

courting

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/16917264) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/16917264>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Rope (1948)
Relationship:	Phillip Morgan/Brandon Shaw
Characters:	Phillip Morgan , Brandon Shaw , David Kentley , Kenneth Lawrence (Mentioned) , Mrs. Shaw , A Florist Bitch , Rupert Cadell
Additional Tags:	classic romancing , courting , Prep School , Boarding School , just really sappy gay romance , Kissing , Mild Sexual Content , literally basically just referenced sexual content if anything , Feel-good , all that jazz , Falling In Love
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2018-12-09 Words: 5,581 Chapters: 1/1

courting

by [bleakmidwinter](#)

Summary

Brandon decides to court Phillip romantically during their years at prep school.

Notes

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

Brandon had a jovial, suave attitude about him. He always seemed to know the perfect thing to say or do in order to spin a situation in his favor. He used people this way, on more than one occasion, and Phillip could never help observing the imbeciles, in which he wielded to his benefit, fall for his shenanigans and charades.

Phillip was Brandon's roommate, and for a while that's all they were. They would say words to each other only out of necessity. Or, in passing. Both parties had their own motive. Phillip yearned for silence and solitude at the end of a busy day, and Brandon scribbled madly into a journal until his knuckles were white, and until Phillip was asleep.

It wasn't until they bumped into each other at Philosophy club that Brandon fully took Phillip in, and Phillip finally noticed the bewitching way Brandon's lips curved upwards after expounding boorish philosophical propaganda.

Phillip's eyes had been the only ones on Brandon the entire time during his speech about Nietzsche, save from their housemaster Rupert Cadell who listened to all the children equally, with the same placid expression.

After Brandon was finished, Rupert asked if anyone had a comment to add, as procedure goes. And though it was Phillip's first time to the club, he spoke up anyway. A sudden urge to please Brandon washed over him. To show him he was of the same mindset of superiority as Brandon had claimed. Phillip wondered if it was because he was lonely and looking for validation.

"I agree, I think there is a divide in the world," Phillip said plainly, and he felt a ripple of pleasure in his chest when Brandon's eyes flicked over to him and that familiar smirk appeared on his face.

"Inferiors are separated from the superiors," Phillip added.

"And how would you know someone is a 'superior' or whatever you're saying," David asked, and picked at his bitten down nails mindlessly.

Phillip made eye contact with Brandon and didn't drop his gaze when he responded. "It depends on who is willing to admit the divide and take action to stay on the right side."

Brandon bit his lip, enthralled.

Rupert sighed quietly, but said in his regular monotone that they had no more time left in the club today. They were all dismissed and Phillip thought maybe things would go back to normal but Brandon was hot on his heels the second he exited Rupert's office.

They started on their way back to their dorm.

"I didn't know you were so intrigued by philosophy, Phillip," Brandon said. "Let alone, Nietzsche."

He walked a little too close to Phillip.

"I'm usually not," Phillip admitted. "I came to this club because I was terribly bored. But, what you discussed certainly enlightened me more than any discussion on philosophy normally would have." He dared to look up at Brandon and was pleased to find the love-light in Brandon's eyes had not vanished. It took about three strokes to his ego to make him putty in Phillip's hands.

The power felt good.

"Wonderful," Brandon smiled wide. "I hope to see you back every week."

"You'll see me just as well in our room," Phillip replied, and took out his key. He waved it deliberately in the air. "We've been living together for at least a month now."

"Yes..." Brandon trailed off, rubbed a thumb over his bottom lip in thought. "We have, haven't we? Why haven't we talked much?"

"Silence is golden as they say," Phillip said with a small sigh when they reached their door. He unlocked it and they stepped inside. They stripped off their scarves and jackets.

"Have you read the Symposium by any chance?" Brandon asked out of the blue.

Phillip felt his ears go red. It was a long, agonizing second before he responded. "I've read many things. Uh, yes."

"Ah," Is all Brandon replied. He hopped on his bed and they fell back into their routine of not speaking to one another. It was easy.

