

I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND

Written by

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EXT. DINER - DAY

The diner is large and brightly colored. The parking lot is full.

INT. DINER - DAY

We see a full diner, filled with loud families and screaming children. The waitresses are looking exhausted as they carry trays loaded with breakfast foods.

Close in on a more secluded and less noisy booth. CHERYL MUNROE (mid 50's) is a composed woman who looks out of place in the greasy diner. The grey streaking her hair makes her look distinguished.

Across from her sits ALEC MUNROE (22), a senior in university. He's not nearly as put together as his mother, dressed in a simple hoodie and skinny jeans with his hair an artful mess. He is clearly uncomfortable as he fidgets under his mother's gaze.

CHERYL

I don't know why you won't just bring her over. It's been months since you told us that you're seeing someone. We would love to meet her.

Alec takes a long sip of his COFFEE before he clears his throat and answers.

ALEC

Mum. I don't think h-she's really ready to meet the family just yet.

Cheryl sighs, like they've had this conversation many times before.

CHERYL

It's been months, Alexander. We really want to meet the woman who stole your heart. This is the first person you've dated in years. Even your father is eager to meet her.

Alec levels her with a disbelieving look.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Don't give me that look. He does care about you. He's your father.

Her phone beeps and she glances at it before pulling out her wallet and putting a few bills on the table. She gathers her coat and stands up.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

We want to meet her. Bring her over
for Thanksgiving dinner tomorrow.

She walks away before Alec can respond. Alec watches her walk away and then drops his head in his hands.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment building is old, but still in decent shape. It's very clearly predominantly student housing. We see a few students walking around.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is cluttered and homey. There are PICTURE FRAMES scattered around the lounge, showing groups of smiling faces. Alec and another boy, Carter, appear to feature in almost all of them.

CARTER (22) is sitting on the worn COUCH, engrossed in a book. His shirt is covered in dried paint and his hair is messy, as if he just got out of bed. He looks up as Alec makes his way into the apartment, hanging his coat up as he goes.

CARTER

Hey! How was breakfast?

Alec groans and flops down on the couch, putting his head in Carter's lap. Carter closes his book and starts carding his fingers through Alec's hair.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Come on. It couldn't have been that
bad.

Alec takes a deep breath.

ALEC

She wants me to bring my girlfriend
over tomorrow.

Carter's hand still's in Alec's hair, and his body stiffens. Alec grabs one of his hands in his own and intertwines their fingers together.

ALEC (CONT'D)

She kept trying to set me up with my dad's business partner's daughters and I told her I was seeing someone a few months ago, just so she would leave me alone.

CARTER

And of course, they assumed it's a girl. Not that you told them any differently.

Carter pulls his hand away from Alec and looks away. Alec sits up and makes Carter turn to face him.

ALEC

Hey. I love you. So much. They're just...not accepting. You know that. I just want them to be happy with me. I'm not ready to tell them just yet.

Carter scoffs and stands up, angry.

CARTER

We've been together for three years now, and all they know about me is that I'm your "roommate".

He makes air quotes around the word roommate.

CARTER (CONT'D)

If they can't accept you for who you really are, then maybe they don't deserve you. Have you thought about that?

He starts pacing, running his hands through his hair, frustrated.

CARTER (CONT'D)

And what about me? I love you. I want to be able to post a picture of us online without being scared that your family is going to find it. Or be able to hold your hand as I walk down the damn street. I can't keep doing this and pretending that I'm okay.

ALEC

(hesitating)

What're you saying?

Alec goes to stand in front of a now still Carter.

CARTER
(shakily)
Maybe if after all this time you
aren't ready, it's me.

ALEC
Babe-

He takes a step towards Carter who steps back and cuts him off.

CARTER
Look. I understand how scary it is
to come out to your family, but I
don't think I can keep hiding. When
I came out I didn't think that I
would be forced back into the
closet.

Alec just looks at him in shock. Carter gives him a watery smile.

CARTER (CONT'D)
I'll give you time to think about
it. I wish I never had to put you
in this position.

Carter moves towards the door, grabbing his jacket and keys. He opens the door before turning around to face Alec, who still hasn't moved. They're both crying.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Just...think about it.

The door closes behind him with a click. Alec finally moves, and he reaches into his pocket to grab his phone. He dials a number and holds it up to his ear as it rings.

ALEC
(softly)
Hey. Can you meet me at the bar? I-
I need you.

EXT. BAR - AFTERNOON

The bar looks a bit worse for wear but still clearly attracts a lot of business as we see people constantly going in and out.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON

Alec is sitting at the bar nursing a beer as he talks. Next to him is ASHLEY MUNROE (25). She is well dressed, but casual. She sits listening intently as Alec recounts the events of the day.

ALEC

And then he told me to think about it and left. He left.

Ashley sighs and turns to face her brother properly.

ASHLEY

Well. I can see where he's coming from. You guys have been together forever. Can you blame him for wanting to be able to hold your hand in public?

ALEC

I guess not.

There's a pause where they're both lost in their thoughts.

