



Interview with the Guardians Part 3 – Blaine

Raven drives me to Blaine's house, and the trip takes about forty-five minutes down the winding mountain. He's quiet and I don't push for conversation, instead choosing to close my eyes for a bit. I open them again when Raven stops the car in front of a gothic-looking mansion with dim lighting and creepy shadows. Total overkill, but so very Blaine. Exiting the car, I pull my jacket tighter and head towards the gloomy porch.

Raven: (comes up beside me) Are you ready?

Me: (nods)

I've met with Blaine more times than Raven knows. In fact, even though Raven initially approached me, it was Blaine who first told me his story. But despite our many catch-ups, we've never scheduled an official meeting like this. Blaine prefers impromptu visits. At the front door, I lift my hand to knock, but Blaine opens the door before I do. He's dressed in the same black jeans he always wears with a dark gray hoodie beneath his leather jacket. I swear that jacket is older than time. He stands in the threshold with a wicked grin on his face, and a glass of what I presume is bourbon in his hand.

Blaine: (bows) Evening, love. (eyes Raven) I see you brought a plus one.

Raven: I'm here to make sure this goes smoothly.

Blaine: (smirks) I didn't realize she needed Guardian protection. You needn't have worried though, there's already a Guardian on the premises.

Raven: (inches forward) A *Fallen* Guardian.

Blaine: (lifts one shoulder) Semantics.

Great. This interview has swung off course already, and I haven't even stepped through the door.

Blaine: (looks to me) I agreed to meet with you tonight, love. Not him. That isn't part of our little arrangement.

I knew this would happen. Every time I meet with Blaine, he insists we talk alone. He's probably afraid someone might discover his secrets. News flash: they will. And when they do, maybe it will change their opinion of him.

Me: (turns to Raven) You can go, I'll be all right.

Raven: (doesn't look convinced) I'll wait here on the porch.

Blaine: No need, brother. I'll ensure she returns safely. (pauses) I always do.

Raven: (clenches fists)... (looks to me)

Me: It's fine. Really. I appreciate you driving me here and organizing the interviews.

Raven: (exhales conceded sigh) Are you sure?

Me: (nods)

Raven: All right. (glares at Blaine) Be nice.

With one final look at me, Raven turns and heads back to the car.

Blaine: (twinkles his fingers) Bye-bye, brother.

Me: Don't torment him!

Blaine: (gasps, hand on chest) I would never.

Me: (rolls eyes)

Blaine: (offers the crook of his arm) Shall we?

When I link my arm through Blaine's, he leads us inside to the living room, where I sit on a comfy leather sofa. Blaine offers me a drink, but I decline. I swear EJ was heavy-handed on the alcohol, and I need to keep a clear head around Blaine. He tends to steer our conversations off course. Blaine sits in the armchair to my left, with his leg crossed, ankle resting on his knee.

Blaine: Tell me, what do readers want to know? And remind me again why I'm answering their questions.

I don't even bother pulling out my list of questions. If Blaine reads them, all the attention will go to his head. And he does not need a bigger ego. I could only imagine what he'd say if he found out how many readers want to marry him. Instead, I decide to wing it.

Me: Readers are curious about the world you live in.

Blaine: (cocks eyebrow) You mean they're curious about me?

Me: I didn't say that.

Blaine: You didn't have to.

Did he just wink at me? Ugh!

Me: (clears throat) What's Hell like?

Blaine: Hot. What do readers want to know about me?

Me: Have you forgiven Aric?

Blaine: ...

Me: ...

Blaine: (uncrosses legs and settles back in the armchair) From what I've seen, mortal interviews commonly begin with introductions. I'll start, shall I? I like long walks in the snow, homemade trifle, mortal bourbon, and well-executed revenge plots.

Me: We can probably skip introductions given readers already know who you are.

Blaine: (sad face)

Me: Um...how's Slater?

Blaine: Do readers want to know? Or you?

Me: They've only had a small glimpse of Slater, so I'm just pre-empting some questions.

Blaine: Mm-hm. Sure.

Maybe I should get a drink?

Me: You know what, I have a question for you. It's something I've wondered for a while but never thought to ask you.

Blaine: (motions for me to continue)

Me: Why didn't you harvest Tayla's soul when you had the chance? You had plenty of opportunities. She was a Chosen, and from what you told me, their souls are like super juice for Fallen.