The next day Phillip woke to a pot of flowers on his bureau. Gardenias, white, surrounded by dark green leaves. Brandon was gone and Phillip had slept in.

Phillip didn't ask about the flowers when Brandon returned from breakfast, and Brandon never spoke of them.

When Phillip watered them every few days, he swore he saw Brandon smirk from behind the book he was reading.

Phillip returned to the club, every week. He praised Brandon's speeches in front of the entire assembly of students, never cared much for their incompetent opinions, and brushed off their devil's-advocate style responses when they sprouted up.

He was turning into Brandon.

With each week, he and Brandon talked more. About philosophy at first. Then about school, classes, and then about *David Kentley*. They both bonded heavily over their irritation with David. Perhaps Phillip had not had many friends but one mention of David, and it were as if a volcano of amusement automatically erupted within him. The inside joke had gone so far that Brandon could say "Did you see David's tie today?" And Phillip would be in stitches thinking about David Kentley's crooked, vomit-colored, tie.

"I just think he should rot," Brandon confessed one night, a cigarette hung from between his lips.

Phillip had a newspaper open to the second page, sitting parallel to Brandon on his own bed. "Then who would we bully after hours?" He questioned, and Brandon never answered.

He merely grumbled and swung around on his bed to face the wall. Phillip looked up once to smile warmly at his back while he wasn't looking.

The notes started two weeks after the flowers had appeared.

Brandon left every weekend to go to his mother's farm in Connecticut, and Phillip was accustomed to the silence and the familiar and empty way his hand would slide under the hem of his trousers to relieve himself from a week's worth of tension.

A note had been left on Phillip's bureau, beside the pot of flowers. It was strange, and almost worrisome. Phillip wondered if something had happened to Brandon or his family. He read the name at the bottom before its contents.

Brandon.

Off to the farm. Don't forget to wash the gel from your hair each night before bed like you did that one time. You woke up complaining about the stiffness of it. See you on Sunday.

Sincerely, your good friend, Brandon.

There was a star shape next to Brandon's name, a small endearing doodle.

Phillip had stared for a good ten minutes at the note, rereading each word carefully. He reread "good friend" more than the rest, and when he went to the practice room to work on his scales, he brought the note with him in his uniform pocket, reading it between breaks.

That night, he washed the gel from his hair in the shower thoroughly.

When Brandon returned Sunday evening, Phillip didn't mention the note. Brandon didn't mention it either, and yet there was another note the following weekend, and the weekend after that, and for the rest of their semester.

Phillip kept each of Brandon's notes in his desk drawer.

There was one night—a chilly Saturday in late October—Brandon's notes changed. Phillip read over familiar words and warnings until he reached the end and dropped the paper to the floor as if he'd been burned.

The doodle had changed from a star to a heart.

Phillip scrambled to pick the note back up. He wasn't sure if he wanted to tear it in half or hold it close to his chest. The words “good friend” on the sheet had a far more bitter taste to them now for some odd reason. Phillip couldn't pinpoint the source of the sting in his chest.

That night when his hand crept under the hem of his trousers, he couldn't take his mind off the hand-drawn heart.

Phillip came quicker than he ever had that night.

It was the first week of November that Phillip received a phone call in the room. The phone was usually used to contact them about school updates or for parents to check in. Phillip's mother never checked in, and it was 8pm, a little late for a school announcement.

He picked it up anyway, and Brandon's smooth voice startled him. “Brandon, what's wrong, are you alright?”

“Fine, Phillip,” he said. It was followed by a sharp chuckle. “Can I not call just to talk to a dear friend?”

Phillip swallowed. “Of course you can, Brandon. A-Apologies. Any discussion you had in mind?” He hoped the trepidation in his voice didn't translate over the line.

“Well, I have the funniest story about this chicken named Henry my mother owns—” Brandon began, and that was that.

He still left notes, but now calls were included in his weekly antics. Sometimes he'd call on both Saturday night and Sunday morning, not all the time though, and Phillip found himself staring at the phone on Sunday mornings absently, until morning rolled into afternoon.

They still went to Philosophy club, even at the end of the semester. Neither of them missed a day. Brandon had moved from his regular spot by the fireplace to sit beside Phillip and whisper petty insults about David in his ear.

