

Angel Lambert

Dual of Hearts

**romantic fantasy, LGBTQ+ stories, magical realism,
emotional coming-of-age stories, and stories about
personal growth and struggle.**

"Dual of Hearts" is a captivating and emotional story about the power of love, the pain of loss, and the long path to healing. It weaves magic with human experiences and shows how hope and connection can overcome even the darkest times. The relationship between Asher and Kieran, surrounded by a supportive network of family and friends, illustrates the universal quest for acceptance and the right to love without fear.

The novel emphasizes that true strength lies in vulnerability and that embracing our deepest emotions is the key to finding peace and happiness. At the same time, it is also a story of courage, where fighters for love and freedom refuse to be stopped by the shadows of the past and society.

Schrijver: Angel Lambert

Coverontwerp: Angel Lambert

Illustraties: Angel Lambert

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Chapter 1: the meeting

I will share the story of my one and only love, the kind that blooms in the most unexpected of moments. It was the summer of 1899 in the quaint village of Eldergrove Haven, and I had just celebrated my seventeenth birthday, freshly graduated from the prestigious Luminara Institute of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Life was good, yet my responsibilities at home weighed heavily on me. As the eldest sibling, I found myself caring for my brother Alderwick and my little sister, Alina, who required my guidance and affection. Peering out the window of our modest home, I noticed a stirring in the familiar setting. There was a new boy in town, one I hadn't seen before. He stood before Mrs. Margot Thompson's door, dressed in dark, mysterious attire that whispered secrets of adventure and far-off places. Curiosity sparked within me, and I wondered who this boy could be. He appeared to be around my age, perhaps even younger, but something about him exuded an aura of intrigue. As I continued to observe him, he stepped gracefully inside Mrs. Thompson's home, disappearing from view. I found myself lingering by the window, lost in thought, until I was jolted back to reality by Alina's voice calling for me. Reluctantly, I turned from the window and went to see what she needed, the mystery of the boy momentarily pushed aside. Later that day, as I made my usual trip to the market to gather supplies for

our household, my mind drifted back to that intriguing figure. Suddenly, I collided with someone, jolting me from my reverie. "Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't see you there," I exclaimed, looking up. To my surprise, it was the same boy I had seen earlier. He looked at me for a brief moment, a hint of a smile playing at the corners of his lips. "It's fine," he said, his voice casual. With that, he turned and continued on his way, leaving me standing there, my heart racing. I watched him disappear into the crowd before refocusing on my shopping. Once my hands were filled with various goods, I made my way home. As I approached our door, my arms too laden to manage the knob, I recited a wandless verbal spell, and the door swung open effortlessly, revealing the warm interior. It was a late afternoon, and the delightful aroma of a meal wafting from the kitchen beckoned me inside. That night, as I lay in bed, I found it difficult to silence my thoughts. I couldn't shake off the image of that mysterious boy. "Perhaps I should welcome him tomorrow," I mused, contemplating how best to approach him. My mind raced with possibilities until weariness eventually overcame me, and I drifted into a dream-filled sleep. The next morning, after taking care of my siblings—dressing them, brushing their hair, and serving breakfast—my resolve strengthened. I decided to visit Mrs. Thompson's house and welcome the new arrival. I walked through the sun-drenched streets, excitement filling the air, and as I reached the old woman's front

door, I knocked, heart pounding in my chest. After a brief wait, the door creaked open, revealing Mrs. Thompson, her glasses perched atop her nose. "Can I help you?" she asked kindly. Feeling a surge of anticipation, I replied, "I'd like to welcome the new boy staying with you." "Kieran! Come down, please! You have a visitor," she called. Moments later, a boy descended the stairs, his presence filling the room with an air of quiet confidence. "Hey, you're the boy I bumped into at the market," he said, recognition shining in his eyes. "Yes, that's right. I'm sorry again for that," I replied, feeling a flush of embarrassment. "It's no big deal," he replied casually, but I could sense an unspoken connection forming between us. "What's your name?" I asked, eager to know more. "Kieran Darkmore," he replied, his voice steady. "And you?" "Asher Vale. I live not far from here," I said, a smile breaking across my face. "It's nice that you're here to help your family." Your aunt told me what happened. "Thanks, I am remarkably close to my aunt. Her passing has hit us hard," he said somberly. "My mother was killed by Muggles. It's been a tough time for me." "That's very sweet of you to come help," I said softly, feeling a kinship growing between us. "Welcome to Eldergrove Haven." As my time with him drew to a close, I realized I had to hurry home to my waiting siblings. "I really must go now," I said reluctantly. "I'll walk you to the door," Kieran offered, and together we moved toward the entrance. As we reached the threshold,

he turned to me with a contemplative expression. “When will I see you again? You seem like someone who might be able to help me with my research,” he suggested. “How about tomorrow night at the Wailing Willow?” I proposed, excitement bubbling within me. “Perfect. I’ll see you then,” he replied, and I walked home with a smile illuminating my face. What a lovely boy he was, I thought, and I knew this meeting was only the beginning of something special.

