops it and lunges for the toilet. Noel rubs his back as he hurls, telling him - *reminding* him that they're in the bathroom, on the floor, and he's his boyfriend and he's *here*.

He can't imagine what it's like for Cody, high as all hell and confused. What it must be like to be throwing up, have his memory flicker out and leave him wondering *Where am I?* before he realizes he's kneeling in front of a toilet and puking and the cycle begins again. With a grimace, Noel once again remembers his first time, and sympathizes greatly.

When he's finished Noel goads him into drinking a few sips of water before directing him back to the bed so he can sleep it off. Noel leans against the headboard and toys with his phone again, Cody curled up in the bed with him, arms wrapped around Noel's waist and head resting on his thigh. Noel doesn't have the heart to move him when his legs go numb. Every so often Cody jumps awake, like he's heard a gunshot, and Noel runs his hands through his hair until he falls back asleep.

Eventually he must fall asleep too because he wakes up with his face buried in a pillow. Cody's awake, on his back and on his phone.

"Hey," Noel croaks.

Cody looks at him and smiles a little. "Hey."

"How do you feel?" he asks again.

"Better. Still panic-attack-y, but better."

"What time is it?"

"Eleven."

Goddamn. He really *hasn't* smoked in a long time. "What time'd you wake up?"

"Nine, I think." He screws up his face, nose scrunching adorably. "I don't remember much."

"You threw up and went to sleep."

"Sounds about right." He shuffles closer to Noel. "I remember you being there, though."

"Unfortunately." Noel smirks.

A playful kick underneath the covers. "Dick. But thanks. Think I would have freaked the fuck out if you weren't there."

Noel feels himself soften. "I'm sorry I got you fucked up. It's not for everybody, I know that."

"It's okay, it's not your fault. You didn't pressure me or anything." A pause. "But I think I'll stick to alcohol."

Noel smiles into Cody's hair, which still smells like weed. "Works for me."

Chapter End Notes

i didnt green out my first time smoking but i got suuuuper fucked up like my brain was a broken clock and i had no sense of time and i kept like, losing my memory. shit was mad crazy

young stuff

Chapter Notes

more sexy

title inspo: <https://youtu.be/8pYHLfKqHL4>

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

So. . .all of that happened.

They spent a lot of time together. They fucked for the first time. He got Cody high. And now Fall Break is over, and everything's back to normal.

But is it? Doesn't feel like it. If they were close before, they are even closer now, sitting next to each other in class, Noel saying things to Cody that makes him giggle and blush, brushing their legs together. It's bittersweet, somehow, because Noel had once been so apprehensive towards affection, and now he accepts it warmly. In his mind, sometimes, he'll fight himself about his tough-guy image and the fact that Cody has taken it and smashed it to pieces, but he'll also sometimes embrace how soft he is for Cody, how he smiles more, how he gushes about him to Aleena (who finds it incredibly endearing).

It's shiny and new.

Since he's in three of the university's music programs, he'll be having three concerts at the end of this semester. It happens every year, so he's completely used to it, but the amount of music he has to work on is ungodly. Orchestra's music is relatively easy, Concert Band is a breeze. However, Noel promised his Jazz Band director that he'd perform an improvised solo for this concert.

He's a fucking idiot for promising that, because he still sucks shit at improv.

It's not like Cody hasn't helped. They just get distracted. It's really hard to take each other seriously sometimes, and most of the time they've ended up just goofing around with the piano.

It's going to be even harder now that they've done stuff. Being in a room together, alone, after the week they had is going to entail *many* distractions.

He has to keep it together. His concert is in just a few weeks, and he's definitely not ready to pull a solo out of his ass. No, he can't let himself be distracted. They've got to be productive.

He can do this.

"Okay, I'm gonna just mess around with some major seventh chords, and I want you to play whatever comes to mind."

Noel stares down at the piano keys. "I can't play that good," Noel says.

"Sure you can. I'll play in C major, so just use the white keys. Don't think about it." Cody smiles at him. They're sitting on the piano bench, thigh-to-thigh.

"It's hard *not* to think about it."

"Trust me. I know," he says, referring to his classical music experience, "but just shut your mind off. Don't overanalyze - improv is like the extent of your creative and emotional self, you know? It's in response to how you *feel*. If you fuck up, don't think about it. Just let your fingers. . .why are you looking at me like that?"

