# How Do You Talk to a Point Man

**Summary**

After all this time, Arthur has too much pride to simply ask Eames to have sex with him. A story in which the job isn't always glamorous, Cobb thinks Arthur makes poor life decisions, and Eames steals everything (including, maybe, Arthur's heart).

**Notes**

This was a prompt, which I can't find anymore, on the kink meme which asked for a fic in which Arthur was blackmailed into sex. So I wrote this, which is about Arthur being "blackmailed" into sex with Eames. Basically, it's 10,000 words of pornography, and it has no redeeming value whatsoever. **This story does not contain any actual sexual coercion**, but if sexual bribery (idk, is that a thing?) triggers you, you may want to avoid this.

See the end of the work for more notes.

The first time Arthur met Eames, he was twenty-five and on his second job with Cobb. Arthur was still learning the ropes of dreamsharing and he winced every time he had to insert an IV, but so far Cobb seemed impressed by the thoroughness of his research and his ability to do backflips. He'd met Cobb at paintball rally, and he'd covered Cobb's ass while Cobb had snuck into the opposing team's base and captured their flag; shortly after, Cobb had cornered him the parking lot and asked if Arthur had wanted a job. (At the time, Arthur hadn't, but when both partners of the law firm he was an office manager for suddenly went bankrupt, Arthur had found Cobb's card in his wallet and thought, What the hell.)

Cobb seemed more like a professor who had gotten into the wrong line of work, but Eames -- real name Thomas Frost, said Arthur's sources, wanted in the EU for art forgery, among other things --
was a common criminal. Yet Arthur was a criminal, too, now, and so he didn't argue when Cobb wanted to bring Eames in for a corporate espionage job.

It turned out Eames could change his appearance in dreams. Arthur had to admit that was impressive. He was also brash, loud, appeared to be colourblind, and handsome in a way that meant he had to be straight, because that was how Arthur's life worked.

They performed the extraction on the train from Paris to Brussels; the train was the mark's preferred way to travel on his weekly commute, which Cobb said was good because it meant they could hide in plain sight when they finished. It went just as they'd planned, and they were in and out in roughly half an hour.

After, Cobb checked the mark's pulse as Arthur got rid of any evidence they'd been there and Eames dropped a wad of euros into the hands of the old man they'd hired to keep an eye out.

"Good work, both of you," Cobb said, as Arthur handed him the PASIV and his passport. He glanced at Eames. "Your money will be wired in the morning. I'll call you if I have any more jobs that require your expertise."

They left the carriage. Cobb went one way, holding the silver case of the PASIV to his chest, Much to Arthur's surprise, Eames grabbed Arthur's upper arm and pulled him in the opposite direction. "Try to look casual, would you?" Eames murmured in his ear while Arthur bristled. "Let's not look as if we've just stolen a man's secrets."

The got to an empty carriage a few cars down, and Arthur threw Eames's arm off. "Next time, how about a little less manhandling?"

Eames dropped gracefully into one of the seats. "I'm getting off in Antwerp," he said, as Arthur took the seat opposite him. "You should come with me."

Arthur frowned. "Cobb said we should split up."

Eames waved a hand. "Cobb says a lot of silly things. But you must admit, we were a good team in there, you and I, and I'd love to steal you away for a night or two. I know a very cozy spot in Het Zuid that does the best martini you'll ever taste," he added, and it was definitely implied in his tone that he expected more than a drink from Arthur.

"Um," Arthur said suavely.

It wasn't that Arthur didn't like Eames, and it wasn't that Arthur didn't think Eames was hot -- because, man, was he hot, hot like burning, and Arthur was going to jerk off to fantasies of Eames's lips and shoulders and jean-clad thighs for days once they were continents apart, like a high school boy with a crush on the head cheerleader -- but Arthur was twenty-five and didn't have a lot of experience with sleeping with guys who were practically strangers. He had definitely never slept with someone he'd worked with. It seemed like it was a bad idea. He knew Cobb had married a woman he frequently worked with, but Cobb seemed to have boundary issues. (Arthur kept trying to get Cobb to call him Mr Reyes, because this was work and Arthur was a firm believer in separating work and pleasure, but every time he said it, Cobb looked at him like he was an idiot and said, "Arthur." Eames called him Arthur too, but Arthur suspected that was because he was something of a jerk.)

