

Quinn and Jaz: Ch 2

By Hollewdz

The street lamps buzzed to life, with some flickers of indignation at being awoken for yet another tedious shift. They waited patiently, as they always did, for one very busy college student- who was particularly late tonight. Just as Quinn turned the corner to enter the sprawling parking lot of her apartment complex, the nearest street lamp gave out, dusting her in the growing shadow of the evening.

Still cursed, then, she half-joked. Quinn's eyes burned and her nostrils were iced with the sharp pain of the cold winter air. She was lucky enough that her jacket could cover her mouth a bit, if she tugged at it the right way; but it only did so much when the whole back-half of her was totally drenched with ice water. As she finally approached the stairs to her apartment, her mind briefly wandered to the warm lump of a guy in her pocket.

She felt lucky, because she'd been able to not think about it too much for the walk home- the bitter cold helped with that. But she knew that the second she got inside she'd have to address reality; And reality, right now, was that she had an entire person, *on her person*. Just *chilling*. She shivered hard at the thought, the anxiety fully overpowering any pre-existing chills.

That feeling from earlier came clawing back, fast. The memory of seeing how her hands dwarfed Jaz, seeing him fit entirely into her glove, how that implied he wouldn't even be hard for her to hold his entire being in one hand. She felt ill at the implications of it all, and shoved the thoughts away for Quinn-Of-Not-Right-Now to deal with. The walk home had been traumatic enough, even before all of this tiny guy shit happened, she didn't need to process anything while her body temperature was still below average.

Finally reaching her building and trudging up the stairs to the third story, Quinn fumbled numbly for her keys and shouldered the iced-shut door open with a loud *crack!* Warmth kissed her cheeks and eyelids, much to her relief. Waddling through the threshold, Quinn hurriedly

footed off her ice-filled boots. Not even caring about getting a noise complaint, she slammed the door shut and let both bookbags fall heavily to the floor where she stood.

Numb fingers tried desperately to claw the zipper of her coat open, but failed to get a proper hold on the slick metal tab, wet with snow. She briefly gave up on the tab, opting to undo her old leather belt and tug off her oversized, worn jeans, down to her long underwear. Fingering off her sopping socks and leaving the shedded articles at the entryway, Quinn shuffled the couple of feet to her kitchen and started her electric kettle. Running the tap hot at her sink, she held her hands in the water for some time until it was painful from the heat, reluctantly withdrawing from the temporary comfort.

With now-dried hands, she shakily pinched at the zipper near her chapped lips. A long, fluttering breath entered and slowly exited her lungs- she had to mentally prepare. Maybe the cold actually had gotten to her, and she was truly losing it from exhaustion. In a way, she hoped that was the case, because then she could just sleep it off and go back to normal.

Oh please, respect yourself, Quinn, she internally chided, The ID, the bag, you literally have that shit defrosting 3 feet away from you. Be a big girl and get this over with.

Quinn laughed in spite of herself at that.

With a sturdy, deep breath, she unzipped the coat and hastily tugged out the glove into the air in front of her face. A muffled *Holy- Watch it!!* from the contents told her that her passenger was not only real, but also had survived the oh-so-perilous journey. Slightly guilty at the jostling, but mostly cold and annoyed, she laid the glove down on the counter as gently as she could manage.

The kettle gave a shy *click* to show it had done its job, and Quinn happily accepted a distraction for her hands. She readied two mugs; A pretty yellow flowered mug equipped with her favorite sleepy-time tea, and then the second mug- a wide, plain, chipped old thing that she set next to the glove, full of nothing but the hot water.

“Oh, and these might be helpful...” She thought aloud, getting two fluffy dish towels from one of the drawers below. Quinn dropped them quickly next to the glove and mugs.

“So, uh,” She started speaking to the air above the set up, not exactly sure how to interact with some guy she just taxi’d into her home, “I’m gonna go take a shower- and uh, warm up- *whatever*. I’m leaving for 15 minutes. You have 15 minutes to get yourself into a better state, and also to not be naked.” *Wait, is that possible?* her face twisted, and she started making hand gestures to no one in particular. “Just make sure you’re not... exposed... when I come back to talk, in fifteen. Eugh. Whatever, bye.”

Throwing her hands up and taking a deep, shaky breath, she spun around and eagerly shed the rest of her clothes on the way to her shower. *If hypothermia doesn’t get me, cringe certainly fucking will. My god.*

Jaz’s head had never hurt so bad in his entire life- which was actually quite impressive, considering how many hangovers he’d dealt with. Jaz ranked this headache particularly high on his list of awful headaches not just because of the splitting pain between his ears. This headache had come with one *tiny* side effect, and it was bothering him to no end.