"You're gonna be such a great teacher," Noel says sincerely.

Cody's smile goes sheepish. "Oh, stop, I'm just telling you what my professors told me."

"But you just said it a million times better. If I take Improv next semester, I want you to be my teacher."

"Yeah?"

"Mhmm. I could even work for a little *extra credit*." Noel smirks at him when he receives a halfhearted sock to the shoulder.

"*Focus*. Here, I'll start." His hands begin playing a jazzy, upbeat progression. They're only chords, leaving room for Noel to play individual notes.

Noel trails his fingers over the keys and plays a single "C."

"You got this," Cody says amidst his jaunty tune.

Noel brings his other hand up to the piano and plays an arpeggiated triad. He adds a few random notes to the chorus, screwing his face up.

"This shit sounds horrible, man," he says.

"Yeah, but it's all part of the process." Cody stops playing. "Okay. C major was a little too happy. What are you feeling right now?"

"You sound like a therapist."

"Shut up." He nudges his knee into his. "I'm being serious."

Noel looks at him. Looks into deep brown-green eyes, takes in the way that Cody's kind of leaning towards him, all of his attention focused on Noel, who feels unequivocally in love and loved all at once. But he can't say that, because. . .well, he just can't bring himself to, despite him already admitting it. He'll get there eventually.

"Affection," he says for now, and blushes at the way Cody looks somewhat pleased with his response.

"Hmm. D-flat major, then?"

"Dude that's five flats."

"So?" Cody plays the scale seamlessly. "Don't woodwind players like flats?"

"Yeah, but still. No one likes D-flat major."

"Can't argue with that." He plays a major seventh chord. "Okay. Is this better?" He plays a slower tune, still jazz-inspired but more. . .reminiscent and relaxed.

Noel nods, feeling warmth in his chest. "Yeah, that sounds way better."

Cody looks at him expectantly.

Noel sighs and returns his gaze to the piano keys. Five flats. . .okay, so B, E, A, D, and G are flat. . .G-flat is just the enharmonic equivalent of F-sharp. Simple enough.

He thinks he knows a song in D-flat major. Frowning in concentration, he tries to emulate that, playing the melodic line with his right hand.

It sounds good, combined with Cody's chords. Then Cody stops playing and smirks.

"Is that fuckin' Joe Sample, dude?"

"Damn, you caught me," Noel says, chuckling. "Always wanted to play it, or at least hear it live."

"What's the name of that song again?"

"Melodies of Love."

"Is that the song that makes you think of me?"

Noel's ears get hot. "Maybe."

Cody pulls a "that's so adorable" face that makes Noel shove him.

"Stop it. Wait, what's mine?"

It's Cody's turn to blush. "Uh. . .it's a Joe Sample song."

"Which one?"

"Carmel."

"Really?"

"Yeah, it. . ." Cody fidgets, his eyes cutting away. ". . .it makes me think of your eyes."

Noel's so full of love he could *explode*. His face is fully warm now.

"I could fucking kiss you right now," he says hoarsely, because he's bad at accepting compliments.

"Do it, then," Cody says, his eyes dropping down to his lips.

So he does. He grabs Cody's face and kisses him. Cody's leg comes up to cross over his, bringing them closer on the bench.

Dammit, they're getting distracted again.

Noel goes to pull away but Cody just pushes closer, his hands tightening on Noel's shoulders. He gives up right around then, he thinks, because he could probably make a living out of kissing Cody if he wanted, he loved it so much.

But, if there was one place Noel never expected to make out with someone, it was a practice room.

One of Cody's hands slide down to his chest - a move he does that usually says "I'm prepared to suck your dick right here, right now."

It signals to Noel that they should definitely stop.

"Mmph," Noel grunts. "Wait."

Cody pulls back and looks at him, dazed. "What?"

"You really wanna - in here?"

"I mean. . ." Cody trails off, looking away.

"Oh my God. You want me to fuck you in a practice room? What, against the piano?"

Cody smacks his chest. "No, *asshole*, you don't have to do that. Just. . ." He takes one of Noel's hands, bringing it down to the waistband of his shorts. "Just touch me. Please."

That did sound promising. But Noel remains skeptical, not liking the idea of someone walking in on them. Practice rooms aren't exactly private spaces - the doors don't have locks and the windows are tiny. The piano faces the wall, which they lean against, so it covers a majority of their bodies. No one would know that they were in there until they'd opened the door partially and got an earful of obscene sounds.