Chapter 2: Wailing Willow

Asher and Kieran meet at the Wailing Willow the next day. Darkmore presents his research on the Deathly Symbols, revealing his theories about their power and significance. He emphasizes the potential symbols to amplify their magic, making them nearly unbeatable. Vale, initially skeptical, is drawn in by Darkmore's charisma and enthusiasm. “The power of the Deathly Symbols is not just a myth; it's a reality waiting to be seized. Together, we can unlock secrets that will change the course of our lives... and perhaps even alter the fate of our world,” said Kieran. Darkmore's words resonate with Vale's own ambition and desire for power. As Darkmore shares his findings, Vale becomes increasingly entranced by the prospect of wielding such immense power. He rationalizes that the ends justify the means and that he can use the Hallows for good. Vale agrees to join forces with Darkmore, and they begin their research together. As the sun sets over Eldergrove Haven, casting a warm orange glow over the quaint village, Asher Vale and Kieran Darkmore find themselves sitting in the local tea shop, surrounded by dusty tomes and steaming cups of tea. They've been working together for weeks, poring over ancient texts and scouring the countryside for any mention of the Deathly symbols. As they pour over a particularly ancient tome, their fingers brush against each

other, sending a spark of electricity through both of them. They quickly pull their hands back, laughing nervously, but the moment lingers in the air. Vale, ever the charming wizard, clears his throat and suggests they take a break to enjoy the evening air. Darkmore, always up for an adventure, agrees, and they step out into the quiet village street. As they stroll through the winding streets, they find themselves at the edge of the cemetery, where Asher's mom lies buried. The wind whispers secrets in their ears, and they stand in comfortable silence, taking in the peaceful atmosphere. Darkmore turns to Vale, his eyes sparkling with mischief. "You know, Asher, I never thought I'd say this to anyone, but I'm rather enjoying your company." Vale's eyes crinkle at the corners as he smiles. "The feeling is mutual, Kieran." Their banter is light and playful, but beneath the surface, there's a growing awareness that this might be the start of something more. As they walk back to their lodgings, they find themselves stealing glances at each other, their fingers brushing together once more as they part ways for the night. "WAIT PLEASE!" Asher walks a bit back to Kieran. "Why don't you stay the night with me today? We can discuss some more about how and where we will practice tomorrow, and I don't mind the company."

"I don't know," Asher says. "I'd have to take care of my family."

“Your brother is old enough to take care of your sister for one night, isn’t he? He even got a girlfriend.”

He was right, Asher thought. “It’s okay, I’ll stay the night; that would indeed be wiser for tomorrow.” The boys walk to Mrs. Thompson’s house. Asher’s eyes scanned the room, taking in the cozy chaos that was Kieran’s abode. The air was thick with the scent of old books and woodsmoke, and the flickering candles casting shadows on the walls. Amidst the clutter, Asher spotted a diary lying open on a nearby table, its pages fluttering gently in the breeze from the window. His curiosity piqued, Asher crept closer, his footsteps silent on the creaking floorboards. He picked up the diary, his fingers tracing the intricate calligraphy on the cover. As he flipped through the pages, he discovered that it was Kieran’s journal, filled with sketches of strange symbols and cryptic notes. Asher’s eyes widened as he read about Kieran’s fascination with the Deathly Symbols and his theories on how to unlock their secrets. Just as he was getting to the most interesting part, Asher heard the creak of the door opening. Kieran strode back into the room, a bundle of blankets slung over his arm. “Ah, perfect timing!” Kieran exclaimed, spotting Asher sitting on his bed. “I brought some sleeping gear for you. You can take one of these blankets.” Asher quickly hid the diary behind his back, hoping Kieran wouldn’t notice what he was doing. “Oh, thank you,” Asher said, trying to sound nonchalant. “I was just... admiring your... um, décor.”