Sometimes Phillip felt David knew about their acrimony towards him, but he laughed at Brandon's comments anyway. Each time.

During a discussion Rupert was giving about Socrates' teachings, Brandon's hand brushed up against Phillip's on the floor, and Brandon rested his pinky overtop Phillip's fingers. It was feather light, and it made Phillip so dizzy he felt as if he were in a dream. When his pinky curled slightly around Phillip's, he could feel his face turning bright red.

Phillip didn't dare look to Brandon.

Brandon pulled away after a few seconds, and Phillip spent the rest of the club zoned out, vision tunneling. Rupert's voice became white noise, and he felt his eyes would melt out of his skull if he stared any longer at the fireplace, flames crackling violently and rhythmically like a beating heart.

They walked back to their dorm in silence.

Phillip didn't receive a phone call that weekend and thought maybe Brandon was disgusted with him. Perhaps what happened at the club had been a set-up to embarrass him and their entire friendship was a scam. He refused to eat Saturday, unable to gain the appetite. Overthinking the missing phone call was like poison even with the short amount of time Brandon was gone.

Brandon returned that Sunday with a shit-eating grin plastered to his face. Phillip watched nervously as he unzipped his satchel and dug around in the front pocket inside.

“Phillip,” he said, “this is for you.” He forced a small, maroon, slip of paper in Phillip's hand.

Phillip flipped it over delicately, and his jaw dropped open. “Brandon, you—”

It was a ticket to an opera he'd been wanting to see for months. He'd only mentioned it once to Brandon in passing while they were sharing their interests. The opera was known to sell out fairly quick.

Phillip couldn't help but struggle to breathe. “How,” is all he managed.

“My mother knows a few people at the Horneville Opera House. She pulled a few strings,” Brandon said simply. He revealed another ticket. “I'll be joining you of course.”

Blood rushed to Phillip's ears. “Wonderful,” he whispered. He felt a nervous prickling in his abdomen. “I didn't know you liked opera.”

“I'm not sure if I do. This'll be my first one, but—” Brandon's eyes flicked up and down, scanning the length of Phillip's body, simpering. “I trust your judgement.”

Phillip refused to acknowledge his body's responses to Brandon's unnatural gaze, and he nodded in agreement. He tried not to show his excitement too blatantly for fear of coming off as callow, but he was smiling digging around in his closet for his best suit.

The opera was the weekend before finals, and the weekend before they were to go home. Phillip tried not to think about how he wouldn't be seeing Brandon for at least a month until second semester started up, and when they took their seats in the middle fifth row, he attempted to focus only on the bright red curtains on the enormous stage.

Brandon flipped carelessly through the program they were handed at the door, a tired look in his eyes. His left leg was splayed over his right knee, and he was slumped down in his seat in an uncouth, yet enticing position. When he caught Phillip staring, a grin formed on his face. It was unfamiliar, not one of the smiles or smirks he'd seen Brandon make at philosophy club or at David to mock him. It was warm and unguarded, and Phillip found himself staring longer than he should at Brandon's soft, yet sharp, features.

“It's starting,” Brandon said with an elbow to Phillip's shoulder. Phillip nearly jumped out of his skin and turned to face the opening curtains.

He'd been waiting for this opera for longer than he could remember, and yet he couldn't absorb a single note or expression from an actor's face. All he could think about was Brandon sitting next to him, so close, and breathing evenly, a small glimmer in his eye as he watched the actors dance and sing around the stage. As a female actresses' voice hit an articulate crescendo, he glanced to Brandon who was watching the woman sing, intrigued. His lips were parted in an unfairly alluring way, and the music seemed to be wailing at Phillip to turn back towards the stage, but he couldn't.

Phillip wondered why he felt as if he'd swallowed acid. The burning in his stomach was becoming unbearable, and there was a heaviness to his chest he couldn't fathom.

Brandon's mother had gotten the tickets for them, so Phillip would rather die before asking Brandon if they could leave, but when Brandon touched his hand to point at an actor in a funny costume on stage, the contact burned irrevocably.