He's about to object, but then Cody pushes his hips into Noel's hand and his inhibitions go flying out the fucking window.

"Please," he wheedles, and, well. "Please" *is* the magic word.

So that's how Noel ends up with one of his hands shoved down Cody's pants, stroking him roughly, breathing hotly into Cody's neck as they cling to each other, hot and desperate and nervous.

"Love it when you get like this," Noel pants, his voice as low as he can keep it with there being rooms next door, "when you get all desperate for me. Fuck, Cody. So good for me."

Cody makes a noise that makes Noel bring his other hand up to cover his mouth. "Shh," he says, and Cody's legs spread wider on the piano bench, making it creak.

It truly is a sight to see, and Noel imagines having Cody spread out on the bed, taking him apart with his mouth and his hands and his fingers, making him whine and moan and cry out and *arch* and he aches for it, pressed uncomfortably against his zipper.

It only takes a few more twists of his wrist before Cody is whimpering beneath his hand and trembling. His hand clutches Noel's thigh as he rides the waves of it and slumps against the wall when he's completely spent. Noel gives him one more rough squeeze that draws his body up like his soul is leaving him.

"*Fuck*," he says eloquently when Noel takes his hand away from his face.

"Mmhmm," Noel hums in agreeance. He makes a face at his now-sticky hand. "How am I supposed to wipe my hand off?"

"Guess you gotta go get some toilet paper," Cody says, almost sleepily.

"Why can't you get it?" he teases, and he knows the answer, but he wants to hear it.

"Can't feel my legs," he mutters, "leave a message at the beep."

"Cody."

"Fiiiiine," he whines, stumbling off of the bench and towards the door.

Cody returns within a minute, donning a small stack of paper towels. Noel's had a bit of time to cool down, his own need flagging a little. Cody stands in front of him, presenting the towels. He wipes his hands and sighs.

"Okay, we should probably - what are you doing?"

Cody's bent at the waist in front of him, dragging his zipper down.

"What do you think I'm doing?"

"Cody, we can't - you don't have to - "

"I *want* to." With that, he slips down to his knees.

"Oh?" Noel asks, because he can't believe this is happening.

Cody gets his button undone and brings his pants down a little, moving his boxers out of the way.

"Oh," Noel says.

Cody just shoots him a wink and then his mouth is on him and - and he's getting his dick sucked in a practice room.

It's good. It's so good, *so* fucking good that Noel wonders faintly where Cody could have possibly learned how to do this. Because he's fucking - he's massaging him with his tongue and stroking what he can't reach, racheting Noel's pleasure up higher and higher.

"Fuck, Cody. It's so good. You're so good," he murmurs, his mouth moving without conscious volition. He almost regrets saying it - sometimes once he starts he'll start babbling - but Cody moans around him, looking up at him with dewy eyes and God he looks so pretty sucking his dick.

Noel tells him this, pushing Cody's hair away from his forehead.

"Yeah?" Cody breathes.

"Yeah," Noel airily replies.

Cody's not-so-innocent look nearly does him in right then and there, and the way he licks up his shaft to toy with the head with his tongue is fucking obscene. Really, it should be absolutely illegal.

His thighs tense under Cody's hand. He's acutely aware of his accidental thrusts into his mouth. He should stop - if this is Cody's first time giving head then he's a goddamn *natural*, but he doesn't want to just shove his whole dick down his throat (as much as he wants to). He forces himself to still, abdomen tensing.

Cody's pleased and somewhat relieved hum makes him tremble, the impending orgasm roaring in his ears like an avalanche. He grunts, his hands shaking, and Cody sucks harder, his busy hand stroking what he can't reach, squeezing and twisting and oh *fuck*.

"Cody, *Cody*, I'm gonna - "

And then Cody takes all of him and he's *coming*, probably harder than he ever has in his entire fucking life, a loud moan flying out of his mouth at the surprise of it, the intensity of it, nearly lifting off of the bench and taking flight into the stratosphere.

When his vision clears and he falls back into himself he settles his bleary gaze on Cody, who is wiping his mouth, his eyes teary.

He swallowed. Jesus *fucking* Christ.

"Holy fuck," Noel says.