Kieran chuckled. “Yes, I know it's a bit messy in here, but I find it cozy. There's something about being surrounded by books and trinkets that makes me feel... at home.” Asher nodded in agreement, feeling a little more at ease now that Kieran wasn't suspicious. As they settled in for the night, Asher couldn't help but steal glances at Kieran's diary whenever he thought the other wasn't looking. He cast a spell to relocate it to his own bedroom. He was full of excitement, having discovered this secret part of his new friend's life. And as he drifted off to sleep, Asher wondered what other secrets lay hidden in those pages...

Chapter 3: Denial of desire

The dense canopy of the Whispering Willow cast dappled shadows on the forest floor, a mosaic of greens and browns that whispered of ancient secrets. Sunlight filtered through the leaves, creating a warm, almost ethereal glow that enveloped Asher and Kieran as they ventured deeper into nature's embrace. Asher tailed Kieran, unable to hide the playful grin molding his features. The crisp air charged with a lighthearted tension, vibrant as the colors of the forest. "You sure you can manage this spell, Kieran?" Asher called, his voice teasing. "I can already picture you turning yourself into a toad." Kieran stopped mid-step, turning to face Asher, a mock look of offense plastered on his handsome face. His dark curls danced with the breeze, framing a smirk that could light a thousand moons. "I'd be a toad that's twice as clever as you!" With a laugh, Asher matched Kieran's spirited expression, but beneath the playful banter lay the flutter of something deeper. Asher absently reached into his pocket, feeling the slight indentation of the diary he'd swiped from Kieran's room. He had always respected their friendship, yet the revelation of Kieran's hidden feelings—a secret unearthed through a stealthy application of a concealment spell—had sent his heart racing with curiosity and desire. "Alright, show me what you've got!" Asher urged, choosing to focus on the

moment. They had come here to practice their spells, to learn and grow, but the air crackled with an energy that neither could deny. Kieran drew his wand, the polished wood glinting in the sunlight. “Alright, watch closely. This one’s a tricky bit of magic from Professor Lark’s book.” He took a moment to steady himself, the concentration evident in the furrow of his brow. Asher couldn’t help but admire the way determination radiated off Kieran. “Feeling confident, toad?” Asher quipped, raising an eyebrow, his own wand resting casually in his hand. Kieran shot him a sidelong glance, lips quirking upward, then tilted his wand as if opening a portal to his power. He muttered the incantation softly, the words weaving through the air as luminous sparkles began to dance around him. With a flick, he sent the spell racing toward a nearby tree, where it exploded in a gentle burst of color—flowers blooming instantaneously in a riot of hues. “Not bad, huh?” Kieran grinned, clearly proud of his display. Asher clapped slowly, his eyes twinkling with admiration. “Stunning. Impressive as always, Kieran.” He couldn’t help stepping closer, their bodies almost brushing in the aftermath of camaraderie. “Your turn, Asher. Show me what you’ve got!” Kieran leaned in, voice playful yet laced with challenge. The way he looked at Asher—bright, eager, challenging—made Asher’s heart race like a drum in a dance. “Alright, alright,” Asher replied, trying to calm the excitement swirling in his chest. He focused, picturing the hidden

message within Kieran's diary. The concealment spell had revealed whispers of vulnerability, and now, he held that discovery close to his heart. With a deep breath, Asher raised his wand, channeling the energy around him. "Fulgere Revelare!" he declared, casting a burst of light that sparked through the branches. The air shimmered, revealing a brief echo of Kieran's words he had read: *I think I'm falling for him. *

The revelation left him momentarily breathless, the world narrowing to the warmth that radiated between them. A gentle blush crept across Asher's cheeks as their eyes locked, both young men standing at the precipice of something indefinable. The forest around them faded, the world narrowing until only the two of them remained. Asher could feel the emotions. "I have to go," said Asher and ran away.

In the heart of Eldergrove Haven, the soft light of twilight painted the sky in soft hues of lavender and gold. A warm breeze rustled the leaves of the ancient trees surrounding the grounds. Asher Vale stood in the garden of his home, his heart heavy with thoughts of the future yet vulnerable in the embrace of nostalgia. It was during this peaceful time that Kieran Darkmore chose to visit, a presence as electrifying as a summer storm. The air shifted as Asher felt Kieran's energy ripple through the air, a mixture of charm and intensity that had always drawn him in. "Asher," Kieran called, his voice a melody