ASHLEY

Look. I know that Mum and Dad aren't the most accepting of people. In fact, you guys barely get along. Why are you trying so hard to keep them happy?

Alec keeps his gaze fixed on the bottle in his hand as he replies.

ALEC

They're already disappointed that I didn't go into law like the rest of you and that I'm not going to continue the family business. I just want them to be proud of me.

Ashley draws him into her side as he continues talking.

ALEC (CONT'D)

They're my parents. No matter what they're like. I don't want to lose them.

He pushes a button on his phone bringing it to life. The background is a picture of him and Carter grinning at each other happily.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Carter is the greatest thing that's ever happened to me. I love him so much. I would do anything to make him happy. But I just don't know if I can do this.

ASHLEY

(softly)

But what about your happiness? You're talking about making everyone else happy, but you're completely forgetting about your own happiness.

Alec opens his mouth to respond but Ashley hold up a hand to shut him up.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

No. Let me talk now. This isn't about Mum and Dad, and this isn't about Carter. This is about you and if you're ready to come out or not. The rest is just background noise. Whatever you choose, someone is going to be unhappy.

Alec closes his eyes as he nestles back into his older sister's side.

ALEC

(softly)

They're my parents. Aren't they supposed to love me unconditionally?

Ashley hugs him back, tightly.

ASHLEY

Unfortunately, the world's fucked up. But you always have me. No matter what you choose to do.

Alec looks at the picture on his phone again, and makes a split second decision.

ALEC

I have to go find Carter.

He gathers his coat and gives Ashley a kiss on the cheek and a hug. Ashley has a poorly disguised smile on her face.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I love you, Ash.

She just laughs and pushes him towards the door.

ASHLEY

Go get your man.

Alec grins at her and just then the door opens to reveal Charlie and Carter stepping into the bar. They catch sight of Alec by the bar and Carter hurries towards him and throws himself at Alec's still form.

CARTER

Babe. I'm sorry. I should never have walked out. We should have talked it out like adults. I'm ready to listen.

Alec finally unfreezes as he makes eye contact with Charlie. He pushes Carter off him.

ALEC

What the fuck?

The two boys give him confused looks and Ashley turns to find out what's happening.

ASHLEY

What's wrong? Oh, hey Carter. And friend.

She grins at Carter, and he gives her a sheepish yet confused grin. Their attention, however, is drawn to Alec as he gets worked up.

ALEC

Seriously? We have a fight, and you just go running back to your ex?

Understanding crosses everyone's face. Carter steps forward slowly, as if approaching a frightened animal.

CARTER

It's not like that.

ALEC

Then what is it? I was just thinking about coming out for you, and now I don't know if you even want to be together anymore.

He starts walking away.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I don't think I'm ready for this.
You're right. Maybe there is a
problem with us.

ASHLEY

Alec!

He ignores her and continues out the door.

EXT. APARTMENT - EVENING

One of the streetlights by the building flickers as a car drives past the building.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Alec barges into the apartment, frustrated. He flops down on the couch with his head in his hands. He picks up a PICTURE FRAME from the table in front of him. He and Carter are happily smiling back at him.

The door suddenly bangs open to reveal a heavily panting Carter. He sees Alec still on the couch with the picture in his hand, staring at him with wide eyes. He goes to stand in front of Alec.

CARTER

You don't get to do that. We have
to talk about this.

ALEC

Like you did earlier?

Carter sighs and carefully takes a seat beside Alec.

CARTER

Look, I know that I was being
pushy, and I'm sorry. And I never
should have left like I did. But we
need to have a grown-up
conversation about this.

ALEC

(softly)

I'm sorry for being a dick back at
the bar. Seeing you with Charlie
again just reminded me that he can
give you what I can't.

Carter carefully takes Alec's hand and intertwines their fingers together.

CARTER

But I love you. Charlie and I just ran into each other at the park, and he comforted me because I was upset. And he reminded me about how scared I was to come out.

ALEC

I don't think I'm ready to lose them, no matter how distant they are.

Carter pulls Alec in for a hug.

CARTER

And I understand that. At the end of the day they are your family. And it's frustrating, but I'm willing to wait until you're comfortable.

Alec pulls away from the hug to kiss Carter's forehead.

ALEC

Thank you.

He pulls Carter in for another hug.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Hey, do you want to go to a Thanksgiving Party tomorrow?

EXT. MUNROE HOUSE - THE NEXT EVENING

Alec's family house is quite large and daunting. The driveway is filled with cars and chatter and instrumental music can be heard outside.

INT. MUNROE HOUSE - EVENING

The Munroe house is very elegant and prim. There's nothing to suggest that the resident's are sentimental except for a couple of extremely posed and formal FAMILY PORTRAITS that hand over the intricate fireplace. There is a STRING QUARTET playing in the corner.

Alec steps in with Carter by his side, both dressed impeccably. Carter is holding a BOTTLE OF WINE. They are immediately greeted by Cheryl, who pulls Alec in for a stiff hug.

CHERYL
Alexander. Lovely of you to make
it.

ALEC
Hey mum.

Cheryl sees Carter as she pulls away from Alec.

CHERYL
Carter. What a lovely surprise.