The constant friction of the too-thick fabric rubbing his bare body was getting to be overwhelming, and going from truly freezing temperatures to a sweltering, inescapable heat was nauseating. *I might actually need to buy this bitch new gloves, that’s hilarious. Whatever, she needs a new set anyway, this brand sucks.* Commenting on Quinn’s gloves was all Jaz could do to distract himself. He might have been able to lie to himself and say this was all some twisted nightmare if not for how sickeningly *real* it all was.

The night prior was a blur. All he knew is that he had a few shots, slept with a few girls and had a good time, like any other night. Like *normal*. He woke up in one of the girls' beds around dinnertime and was kicked out before he could even ask what they were cooking.

They were embarrassed they couldn't cook for shit. Yeah. I would have just ordered us all whatever if they didn't go all psycho, kicking me out. Jaz absent-mindedly ran his hands slowly up and down his arms, and shut his eyes. He focused on his breathing, and tried not to feel the heat emanating from the wall beside him. *Those bitches just didn't know I would have covered everything- gotten maids for the cleanup, had my secretary manage any absences. Damn, I should have started the night with that- 'Everything's on me tonight!' Then I wouldn't be in this fucking mess.*

Between jabs at the group of girls he had partied with, the thoughts of how unendingly vast the world felt from his nest of clothes silently fogged into his head. Flashes of seeing his fingers poke through the stitches of his own scarf, at just the amount of time it took to get a full view of Quinn. Bubbling visuals of the hole in the toe of her boot, only a couple yards from him at the time- big enough for him to walk into, with *clearance*. The way her shins trailed into her knees, peaking at the height of small buildings. He thought of her face; blurry and dulled, like a billboard you're *just* too far away from to make out the smallest lettering.

He very nearly retched at the thought of it all. He didn't even realize his fingernails were leaving raw, throbbing circles now, swirling across his biceps. A sharp, thin whine loosed itself from somewhere outside, and all of a sudden Jaz didn't have time to *worry* about retching, he may just start blowing chunks right then and there.

The only way he could describe the feeling was like that of the world's least fun rollercoaster- something close to the Tower of Terror, but in reverse. His insides lagged behind whatever unnatural force was yanking him into the air.

“Holy- *WATCH IT!!*” He spat, hoping desperately he could be heard through the polyester and fleece. A pause told him he was heard, and he gladly accepted the much slower descent to a floor.

Damn, who the hell let this roid-rager out around normal people? Doesn't she know that I'm literally-

Jaz suddenly became quite aware of how deeply his nails could go into his arms. He flinched and loosed his grip on himself, seeing pinpricks of blood on a few of the impressions his fingernails had left behind. Outside the tent of a glove, Quinn was somewhere far off giving a long spiel about showering or something.

Showering... 'something something naked'... Damn, is now really the time for this? Jaz was exhausted, he felt he had enough of women for the next few days. Preparing his usual script, he emerged to *politely* shoot her down and give her a proper rejection. Quinn, however, had scurried away. Out of sight, to some distant closet all the way on the other side of the kitchen.

Jaz felt strangely about such a massive woman truly *scurrying*, the way Quinn just had. *Maybe she's not as godzilla as previously thought.* But looking around, he had a lot more than that to feel unsettled by than just the girl who uber'd him.

Everything. All of it was huge.

This apartment was a stadium to Jaz- no, even bigger. A colosseum, made of plywood and layers and layers of landlord-special paint. There was so much to take in- the mural-sized art pieces on the miles-away walls, the countertop longer than a nascar track, the floor, *all the way down there*. That nauseous feeling came clawing back, pinching Jaz's throat and behind his nose and cramping his stomach.

He had to look away.

Turning eagerly to look at what was right in front of him, he found a steaming ceramic tub was waiting patiently with two thick towels, the size of tennis courts, flung to either side.

The realization of Quinn's actual intention now finally dawned on him, "*Oh, shower.*"

Eager to get out of the stuffy tent-glove, Jaz kicked his way free of the damp, beaded, fleece lining. A cold chill hit him, and he was forced to remember why he was in that glove to begin with.

Jaz had never been shy about his birthday suit- he worked very hard for his toned and fit physique, and was known to half the campus to jump at any chance to put it on display.

In that moment, though- standing on a countertop, the nearest "floor" being a hundred foot plummet away, and the closest exit truly impossible for him to access or use...

Jaz *felt* naked. He felt *utterly exposed*.

It was a new, supremely unpleasant feeling. His hands went back to his biceps, and he quickly recoiled at the sting. His eyes flitted to the scratches and his gaze lingered. Ever so slightly, his shoulders rose and tensed, an almost unnoticeable flicker of weakness breathed through his knees.

Fuck it, I can clean up if I'm staying the night. Jaz clambered into the mug, steeling himself. He silently begged the near scalding water to burn out the unpleasantness- trying to find a distraction in this new sting.

A nebulous sort of respite tentatively descended upon him.

"Besides, I haven't even really introduced myself."