that pulled at Asher's heartstrings. "I thought I might find you here." Asher turned, caught in the golden rays of the setting sun. Kieran stood at the threshold of the garden, wearing that enigmatic smile that made Asher's heart race. "There's a world outside that door waiting for us," Kieran continued, his golden hair shimmering like a halo. "Shall we explore? I want to show you something, and I want to do it together." Asher responded with an easy grin, his worries momentarily forgotten. "I would follow you anywhere, Kieran." They wandered through the woods, sharing laughter and dreams, their connection stronger than the gravitational pull of the moon on the tides. Asher found himself utterly captivated, the world around them fading away as they lost themselves in deep conversation. "Tell me, what do you yearn for most, Kieran?" Asher asked, his voice barely above a whisper, the flickering candlelight of their growing bond illuminating the dark corners of their souls. Kieran's eyes sparkled with fervor as he replied, "To create a world where we can be free—free from fear, free from the constraints they impose upon us. And to be by your side as we build something remarkable together." His words echoed in Asher's heart, igniting a flame of shared ambition and passion. "And what if that world means embracing the darkness as well?" "Sometimes," Kieran said, stepping closer, his gaze penetrating. "To bring about real change, one must wield power—power that can reshape the world." Asher gazed into Kieran's eyes,

feeling the magnetic pull between them. “But at what cost, Kieran? It is a dangerous path we tread.” Kieran's eyes softened, and he reached out to tuck a loose strand of hair behind Asher's ear. “I fear for you, Asher. You have a heart too pure to see what's at stake.”

“And I fear for you,” Asher murmured, their faces mere inches apart. “You become consumed by your desires.” In the stillness of the moment, they sought answers in one another's eyes, their breaths mingling. “I know you have my diary, and you must have figured out the second layer in it.” Asher leaned in, and Kieran, caught in the intensity of the moment, closed the distance between them. Their lips met in a gentle kiss—soft, tentative, yet electric. Time stood still, the world around them disappearing as they lost themselves in each other, heartbeats synchronizing in a rhythm that felt ancient and profound. Kieran's hand cradled Asher's face, a delicate touch that was both tender and possessive, as if he was anchoring Asher to him. When they finally pulled apart, both breathless, Asher's eyes searched Kieran's face. “You make me feel alive,” he confessed, vulnerability seeping into his words. Kieran smiled, a glimmer of mischief dancing in his eyes. “And you inspire me to reach for the stars.” As the sun set behind them, casting shadows on the ground, Asher felt the weight of their kiss linger like an unspoken promise. They stood, embracing the uncertainty of their futures, both aware that their paths were a delicate tapestry interwoven with ambition,

love, and danger. “Together, Kieran,” Asher said softly, hope shining in his eyes. “We can navigate the darkness, if we embrace the light within us, too.” Kieran nodded, a flicker of determination igniting his gaze. “If you’re with me, Asher, then I have nothing to fear.” The soft glow of the setting sun bathed the Whispering Willow in golden light as Asher stepped back from Kieran, breathless and bewildered. The kiss had unraveled something deep within him, a rush of emotions he had kept locked away. Kieran's eyes sparkled with both surprise and a hopefulness that cut through Asher like a blade. But as the moment stretched into uncertain silence, Asher's heart twisted painfully. He had made a decision, one that felt nothing short of heartbreaking. “I can’t do this,” he whispered, the words barely escaping his lips before they shattered the fragile beauty of the moment. He turned away, the image of Kieran etched into his mind even as he forced himself to look toward the path that led back to reality. “I have to leave... for Luminara.”

Kieran’s expression shifted from shock to dismay, his features crumpling as if the very air had been knocked from his lungs. “What do you mean, leave? You don’t have to—” His voice was desperate, fingers twitching at his sides as he took a step closer, trembling from the fear of losing Asher. But Asher shook his head, the ache in his chest unbearable. “It’s better this way, Kieran. We can’t—” He stopped, swallowing hard against the wave of emotion threatening to spill over. “I can’t keep doing

this with you. I can't bear it." Kieran's eyes searched Asher's face, each flicker of hope slipping further away as realization set in. "You really mean that?" The tremor in his voice mirrored the fragility of his heart. "You're just going to walk away?" As Asher met Kieran's gaze, he felt the weight of every unsaid word, every shared glance, crash down upon him. He imagined their laughter fading into the distance, the warmth of Kieran's smile becoming a mere shadow in his memory. "Yes," he whispered, the pain slicing through him like a freezing wind. "I have to go." Kieran's face went pale, jaw tightening as he wrestled with the hurt creeping into his chest. "But we—" He took a shaky breath, his voice cracking under the strain. "We just kissed, Asher! It meant something!"