Carter gives her a small smile and hands her the wine.

CARTER
Hi Mrs. Munroe. Thanks for having
me over. This is for you.

CHERYL
Oh, thank you, dear.

She puts the wine down on a nearby table and turns to face
Alec.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Now, where is that girlfriend of
yours?

Alec sighs in frustration.

ALEC
S-she couldn't make it. She had
plans already.

Cheryl gives him a long look, before sighing. Alec makes eye
contact with Carter standing behind his mother. He looks like
he's trying to hide his disappointment and shakes his head
sadly when he catches Alec's eye.

CHERYL
Your father will be so
disappointed. Very well, come now,
greet the guests.

She leads them into the main room, filled with PEOPLE
carrying GLASSES of wine and champagne.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Your father is in there somewhere.
You know how he is with guests. Oh,
hello.

Cheryl gets caught up in conversation with a snooty looking
woman and Alec drags Carter away from the crowd.

They spot Ashley sitting in an empty corner, a GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE in her hand, and head towards her. She is in an elegant dress that allows her to blend in with all the people.

As Alec and Carter come to a stop in front of her, she stands up and hits Alec over the head.

ASHLEY

You idiot.

ALEC

What was that for?

Ashley rolls her eyes and makes as if to hit him again but he manages to grab her arm before she can strike.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Would you stop? What is wrong with you?

ASHLEY

You. You stormed away yesterday and you having been answering any of my calls or messages since. Hi Carter.

Carter grins at her.

ALEC

Why don't I get such a nice greeting?

Ashley pinches him. This time Alec isn't fast enough to stop her.

ASHLEY

Stop being a bitch. Clearly you-

She's cut off by Cheryl, who gives them a stern look.

CHERYL

Why are you three in the corner whispering amongst yourselves? Go, socialize.

Ashley gives Alec a look that says "This isn't over" as she hooks her arm around Carter's and drags him into the crowd.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Now, Alexander. Karen's son over there just got a job at Latham & Watkins.

(MORE)

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Now, I know you "don't want to study law", but I think it would be very educational if you talked to hi-

Alec cuts her off.

ALEC

Mum. I'm not studying law, and I refuse to talk to Karen's son about getting a job at a law firm that his dad probably bought his way into.

CHERYL

(sharply)
Alexander.

Her lecture is cut short as she catches a glimpse of a woman through the crowd.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Well, I'll be. Samantha Branson actually showed her face in public.

ALEC

What?

Cheryl turns to him as if just remembering that he's there.

CHERYL

Didn't you hear? Her son just came out as...

She looks around and lowers her voice conspiratorially.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

...homosexual. I'm amazed that she's actually showing her face in public after such a scandal. I know I wouldn't have the guts to do something so bold.

She walks off to greet her new guest as Alec is left staring after her. Carter quickly comes to replace her, Ashley still attached to his arm.

CARTER

Alec-

ALEC

Hold that thought.

He grabs a CHAIR from a nearby table and climbs up onto it. People nearby turn to stare at him in surprise.

ALEC (CONT'D)

(loudly)

Excuse me, everyone. I just have a few words that I would like to say.

This catches everyone's attention and they all turn to look at him. Cheryl rushes to his side, and hisses at him under her breath.

CHERYL

What are you doing Alexander? Get down from there, immediately.

She's pulled back, however, by Ashley, who has a knowing smile on her face.

ALEC

Hi. I'm Alexander Munroe. And I just have a few words that I would like to say.

(Beat)

So, for the past few years, I've done everything I could to make my parents proud of me. I wanted them to be happy to have me as a son. But what I didn't realize was that in my attempts to keep them satisfied, I let myself down. Not only that, but I let the love of my life down.

He turns to wink at Carter who has a smile on his face. He blushes as he makes eye contact with Alec.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Now, you're all probably wondering why I'm standing up on a chair on Thanksgiving to tell you all this. Well, I've realized that I'm done trying to please them, because no matter what, they will never be proud of me.

Alec makes eye contact with his father, across the crowded room and stares directly at him as he says the next part.

ALEC (CONT'D)

So here it is. Mum, Dad, random strangers. I'm fucking gay.

(MORE)

ALEC (CONT'D)

I've been in a relationship with a man for the past 3 years, and he makes me happier than you ever have. And if you can't love me because of that, then go fuck yourselves.

Alec hops off the chair and makes his way towards Carter. He takes ahold of Carter's face and kisses him. The room is filled with gasps. Alec turns around to face his mother.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Have fun showing your face in public after this, Mum.

With that he takes Carter's hand and they walk out of the house with big smiles on their faces.

EXT. MUNROE HOUSE - NIGHT

Alec and Carter walk down the driveway to their car. As Alec goes to open the door Carter pulls him back in for a hug.

CARTER

I'm so freaking proud of you! You did that! And the look on your Mum's face was priceless.

Alec grins and buries his head into Carter's shoulder.

ALEC

I love you so much. And I can't wait to hold your hand in public.

They separate and Carter gently kisses Alec.

CARTER

Sounds like a plan. Now let's go home.

FADE TO BLACK.