Eames smirked at him like he knew Arthur was thinking about how each of his (strong, muscular) thighs were nearly the size of Arthur's torso.
"I'm sorry, Mr Eames," Arthur said, and he really was sorry, kind of, "but I think it's best our relationship remain professional."

"I see," Eames replied, nodding. He didn't look surprised.

They sat in silence until the train pulled into the Antwerp station. Eames grabbed his duffle bag, which was probably stuffed with ugly clothes, and said, "Until we meet again," in a way he probably thought was dashing. Arthur refused to fall for it.

Anyway, it turned out Eames was playing them and he sold the information back to the mark for triple what Cobb had paid him. After that Arthur didn't care how handsome he was; he never wanted to see Eames's stupid face again.

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The next time they saw each other, a year later in Beijing, Eames took one look at Arthur and said, "Look--"

Arthur punched him in the nose. Eames staggered backwards and barely missed tumbling to the floor.

"I deserved that," he said, covering his bleeding nose with one hand, "but you know what they say, all's far in love and war."

"I was almost killed because of you!" Arthur raged. "Did you know there's a Belgian mob? Because I didn't, until they put a hit on me. The only reason I got out of the country alive was because my brother mailed me his passport!"

He took a step towards Eames threateningly, but Eames reached out and touched his face and said, "I am very sorry about that, darling, you must believe me," and Cobb coughed and called, "Do you two want to be alone?"

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After that, he and Eames were friendly -- but definitely not friends -- again. Eames disappeared to Kenya around the time Mal jumped and Cobb's self-control left the building, but he inexplicably continued to send Arthur emails about ridiculous things, such as:

_to: "Arthur" a.reyes81@gmail.com
_from: "He Who Must Not Be Named" georges.seurat@yahoo.co.uk
_subject: shall i compare thee to a summer's day? or some other cliche?

today i saw aLovely young man with dark hair and a burberry suit and thought he must be you, but in my heart of hearts i knew you would never willingly go to a country with such opresive summer heat. perhaps my subconsoous has burst thru and is causing me to suffer from halucinasions. at least my halucinasions are pretty ones. do visit when you have a chance. i'll be in st petersberg next, i know that weather is more to your liking.

e.

And,

_to: "Arthur" a.reyes81@gmail.com
_from: "He Who Must Not Be Named" georges.seurat@yahoo.co.uk
_subject: FWD: (no subject)
my mate sent me this, thought u'd like it.

e.

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: (no subject)
From: "Yusuf Khan" yusufkhan@cambridge.ac.uk

>Look at his precious face!

Okay, that was one was pretty cute. Arthur forwarded it to Cobb.

But the point was, Eames acted like he and Arthur were buddies, or something. They'd only worked together a handful of times; Eames was an extractor in his own right, and there weren't many extraction jobs that required either forgers or an extra extractor. He knew Eames was hiding out in Mombasa because he'd stolen several pieces from a shipping heir's private art collection. Yet he still sent emails, and he still called Arthur names like *darling* and *sweetheart* and *love* the few times they saw each other, and he was still brilliant and infuriating, and he still brought Arthur vanilla lattes with extra foam just the way Arthur liked them. And after four years, he was starting to make Arthur feel funny in places other than just his pants.

Things came to a head during the Fischer job. Much to Arthur's chagrin, Eames was goddamn amazing at it, coming up with Fischer's motivation, pretending to be Browning, blowing shit up. Gazing at his sleeping face in the hotel room Ariandne had constructed, Arthur thought, horrified, Shit, I *like* him. But then the hotel tipped over and he had an army of projections to battle, so he was able to put it out of his mind.

At LAX, several hours later, Arthur watched Cobb walk through the arrivals terminal a free man. Then he headed for his connecting flight to Vegas. He was checking his email on his phone when he bumped into Eames buying a coffee at Starbucks.