Blaine: (grins) Super juice?

Me: You know what I mean. You told me that Chosen have the most concentrated heavenly light of any mortal. I would've thought, as a Fallen, you'd want that power at any cost.

Blaine: ...

Me: Why didn't you take the power when you had the chance?

Blaine: You already know the answer.

Me: (confused) I do?

Blaine: (nods) And I suspect readers also know. They are a clever bunch for mortals.

Hang on. Did he just say...?

Me: I'm sorry, how do you know they're a clever bunch of readers?

Blaine: (smirks) You think I don't read the stories you publish? I need to ensure you're portraying me in a manner fitting for a villain.

Holy shit. If I had a drink, I would've spurted it all over the antique furniture. I should've known he'd pull a stunt like this.

Me: (regains composure) A villain?

Blaine: Yes.

Me: I think readers feel otherwise about your villain status.

Blaine: Let them think what they like. They'll soon see the truth.

Me: I keep telling them that, but they don't listen. I mean, I've only written Raven, Aric and EJ's stories so far, how can they possibly have made up their minds about you.

Blaine: (takes a long sip of bourbon)

Me: ...

Blaine: Everything is connected, love. They may think you're telling the Guardians' story, when in truth, you're not.

Me: Okaaaay.

I'm having a little freak out right now. What the hell is he talking about? And how does he always blindside me? While I compose myself, Blaine refills his drink with the flick of his wrist. He always flaunts his power. Were the Guardians this powerful before Fate revoked their abilities? Before she banished them?

Blaine: Which Boy Scouts did the readers have questions for?

Me: All of them, including their soulmates. In fact, one question for the soulmates was if anyone sleeps with a teddy. Tayla thought you might. (tries to conceal giggle)

Blaine: (eyes widen) How did she know? (smirks and relaxes in seat) Tayla is truly adorable. I often wonder why Fate created her for that brother of mine. She's better suited to someone less...broody.

Me: (frowns) Are you...jealous?

Blaine: (screws up face) On the contrary, love. I'm far too occupied to entertain romantic entanglements. The Ice Queen simply surprised me with that soulmate pairing. She rarely does that.

Fate rarely does what? Surprises Blaine or creates that kind of soulmate pairing? I shake my head and decide not to get into that conversation tonight, I'm way too tired.

Me: Tell me how your revenge plot is coming along.

Blaine: (winks) A villain never reveals his plans. You should know that.

Me: (rolls eyes) The readers don't think you're a villain, Blaine.

Blaine: Perhaps not yet.

Me: Speaking of villains though, is Ebony with you?

Blaine: (slams glass on the side table) Are you telling me the readers think that Dumahel is a villain?

Me: From what I hear, she doesn't have many fans.

Blaine: Why her?

Me: Well, to be fair, the readers have only just met Ebony. Whereas they've gotten to know you over three books so far.

Blaine: (glares at me) How can I make them dislike me?

Me: (sighs) Blaine, I hate to break it to you, but mortal women have a thing for the bad guy. And you have that vibe in spades.

Blaine: (glances at clothes) Would it help if I lost the jacket? I wouldn't though, it's my favorite, but you could simply tell them I did.

Me: (shakes head) I doubt that'll work.

Blaine: (tilts head) Fine. I'll show them how villain-like I can be in the next book.

Great. Now he wants to be badder just to prove a point. I think I better wrap this up before he plots world domination.

Me: (glances at grandfather clock) It's getting late, I really should get back before I fall asleep on your couch.

Blaine: (nods) Very well.

Blaine stands and offers me his hand to help me up from the sofa. As I stand, my stomach flips, my vision blurs then everything goes black. A second later, we materialize on my front lawn. Multi-colored fairy lights strung along the porch still flicker in the fading darkness, while a warm orange glow peaks over the horizon.

Me: (a little lightheaded) Um, thanks for the...mist.

Blaine: (leans in) Ask me the question, love.

Me: (plays dumb) I already have.

Blaine: Not those. The one you refuse to ask.

Me: ...

Blaine: ...

Me: Readers want to know what your deal is with Fate.

Blaine: (amusement ghosts over his face)... (peers at the Heavens then looks back at me) What will you tell them?

Me: They'll find out soon enough.

Blaine: (smirks) That they will.

Blaine steps back and gives me a low regal bow before misting away. Why the hell do I feel like I've just kicked a hornet's nest?

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