Cody smiles triumphantly.

Chapter End Notes

the songs cody & noel reference are the titles of previous chapters, those links should be in the chapter notes :)

i promise ill end this damn story soon i really just fuckin - i cant do plots, i really cannot. i also hate writing long stories but god i love these two

ill wrap it up soon. pinky promise

love's sorrow

Chapter Notes

im back

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Needless to say, Noel doesn't learn how to improvise, and he's royally fucked.

It's early December. His concert is next week, the day before Winter Break. He doesn't have the heart to tell his jazz band teacher that, no, he will not be performing a tenor sax solo for that song, because he was too busy blowing Cody's back out to actually draw up anything.

Well, he wasn't doing that every time they practiced together, but still, that's what he might as well say to him. The guy's gonna be crushed.

Still hoping that he can cram some improv techniques into his brain in seven days, he decides not to tell his teacher.

They can't go back to Noel's room unless they want Spock to get an eyeful, and Cody wasn't able to convince Marcus to leave, so they settle for the back of Noel's Civic.

It's pretty cold outside, so he's got the heater on full blast, warming their chilled skin and making the inside of the car cozy. Cody's sitting in his lap, a position Noel didn't think Cody would be comfortable with but evidently is. He urges Noel's hands to his ass, which he cups and squeezes gently, prompting Cody to rock down into him.

Their kiss is slow and lazy. They really should be more mindful of the time, because campus security starts driving around the parking lots at this time of night, and Noel has his car just idling with the lights shut off and the engine running. No doubt the windows will fog soon.

They really should pick better places to fuck around.

When they break for air, Cody's lips are kiss-swollen and his eyes are hazy with want. Noel imagines that he doesn't look much better.

Cody's fingers deftly snap open the button on his jeans, sitting up a little so Noel has room to wriggle his pants and boxers down to mid-thigh. Noel thinks that he's going to sink down to the floor of the car, but Cody just shuffles closer and mouths at his neck, one hand reaching down to grasp at his dick. Noel sucks in a breath, his hips jerking.

Cody finds a sensitive spot somewhere underneath Noel's jaw. He gasps, twitching, and feels Cody's smirk against his skin. His hands tighten on Cody's thighs.

"Shit," he says when Cody's wrist twists on an upstroke. He can feel his end drawing near already, but he wants more. "Cody."

The man in question makes a noncommittal noise.

"Cody, *please*."

"Please what?"

"Just - *do* something."

"I think you can come like this." A hard squeeze that makes Noel's eyes roll. The finality of his tone does things to him.

"Fuck, just - yes," he groans as Cody's other hand joins the party.

"Yeah?" Cody's voice is smug.

It's hard to hold on after that. Cody completely ignores his own arousal in favor of touching and squeezing Noel, kissing him and looking at him with lust-blown pupils that shine with such adoration that Noel has to shut his eyes.

Who would have thought that something as simple as a handjob would have Noel near gasping? Maybe that was it. They'd done everything but that, pretty much. They skipped first base and went for it. But he'd forgotten how skilled Cody's hands were, how sharp his eyes could look when he was being mischievous, how he simultaneously managed to be the one literally sitting in Noel's lap but also the one controlling the entire show. Noel was literally in the palm of his hand, the other hand a little farther back and doing truly wonderful things to his balls.

Noel comes hard with his hands gripping Cody's thighs to near bruising, his head thrown back, streaking the bottom of Cody's shirt with white. It's messy, it's always messy, but Cody looks at him like he wants to eat him alive and, well. A ruined shirt might just be worth it.

"*Oh my God*," he pants, his limbs still tingling pleasantly. He can't quite open his eyes yet.

"Good?" Cody asks.

"S fucking good," Noel slurs.

Cody just chuckles lowly, and Noel wonders if this is how Cody feels with him.

He pulls him down for a kiss that is lazy and slow, Noel drunk on the effects of his orgasm and Cody reveling in his satisfaction. They're closer, now, and Noel feels something poke his lower stomach.

"Feels like I should return the favor," he mumbles, his hand sliding back to squeeze Cody's ass.

"Please," Cody says, and all of his previous dominance is gone. For some reason, that fact makes Noel relax a little. As much as he liked Bossy Cody, he prefers to be in charge.