"You have an iPhone?" Eames demanded, snatching it out of Arthur's hands, coffee forgotten. He scrolled through Arthur's email. "Bloody hell, are all these from your mum?"

"Eames, give it back," Arthur said angrily.

Eames smirked. "What will you give me for it?"
Arthur started to walk away, but Eames called, "Hold on."

He turned.

"You can have it back if you give me your number," Eames said.

"I don't give this number to people I work with," said Arthur, but Eames just looked at him, and for an instant, Arthur felt reckless. He took a pen out of his bag and wrote his number on Eames's palm. Then he took his phone back and headed for his gate.

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He waited for Eames to call or text him, but after a week, he realized it probably wasn't going to happen. Eames didn't email him, either, which was unusual. It made him feel weird, like maybe he'd crossed a line or something. Or maybe Eames just liked the thrill of the chase, and he was through with Arthur. That thought made Arthur furious, and he spent several weeks taking a lot of long, angry morning runs. He hated feeling young and stupid.

In Nevada, his mother shoveled cakes and pies and flan at him, claiming he was too skinny and oh my God was he smoking? Didn't he know he was going to die of lung cancer? She made him visit his grandparents, go to his cousin's high school graduation, and clean out the gutters of the house he'd bought for her after his third extraction job; she kept asking if he was sure he wasn't lonely, that he could come home and find a good job at a local office instead of that big impersonal Boston firm. So when Cobb called, nearly a month later, Arthur answered with an, "Thank God, you have to get me out of here."

"What, are you being tortured or something?" Cobb asked.

"Yeah, by my mother," Arthur replied, keeping his voice down. He closed the door to his room. "I think I'm going crazy."

"You ungrateful brat," Cobb said. "Your mother slaved over for you for eighteen years, and this is how--"


Cobb cleared his throat. "I've discovered I may not be a good stay-at-home dad."

"Really," Arthur said.

"I have a job lined up in Seattle. I need a point man."

Arthur turned on his laptop and started looking at flights. "I don't know," he said, typing in 'From: Las Vegas, to: Seattle'. "Mom might get upset if I just up and leave."

"I've already asked Eames."

To his credit, Arthur didn't make a sound. He exhaled calmly and replied, "Is that necessary? There are other forgers."

"He's the best," Cobb said, which was, unfortunately, true.

That was how Arthur ended up in a seedy motel in the bad part of Seattle two days later. He hadn't even known there was a bad part of Seattle. Since it was just the three of them, Cobb had rented out five rooms: three bedrooms, one "office" for Arthur and Eames, and, because even a shadeless
Cobb was still a paranoid and selfish Cobb, one "office" for himself. Arthur was bemused to find himself the last to arrive, and he wondered just when it was Cobb had decided to start calling forgers before his point man.

The first thing Arthur noticed was Eames looked good; he was tan and scruffy and looked like he had gotten dressed in the dark, so it was business as usual, then. The second thing he noticed was Eames was setting up a large white board in the corner of the room they were using as their office. The bed was covered in papers and Eames's laptop (which was from, like, 2001 and weighed at least ten pounds), and there were crumpled cups of convenience store coffee on the table. It was just like the job they'd worked together before the Fischer one, in Cape Town back in '09, when Arthur had screamed at Eames for leaving his crap everywhere and Eames had called him a "prissy, uptight prat who needed a good--" and Cobb had sent each of them into their own corners for the day. It had not been one of Arthur's proudest moments.

"Mr Eames," Arthur greeted coolly.

"Arthur, pleasure, as always," said Eames. He gestured to the board and asked, "Do you like it? I know it helps you think."

"Thank you," Arthur said, and when Eames smiled at him, he almost -- but not quite -- forgot Eames was an asshole.

Cobb clapped Arthur on the shoulder. "I need to go meet our client for an update. Do you have what you need to get started?"

Arthur eyed the mess on the bed. It was a good thing he'd had the foresight to bring his own pens, label-maker, and multi-coloured loose files.