Brandon stood to clap when the opera was over, and Phillip felt like he could breathe for a moment. It took ages for the clapping to die down and for rows of people to begin bustling out of the theater. Brandon sat back down and his eyes searched Phillip's face, worried.

"Phillip, you look ill. Are you alright?" he whispered in a voice that didn't suit him. Too soft. Too caring. Phillip felt like he was going to throw up.

"I need some fresh air," he muttered back.

Brandon grabbed him by the shoulder and hauled him up, and helped him outside. Phillip didn't need the help, but he couldn't much argue with Brandon after Brandon started doing what he wanted. The cold air felt golden on his burning cheeks, and when he closed his eyes for a moment he felt like he wasn't suffocating.

"I'm not ill. I think I was having some sort of panic, though. I'm unsure why, I apologise." Phillip was leaning against the wall of the opera house, and Brandon rested next to him, and dug into his pocket for a cigarette. He handed one to Phillip who shook his head, so Brandon plopped it in his own mouth, and lit it.

The smell of smoke calmed Phillip and they didn't speak until Brandon waved down a checkered cab they could use. "You shouldn't apologize. You're superior to those who need to apologize," Brandon said quietly when they were comfortably seated and on their way back to Somerville.

Phillip didn't respond. He felt his hands trembling in his gloves. He couldn't tell if it was from the cold or his nerves.

On the weekends during his first winter break, he woke up expecting a note on his bedroom dresser. It took him a while to adjust to the silence and emptiness of mornings again. And it took even longer to cope without Brandon's presence. He realized he never gave Brandon his home number, and he never received Brandon's. He'd fix that mistake next time, but for now

he stared at the ceiling, watching the fan spin in circles each day until the end of January rolled along.

When Phillip entered their room the first day of their second semester, Brandon was sitting down with a small wrapped gift in his hand. “I bought this for you, for Christmas,” Brandon said, and held it out at arm’s length. No greeting, no wave or gesture, just right to whatever business he wanted to get done with.

Phillip was flustered, but took the package anyway. With Brandon’s intense gaze on him, he felt nervous opening it, and nearly dropped it when he saw what it was.

A custom made, black, leather jacket, with the name *Phillip* embroidered on the top right corner in small white letters. Phillip had mentioned once or twice before he had a sliver of jealousy over the jock fashion in their school. Brandon had always undermined his opinion on the specific subject, so he’d never brought it up again.

“Oh my,” Phillip said in a whisper. He ran a hand over the leather in a trance. “I feel awful. I didn’t get anything for you.”

“I hate gifts anyway,” Brandon responded. There was now a lit cigarette in his mouth, and he blew out a puff of smoke with a relaxed sigh. “Do you like it?”

“Of course!” Phillip exclaimed, perhaps a bit too loud. “I thought you said I’d look like some wannabe ignoramus, and that the hard-look wouldn’t suit my features.” He slid the jacket on.

“I realized that might have been disrespectful.” Brandon coughed. “Don’t get me wrong, I’m not sentimental. My mother merely knows a very good tailor, and—oh.”

Phillip spun around to show off the full jacket. He felt raunchy in it, like he might be able to go beat something up. Or drive a motorbike. He didn’t notice Brandon’s slack jaw expression at first until Brandon said, “Wow,” and stared directly at the shape of Phillip’s arms underneath the leather sleeves.

“I may have been mistaken,” Brandon said under his breath. Phillip might have asked him to repeat himself if he was feeling crabbiest. He ran his fingers over the white embroidery in the front, and smiled brightly.

Brandon smiled too.

It was ten minutes until Phillip noticed the Gardenias had died. He made quite a fuss about it, and slumped down to the trash bin to throw them out. The next morning, there was a new pot of fresh Gardenias there for him—they looked pristine and almost glittery.

Everything went back to normal after the jacket and the flowers. Or what had become normal: notes, phone calls, and an increasing amount of physical touching on campus. The touching was new, but not something that bothered Phillip. When Brandon had curled a finger around his during a philosophical lecture the previous semester, Phillip had panicked, and felt like the world’s eyes had been on him. His resistance to the touches slowly diminished over time as they became regular, and more insistent.