He hums, leaning back in to kiss him. Cody moans into it and tugs Noel's shoulder towards him. Twisting, they lay flat on the seat, Cody with his legs curled around Noel's hips and Noel pressing down on him.

Cody pushes up into him, impatient.

"Okay, okay," Noel says. He kisses his way across Cody's cheek and to his throat. "What's got you so bossy today?"

"Shut up," Cody says, but it's breathy and not all threatening because Noel's pushing his shirt up and sucking a hickey the size of Arkansas onto his neck.

"How do you want to come?" Noel asks. He lowers his voice intentionally just to see Cody shiver, trailing his hands down Cody's flat stomach and tucking into his waistband.

"Your mouth," Cody says.

He stills. "Huh?"

"I just - I've always wanted to try that."

Noel swallows. "Uh, I don't - I haven't ever - "

"It's not that hard." He smirks. "Well, it *is*, obviously but - just - Noel, please."

"I - " A million things run through his head. He thinks about the way Cody looks when he's sucking his dick, and it's demure, eager, and overall just *sexy*. Noel isn't sure he could picture himself like that. It makes his stomach twist, imagining himself on his knees for someone, even for Cody.

Cody's face goes concerned. "What's wrong?"

"I don't. . ." The words catch painfully in his throat. "I don't think I'd be comfortable with that."

The dejected look in Cody's eyes makes his insides corkscrew further. "Oh."

"Yeah," he says, because it's all he can fucking say.

"Can I ask why?" Cody sits up against the door and pulls his shirt down. He's shrunk away from Noel, his arms crossed around his stomach. Like - like he's *shielding* himself.

Noel's heart aches. "Cody - "

"Is it because of me?" His eyes widen with realization. "It's because of me, isn't it?"

"No, Cody, I just - can't. I can't really see myself. . . doing that."

And Cody stares. They stare at each other for a long while. Noel's heart is pounding in his ears. The sound of the car's engine is deafening. He realizes belatedly that his pants are still down.

Cody's eyes narrow. "Wait, what do you mean 'doing that'?"

Noel flinches. "It's just so. . ."

"Emasculating?" Cody's tone is accusatory. "That what you were gonna say? *Demeaning*?"

Noel says nothing. Guilt forces its way down his throat and into his stomach, because both he and Cody know that's exactly what he was thinking.

Cody nods at his silence. "So, what, is that what you think of me? Is that what you think I'm thinking about when I'm sucking your dick? Because I don't care about that shit, dude. All I'm thinking about is you, not about how I look."

"No, man, I just - " Noel takes a deep breath, frustraed that Cody doesn't understand and frustrated that he can't seem to explain it. "I'm bad at being vulnerable. With you. With anyone. It's not you. I'm just being an idiot. I can't - it just feels so submissive." He thinks about Cody sitting in his lap earlier and tries to think of himself in that position and can't. It makes him extremely uncomfortable.

Cody scoffs at that. "It doesn't have to be. How's it any different from going down on a girl?"

"It *is* different! Because - "

Because. . .

He doesn't know why.

"Because you're going down on a guy. And men are always dominant." Cody's tone is flat. "And if you're not dominant, you're not a man."

"No, Cody, that's not what I meant."

"Isn't it though?" Cody's eyes are shining.

Once again, Noel is at a loss for words.

Cody searches his face for something - *anything* - but Noel looks away, not wanting to face him.

"I'm gonna go," Cody says quietly, and he makes a noise that sounds like a sniff. "I'll see you later."

Noel's not looking as he hears the rustling of Cody putting his clothes back together and him opening and slamming the door shut.

And he's alone.

Chapter End Notes

sorry 4 the hiatus i am very bad at keeping up with stories

hope you enjoyed the angst. what a couple of dumbasses.

End Notes

can you tell i cant write slow burn???? grab your sunscreen boys because this is gonna be a very FAST burn bc ive already written the many smut scenes for this fic and im EXCITED

also i will be including the links to the music that inspires each chapter!! dont need to listen to them to read it. here's the song that inspired the fic title (<https://youtu.be/dBwHZaWIurA>) gotta love sultry, sexy jazz!

ill also include the links of the music im referencing, along with the timestamps of specific parts, and expand on some music terms that may seem confusing to non-musicians.

i am a cello player so forgive me, woodwind & percussion players out there, if i fuck something up. i work in a music store so i know basic shit but im not hip on band lingo

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