As soon as Cobb closed the door behind him, Arthur turned to Eames and glared at him.

"I would ask if you were angry with me," Eames began, "but it pains me to say I recognize that expression all too well."

Arthur ignored him, choosing instead to pick up the first set of papers, which were print outs from an escort service's website. Apparently, their mark and his buddies had a fondness for blonde women with names like Roxie and Silver, and every page featured some sort of variation of "It will be the best night of your life." Right up until the syphilis, Arthur's mind supplied.

"I was going to call you," Eames said, awkwardly.

"Don't worry, Mr Eames," Arthur said, "I didn't actually expect you to call me."

"No, I was going to," Eames continued, making it worse, "I really did want to. I had a whole list of things I wanted your opinion on. You know. Books, and such. But--"

Arthur raised an eyebrow.

"--I was arrested in the Czech Republic."

"Okay, first of all, it astonishes me you continue going back to Europe when you've been one of the Europol's most wanted for nearly a decade," Arthur replied. "Second, do I need to explain what, exactly, it means to be wanted in the entirety of the EU?"

Eames rubbed his chin. "While I'm delighted at your concern for my safety, it's usually not a big deal, so long as I'm careful. But it was my mate's stag night, you see, and the whole lot's very nosy
-- I don't know why I'm friends with them, to be honest -- so I had to use my real passport. And I should point out that at the time I was originally under investigation, the Czech Republic had not been part of the EU."

Arthur laughed incredulously. "You're an idiot. How'd you get out?"

Eames grinned. "No prison can hold me, darling. You must know that by now."

And that was probably some sort of metaphor for something, but Arthur didn't have the imagination to come up with just what.

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The next couple of days were a flurry of phone calls, reading, Googling, organizing, and eating greasy take-out. Whenever Arthur took long breaks from his work, this was what he missed; there was just something so satisfying when a plan came together. Cobb liked exploring the dreams and seeing what their imaginations came up with, Eames thrived on the moment of opening the safe and discovering the mark's secrets (and Yusuf had told Arthur, on the plane, that the only part he liked was waking up, grateful to still be alive), but for Arthur, the best aspect of his job was the planning.

Arthur was busy emailing the mark's private account a trojan which would allow him access to his computer when Eames threw down a stack of papers in disgust. "I don't think we need to go into this guy's head to find out what he's been spending all his investors' money on."

Arthur shook his head. He didn't look away from his screen, but thanks to the smallness of the motel table, he could still see Eames's face over the top. "Believe it or not, this is what he spends his paycheque on. We're looking for the number of his off shore account so we can find where the rest of the money's gone."

"I wish I made enough money to spend it on all the whores and blow I wanted," Eames drawled. "Oh, wait, I do."

Arthur grimaced, and Eames said, "That was a joke, dear. However, it's good to see that becoming a millionaire hasn't affected your sense of humour, or lack thereof."

*My name's Candy*, Arthur typed. *Come watch my best friend and me on our website. Here's a free preview.* He attached the trojan and sent it off.

"Maybe I just don't want to think of you as the kind of guy who puts all his money up his nose," Arthur said, closing his laptop and getting up for a bathroom break. "Although you're not investing it in your wardrobe, that's for sure."

"I'll have you know, these shoes are very expensive," Eames yelled at his back.

When he neared the table again, he noticed his moleskine notebook was gone. It was in Eames's hands, and he was flipping through it, lips pursed.

"There's nothing in there that would interest you," Arthur said, reaching for it back.

Eames held it just out of his grasp. "You don't know that. Maybe I find your thought processes fascinating."

Arthur sighed. "Eames, give it back."
"In a minute."

Eames picked up a pen like he was going to write something, and Arthur said, "Don't you dare."

"What will you give me for it?" Eames asked, just like he had done at LAX.

Intellectually, Arthur knew Eames was trying to get him to do something embarrassing (just like last time, and Arthur still felt stupid over that), or maybe to just punch him and take it by force, but if it was one thing Arthur was good at, it was thinking on his toes. Arthur is entirely too clever for his own good, his teachers used to write on his report cards when he was a kid. It was why he was good at his job; it was why he was still alive.