"It meant everything," Asher admitted softly, unable to mask the swell of emotion surging within him. But every emotion tugged him in a different direction—away from Kieran, away from the temptation of a future that seemed dangerously intertwined with his heart's desires. "Then don't just throw it away!" Kieran's voice rose slightly, desperation lacing each syllable. "I need you! There's more for us. We can—We can figure it out!" Asher turned his back, feeling Kieran's words chase after him like shadows. The darkening woods felt suffocating, each rustle of the leaves echoing the uncharted territory of his decision. "I can't face this, Kieran. Please... just let me go."

“Asher!” Kieran’s call was thick with emotion, a mixture of disbelief and heartache, but Asher kept walking, each step feeling heavier than the last. The weight of his choices pressed upon him, and he couldn’t let Kieran follow. Not like this. They had shared a moment, a brief union of hearts that had given Asher a glimpse of what could be, but it was a future he dared not explore. Hope mingled with anguish, and he feared the strength of what he felt for Kieran could tie him to feelings he was not prepared to face yet.

Days later,

As he confided in the familiar stone walls of Luminara, Asher felt the absence of Kieran echoing cruelly in his heart. Every lesson he taught, every student he guided, was haunted by the choices he had made, each moment layered with the regret of what he had abandoned. His nights were restless, thoughts retreating to the forest—Kieran, illuminated by twilight, and the warmth of the kiss that had likely shattered them both. Meanwhile, Kieran wandered the heart of the countryside, often finding himself standing at the edge of the Whispering Willow, heart heavy with longing. He tried to distract himself—swimming with friends, practicing spells—but none could erase the ghost of Asher's absence from his thoughts. Each deliberation of what might have been twisted like a knife. “Just one more time,” he whispered to himself under the canopy of trees, his heart aching for

the boy who dared to touch his soul. “One more time.” But his attempts to see Asher were always fruitless. Asher refused every invitation to meet. Owls and messages went unanswered. It felt as though Asher had erected a barrier, one as unyielding as any spell taught at Luminara—each ignored note a sharp reminder that love, however powerful, could also be painfully one-sided. In the solitude of their separate worlds, both Asher and Kieran grappled with their own grief, heartbreak intertwining with memories of what they once held dear. Each felt stripped of something precious, a bond that could have blossomed but now lay buried beneath their silence, leading only to a sense of profound loss that neither knew how to mend. As the seasons changed around them, Asher and Kieran moved through life like shadows of their former selves, their hearts each wearied by unspoken words and an emptiness that no number of distractions could fill.

Chapter 4: teaching at Luminara

Valeria stood in her office, a concerned expression shadowing her features as she watched Asher pace restlessly. It was clear to her that something weighed heavily on his mind. “Asher, you’ve been a bit off lately. Is something troubling you?” she asked gently, her eyes searching his face for answers. Asher paused, caught off guard by her inquiry. He sighed, tension clear in his shoulders. “It’s just—I’ve fallen in love, Valeria. But I’m terrified to be with them,” he confessed, the words tumbling out with a mix of relief and sorrow. Valeria’s face transformed with warmth. A smile broke through her concern, her heart swelling with happiness for him. “Oh, Asher! That’s wonderful! I’m so pleased to hear you’ve found someone special.” As her joy embraced him, Asher hesitated, torn by the weight of unspoken truth. “It’s... It’s a boy,” he murmured, the admission nearly escaping his lips, but fear tightened his throat. Would this change their relationship? Did he dare share this part of his heart? A boy? What’s his name? “Kieran Darkmore,” said Asher. He thought of Kieran, a presence that filled every corner of his mind. A deep ache developed within him at the thought of losing Kieran. He had been missing Kieran terribly, the silence between them stretching uncomfortably, pulsing with a longing he could hardly articulate. “Asher, if he is the person who makes you