He found Brandon's hand on his hip while he was showing him a store in the city, not long enough for people to begin turning heads, but long enough for Phillip to notice it. That month or so without Brandon in Winter had been ultimately forgotten as they spent everyday together, eating, classes, going to club, and even sharing the same shower schedule.

Not much changed during their second semester until the end was drawing near, and Brandon did something alarming during one of Rupert's lectures.

Phillip was zoning out, tired from studying for finals, and he didn't register the head on his shoulder until Rupert stuttered over a word. He never stuttered or paused, and Phillip realized it was because Brandon had rested his head on his shoulder.

He didn't dare look to the other students. He didn't dare acknowledge Brandon. Phillip prayed that God might open up a hole under him to swallow him up. Before he could go into full panic mode, Brandon sighed loudly. "Rupert, you've talked about this before. You're putting me to sleep, see?"

Phillip smiled awkwardly. So, he was just being used a prop for Brandon's criticism of Rupert. Nothing more. When he dared to look at the other students, he saw they looked bored or didn't care what Brandon was doing. Phillip sighed softly, and relief flooded him.

When Brandon lifted up his head and he and Rupert were done squabbling (or as close as you could get to squabbling with how Rupert is), Phillip missed its absence.

That same night, a day before spring break, Brandon said, "Phillip, come here."

Phillip was sitting on his bed, and wasn't sure what Brandon wanted, but he got up anyway, and walked over to stand by the edge of his bed. Brandon patted the empty space next to him, and Phillip opened his mouth to protest, but wouldn't know what to say. It felt wrong on the surface, but he really did want to sit on Brandon's bed, so he complied.

Brandon was smoking as per usual, and he didn't look to Phillip when he asked, "Some weekend after spring break, would you like to come up to the farm?"

Phillip swallowed and blinked quite a few times to process the question. "Your mother's farm?"

"Which else?"

"Would your mother be, um, *okay* with that?"

The corner of Brandon's lip curled upwards. "She wouldn't mind me bringing a friend over for a few days. We have a couple guest bedrooms. And besides, I'm getting tired of phone calls. It'd be easier just to have you there with me." Brandon turned to him and with a smile he added, "I can introduce you to Henry."

"The chicken?" Phillip giggled. "I suppose, that would be fine. If it's no trouble."

"You could never trouble me, Phillip," Brandon said, and opened his mouth to let the smoke escape in languid white waves. Phillip watched Brandon lick his lips and inhale more smoke

from the cigarette. He wasn't sure if he was supposed to leave Brandon's bed, so he stayed until it was dinner time, and he watched the shape of the smoke twirl and evaporate in the room until he felt dazed.

He went home to his mother's for spring break, and on the way back on the road, they passed by a florist. It was very close to his school, and Phillip had a passing thought about the Gardenias he'd left back in his room. He told Kenneth who was staying at Somerville for spring break to water them every other day if he could until Phillip got back. He wondered if he were to ask the florist if they had Gardenias if they would say yes.

No reason, Phillip was just curious.

The day he got back, before Brandon returned, he took his lunch break to go walk downtown to the florist. It was a small shop with bright blue walls. It was almost blinding. The woman at the counter with the sunhat too big for her head greeted him politely and he asked, "Do you by any chance sell Gardenias? White ones?"

The woman chuckled and she shook her head. "They're not in season, my boy. We did have some shipped in from another supplier about a week or so ago. The buyer seemed very urgent to have them. It was quite sweet, he wanted them for his girlfriend you see—"

Oh. Phillip was confused. If it wasn't Brandon, then who?

"That's alright, Miss. Thank you."

"Do you know what the Gardenia symbolizes my boy?" She questioned. "It's quite romantic."

Phillip stiffened. "Is it?"

"Love," she whispered dramatically. "Gardenias are usually only gifted to those experiencing a secret love. How charming is that? Lovely and tragic, I'd say!" She put a hand to her forehead to fake frailty. "Would never receive a gift that meaningful in my old age, no, all I get is a bearded swigger who—Oh."