There were a lot of things Arthur wanted in his life that his pride wouldn't let him have. He wanted to wear jeans to work sometimes, he wanted to learn how to Salsa dance, he wanted to learn how to forge in dreams, he wanted to shoot Cobb in the kneecaps and ask him how it felt, he wanted to go on an Alaskan cruise, and -- and this one was the worst, the absolute worst, and he was never telling anyone, ever -- he wanted Eames to be nice to him. But mostly he wanted to tear off all of Eames's ugly clothes and have sex with him until they both forgot their names.

There was, he realized suddenly, a way for him to maintain his dignity and get what he wanted.

Arthur took a step forward. He licked his lips pointedly, and he was pleased to see Eames's eyes flicker. "I'll do anything you want," he said, voice low.

Eames dropped the pen.

"Come again?" he asked, voice strangled.

Taking a few bold steps closer, Arthur repeated in the same tone, "I'll do anything you want if you give me back my notebook."

Eames stared at him for a long heartbeat, and Arthur could see the wheels working behind the grey of his eyes. Finally, he said in a voice Arthur had never heard come from him, "I'll give you the notebook back if you blow me."

Arthur watched Eames's hands clench the arms of the chair tightly when he moved to stand between Eames's legs. When Arthur sank to his knees, Eames made a noise in his throat, and all the blood in Arthur's body drained to his cock. He couldn't help but smirk a little when he found Eames was already hard.

Without breaking eye contact, Arthur lowered the zipper and pulled out Eames's cock. Arthur curled his hand around it and gently stroked; Eames wasn't the biggest he'd seen, but he was a nice size, and Arthur knew instantly that this wasn't the best idea he'd ever had, but goddamn it, he was going to enjoy himself. There would be time for dealing with the consequences later.

He waited until the head of Eames's cock was less than an inch from his lips before he asked, "Ready?"

"Uhhhhh," said Eames.

"Uhhhhhh," said Eames.

Taking that as a yes, Arthur wetly sucked Eames into his mouth. He used one hand to continue stroking and ran his other hand along Eames's thigh, which was strong and muscular and fucking huge, before grabbing tightly onto Eames's knee. With a low moan, Eames sank lower in the chair, spreading his legs wider, and Arthur went down as far as he could without gagging. He did that for a while, just focusing on Eames's taste and texture and smell; Eames's hand fist ed in his hair, every
so often his fingers twitching against the back of Arthur's head.

When he looked up, Eames was staring down at Arthur with such heat in his gaze that Arthur found himself reaching inside his own pants to stroke himself, so hard from the feel of Eames in his mouth and the noises Eames was making, like this was the best blowjob of his life. Eames groaned, "Jesus, Arthur, are you--? Holy fuck, God, Arthur, you're so good, so good. Arthur." He gasped around Eames's cock, speeding up his hand, and then Eames was coming in his mouth in a burst. Eames tugged Arthur up by his hair and they were kissing, Eames cleaning out Arthur's mouth with long strokes of his tongue, and that was when Arthur came inside his favourite Dior slacks. Dazed, he let Eames pull him into his lap and kiss his cheeks, his nose, his neck. His notebook sat on the floor near their feet, long forgotten.

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"This is not part of my job description," Arthur said.

He and Eames were sitting in Cobb's rental car waiting for their mark's PA -- who Eames would be impersonating in the dream -- to come out of the Fairmont Olympic Hotel. For some unknown reason, Eames actually had a pair of binoculars and one of those enormous DSLR cameras, which every so often he pointed at the hotel. He also had a meal from Burger King and was munching away on the fries, knocking a few to the floor every time he raised his camera for another shot. The whole set up made them less than inconspicuous, especially since Eames was wearing a jacket you could probably see from space.

"Perhaps not, but it is your job to figure out the mark and his or her associates' daily schedules," Eames pointed out.