happy, you can't let him go. It may be illegal, but he will always protect you just like your family and I. The rules are old-fashioned; it's time someone sets the example to change them.” Then, an owl dropped a message—Kieran was leaving. The news struck like a lightning bolt, igniting a sense of urgency in Asher. With a determined heart, he decided in that moment, he couldn't let Kieran go without a fight. Rushing out of Valeria's office, Asher made his way to Mrs. Thompson's house, his heart pounding with every step. But when he arrived, he was met with disappointment—Kieran had already left for the station. Without wasting another moment, Asher sprinted towards the train station, the world around him blurring as he pushed himself harder. The station loomed in front of him, filled with the bustling sounds of travelers and. Through the crowd, there he was—Kieran, standing there at the last moment, about to board the train. Time seemed to freeze as Asher dashed forward, adrenaline surging. In one swift movement, he grabbed Kieran's arm and pulled him close, crashing their lips together in a fervent kiss. “I'm sorry that I didn't dare to be with you, that I didn't trust you to protect me,” Asher whispered against Kieran's lips, pouring out his heart beneath the bright station lights. Meanwhile, back at Luminara, Valeria had to endure the most of Asher's absence, stepping in to teach his class. Confusion and concern mingled as she wondered about the unexpected turn of events. The next day, Asher returned, exhilarated but still flushed with the

thrill of the previous night. Valeria's gaze bore into him, searching for answers. "Asher, what on earth happened?" she pressed. He recounted everything, his words spilling forth in an excited rush. Valeria listened intently and, with a sigh of relief and happiness for her friend, she forgave him for his fleeting absence. As the weeks passed, Asher and Kieran found themselves spending more time together during the weekends, their connection deepening with each shared moment. But still, Asher felt a yearning to take their relationship to the next level. One evening, he mustered the courage to ask, "Kieran, do you think we could take this a step further?" Kieran's face fell, a hint of shame flickering in his eyes. "I'm not ready for that yet," he admitted, and the words hung heavily between them. Asher felt the distance grow, the silence stretching into a month of uncomfortable quietude.

After a month

Kieran paced back and forth in his small room, the midday sun filtering through the window, but he hardly noticed its warmth. His heart raced, each beat echoing the anxiety that had consumed him ever since Valeria's owl had delivered the news. Asher was hurt—seriously hurt—after jumping in front of a student during an accident with a spell. The details were sparse, but Kieran's imagination filled in the blanks with horrific images of what could have happened. Frustration bubbled up inside him. Why hadn't he been there? Why

had he let fear dictate his choices in the past? Kieran was still grappling with the reality that he couldn't visit Asher because he wasn't family, the rules of the Lumenera hospital stringent and arbitrary in his eyes. The thought of Asher lying there alone, in pain, without the warmth of familiar company, was nearly unbearable. His mind spun with the helplessness of it all. When Valeria had relayed the message that Asher had recovered well and was healthy at home, Kieran felt a flicker of hope—the thought that Asher would eventually heal brought him momentary solace. But he knew he needed to be there for Asher, to support him through the dark shadow of recovery. They had weathered storms together before, and Kieran couldn't bear the thought of this one tearing them apart. That was enough. The decision crystallized in his mind with a clarity he'd been searching for. There was no way he could wait any longer. Without a second thought, Kieran left his room, taking the stairs two at a time. The fresh, brisk air welcomed him outside, and he took a deep breath, letting it fill him with resolve. He ran toward the Alderwick's bar, his feet pounding against the cobblestones as he navigated the familiar streets. Each step felt like a promise to Asher that he wouldn't abandon him. The bar came into view, its cozy exterior a stark contrast to the gnawing fear in Kieran's heart. Pushing through the door, he scanned the room until he spotted Alderwick, sitting at a corner table with a steaming mug in front of him. Relief flooded through

Kieran when he saw him with a cheerful smile, a sign that things were looking up. Then, Kieran found himself outside Asher's room in his brother's café, panting from the long walk. With a hesitant knock, he waited, his heart racing until Asher opened the door. The sight of Asher, shirtless and looking somehow more inviting than ever, stirred something deep within him. Asher took a playful step back with a playful smile on his face, a silent invitation in his eyes. Kieran wasted no time, pushing him against the wall and capturing his lips in an electrifying kiss. The heat between them ignited, and Asher guided Kieran towards his bed, their kisses deepening as they shed the barriers that once kept them apart. But just as the world around them melted away, Asher pulled back, uncertainty clouding his mind. "I... I don't know how this works," he admitted, vulnerability wrapping around his words. Kieran stepped closer, determination in his eyes. "Just trust me," he whispered, and he took the lead. The next morning, Kieran awoke first, a soft smile creeping onto his face as he looked down at Asher, who was half-draped over him. Kieran's heart swelled, and he leaned down to kiss Asher gently on the head, enjoying the peaceful moment. Asher stirred, his eyes fluttering open, a radiant smile spreading across his face. "Are we together now?" "Yes," he declared, and they kissed again, lost in a joyful embrace. But just as Asher turned to face him for another round, a sharp knock on the door broke through their bliss.