Phillip slammed the door shut to the florist, and tried to find his footing outside. He needed to get back to Somerville. He felt as if he could black out any minute. He wondered if Brandon knew what Gardenias symbolized. He wondered sickly if Brandon had actually been the one to put the flowers in the room, knowing full well what they meant.

Of course he was the one who put them in their room, but why.

Phillip couldn't begin to ponder the possibilities of what it might mean.

When Phillip returned to their room, Brandon was there. For once, in all the time Phillip had known him, he looked utterly distraught. When he saw Phillip, he stopped pacing, and

embraced him before Phillip could react.

They'd never hugged before. Brandon was warm, and firm, and held Phillip tight, not like one of those fake embraces you'd give to a relative you disrespected. Phillip's heart was beating out of his chest, unsure of how to react.

He wondered what was acceptable to do. Could he hug back and press closer?

"My break was devastating," he mumbled into Phillip's shoulder, and his fingers gripped tighter around his middle. Phillip felt an abrupt wave of sympathy, and he delicately (finally) circled his arms around Brandon, rubbed a hand down his back in a soothing motion.

It felt good, *too* good. Phillip didn't want to let go. He knew if it went on longer, however, he might not be able to control himself. He pushed gently at Brandon's chest after a minute and he backed up, hands still rested on Phillip's shoulders.

Brandon's eyes were red. Phillip couldn't tell if he had been crying or merely tearing up. Either way Phillip had a strong urge to reach up and stroke his cheek.

He couldn't, for many reasons.

"My father came home," Brandon explained. "I, well, we don't really have a good—" Brandon scratched at his neck, and Phillip knew that meant he was nervous.

"Do you want to sit and tell me?" Phillip asked gently. He *did* dare to reach up and place a hand on Brandon's shoulder to steady him. Brandon let out a shaky sigh and allowed himself to be lead to his bed where Phillip hopped up next to him.

He listened to Brandon talk about the terrible relationship he had with his father, and how his father divorced his mother years ago, but still tried to mooch off of her fortune. Phillip ached to hold him or run his fingers through his soft hair. Instead he sat pathetically nodding and giving Brandon small verbal reassurances.

"I don't know if he'll be gone this weekend," Brandon said. "We planned for you to come, but if he's still there, I don't think you're going to enjoy yourself."

"I don't mind," Phillip said, and scooted closer.

"*I* mind," Brandon replied harshly. "I don't want him to say anything to you."

"Don't worry about my wellbeing, Brandon. I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself." Brandon opened his mouth to make a quip, but Phillip silenced him and kept speaking. "If your father makes you this upset, it's all the more reason for me to come. If you feel like you're going to explode, I can talk to you, and we can sort things out together."

Brandon looked at him in a way a friend like Kenneth Lawrence would never look at him. Surprisingly, Brandon accepted without more back and forth, and Phillip helped him light his cigarette.

The night before Phillip was to go up to the farm, he was watering the Gardenias on his bureau and he said, "These flowers are quite beautiful, aren't they Brandon?"

Neither of them had ever made mention of the flowers before, and Phillip could tell he'd thrown Brandon entirely off-guard by the silence that followed his statement. Brandon eventually muttered out a weak, "Yes," and Phillip hummed, content.

The drive up to Connecticut was dreamy, and just the perfect amount of silent. They were taking a cab up and time flew by for Phillip as he stared at the horses and cows in passing fields.

"Are you entertained by farm animals, Phillip?" Brandon asked.

While staring at a herd of baby cows, Phillip responded. "By most of them."

Phillip was notably charming with Brandon's mother. It's not a trait he's suave at with anyone, but Mrs. Shaw had a very lovely, open, personality. Phillip could see where Brandon got his charisma. They didn't talk much, she apparently had an abundance of work to get back to, and whispered to Brandon that his father might be back around very soon.

Brandon tugged lightly at Phillip's sleeve when she was gone and brought him up to his bedroom. "It's not much. I have an inclination for minimalism," he said.

Brandon seldom talked himself down, and Phillip thought maybe he was fishing for compliments. He did every so often want Phillip's genuine validation.

Brandon had quite a few paintings, mostly landscape. One over his bed was a figure painting of a man. A rather lewd man, no less. "Is that a Paul Cadmus?" Phillip asked in a whisper. Brandon nodded.

"I'm surprised you know," Brandon said. It sounded like a lie.

"He certainly has a definitive style," Phillip replied, and hoped his ears weren't red. He pawed at Brandon's soft rug with his socks, and felt privileged to be in this room that no one at Somerville would see besides him. He notices a beige-colored book resting on the dresser beside Brandon's unmade bed.

"You have a copy of the Symposium next to your bed," Phillip noted, and tried not to blush too deeply at the thought. If he were anyone else he might call Brandon a lot of things in this moment, or at least assume it. Brandon merely nodded again.

"You have a very lovely room," Phillip said softly, sitting on Brandon's bed. He tried not to think of Brandon touching himself in this bed, perhaps craning his head up to look at the Cadmus painting above him, and all the toned muscles and sharp curves.

He felt dizzy again, so he laid down completely and stared at the ceiling. Brandon mirrored him and their shoulders brushed. He took out a cigarette and lit it, and they both watched the smoke travel up to the fan. "I went to the florist," Phillip said. The confession relieved tension he didn't know he was harboring, and he felt Brandon's head turn to look at him.

“She told me what Gardenias symbolize,” Phillip started and he kept going. For once in his life, he was brave enough to take this risk. “They’re given to someone by someone they’re experiencing a secret love with, that’s what the woman said.”

“Is that so,” Brandon drawled. Phillip could hear the sarcasm coating his voice, and sensed his heart skip a beat.

“Yes,” Phillip responded candidly. He turned to face Brandon whose nose was an inch away from his own. Phillip’s eyelashes fluttered and he licked his lips in an automatic response.

They stared at each other for a few beats. Brandon’s expression was calm and knowing, and Phillip very nearly hated him for it. For being one step ahead of him at every turn. Every call, note, and gift had been leading up to him being here, on Brandon Shaw’s bed. It had been an operation, of sorts.

And Phillip couldn’t find it within himself to care in the slightest.

Phillip leaned in and kissed Brandon. He never thought he’d be the one to initiate it, but in the moment, he knew Brandon wouldn’t pull away. There was an unspoken understanding and a sparking revelation. Brandon pushed forward until Phillip’s head was flat against his bed, and he kissed him deeper, a tongue sliding into the mesh of warmth between them. Phillip threw his arms around Brandon’s shoulders and his breathing became pitchy when Brandon pulled away only to start placing sloppy kisses down Phillip’s cheek to the crook of his neck.

“You’re a bastard,” Phillip whispered against Brandon’s lips. Brandon ran his fingers through Phillip’s hair, and Phillip’s stomach flipped. Each point of contact was overwhelming.

“What did I do now?” Brandon asked warmly, playful even. He continued to stroke Phillip’s hair, and curled a black strand around his finger, entranced.

“You weren’t smooth you know,” Phillip said. He sat up and Brandon had to follow suit. “I could see what you were doing from a mile away.”

“Oh, I assumed. I expected you to make a move sooner than you did.”

“Even you know it’s not that simple, Brandon,” Phillip responded. Brandon shrugged and kissed his cheek, lingered, and moved to his ear and whispered that he loved him.

Phillip’s face turned red. He hadn’t been expecting that. Brandon slipped a hand over his and they intertwined fingers. Phillip wondered if, *prayed*, they would last. He couldn’t remember life before Brandon, he seemed to have woven his way into every aspect of Phillip’s life and made it so every other part of it without him didn’t matter.

“I’d rather spend a day with David than a spend a day without you. So, I suppose I feel the same,” Phillip said with a sly smile. Brandon laughed and drew him closer so he was holding him in a gentle embrace.

End Notes

here's another rope fic no one asked for, rope fans wya, can't wait to never stop writing for this film and die wishing brandon and phillip never got caught and went on their romantic vacation getaway. the next fic will be hornier than this i promise.

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