Arthur crossed his arms over his chest. "I don't actually need to follow them around like a private eye. I use computers, or I bribe people into giving me information. I make a lot of phone calls."

Eames chuckled. "Well, then just think of it as you keeping me company during what otherwise would have been a long, boring afternoon."

He offered Arthur a fry smothered in ketchup. Arthur wrinkled his nose and pointedly took a sip of his coffee, which had gone cold a while ago.

"I don't think Perry's coming down," Arthur said. Their target had entered the hotel with his two-thousand-dollar-a-night escort at noon, and it was five 'o' clock now. "We've been sitting here for hours. He must've booked the night."

"It looks like you might be right," Eames agreed absently. He rolled down the window and threw out his crumpled Burger King bag.

"I can't believe you're littering, you prick," Arthur said. "That's so bad for the--"

"What did you do before you met Cobb?" Eames demanded abruptly, turning his full attention to Arthur.

From anyone else, Arthur would have told him to fuck off, but something in Eames's expression was earnest. And Eames usually didn't ask him for personal information; normally, he found something in a roundabout way and then brought it up at the least convenient time, like when he had found out Arthur had majored in Art History, or when he'd found out Arthur was deathly allergic to peanuts.

"I was an office manager at a law firm," Arthur answered.
Eames's brow furrowed. "Office manager? Isn't that like being a secretary?"

"Administrative professional," Arthur corrected. "And, no, it's nothing like that."

"If you say so, poppet," Eames said. He took a big gulp of his Coke. "Pity you can't forge; you'd be a more convincing PA than me. The only legitimate job I ever had was working at the pub whilst in university, and that was only so I could learn some of the skills I am highly paid for today."

"Like what kind of skills?" Arthur asked suspiciously.

With a smug look, Eames dangled the car keys in the air. They had been in the pocket of Arthur's jacket, now left folded on the backseat. Arthur hadn't seen Eames reach back there once, however. He put his hand out for them, but Eames pulled back.

"You've made your point," said Arthur, exasperated.

Eames's expression shifted. "What will you give me for the keys?" he asked, and Arthur couldn't help but glance down at the buldge in Eames's pants.

Two days ago (two very, very long days -- not that Arthur was counting), when Eames had asked that, he'd been kidding. Now, though, his tone was overtly sexual, and Arthur could feel himself responding. He knew exactly what Eames wanted.

"I'll suck you again if you give them back to me," Arthur said, looking him dead in the eye.

"No," Eames said, surprising him. He brought his face close enough for Arthur to smell him, which was a strangely sexy mix of cologne, sweat, and french fry grease. "I'll give you the keys back if you let me suck you."

Arthur swallowed thickly. "Okay, but not-- not here."

The drive back was a blur. Inside, he let Eames back him up against the wall in Eames's motel room and kiss him, all tongues and slick teeth. The look on Eames's face was so intense, and he slid to his knees and smirked up at Arthur, who had no idea what the expression on his own face was just then. Arthur was sweating and more turned on than he'd ever remembered being before, even more than last time.

Eames pulled down Arthur's zipper and lowered his pants and underwear with agonizing slowness. When he rubbed his stubbled cheek against Arthur's hip, Arthur jerked and moaned.

"Like that, do you?" Eames asked, nosing Arthur's belly.

Without waiting for a reply, he rubbed his cheek against Arthur's dick, and Arthur swore loudly, banging the back of his head against the wall. He could have cried when Eames finally sucked him into his mouth, wet and tight, and he grabbed Eames's hair like Eames had done to him. Eames's eyes were heavy-lidded and bright with some unidentifiable emotion, and Arthur couldn't stop staring at the way Eames's lips were wrapped around his cock.

It took embarrassingly little after that for Arthur to come, and his knees felt like jelly afterwards. He slid to the floor and Eames sat beside him, the length of their sides pressed against each other. Arthur was still trying to catch his breath when Eames put his hand on his knee and rubbed his thumb in circles, and Arthur gave himself permission to put his head on Eames's shoulder.

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It got a lot easier after that.

The following afternoon, he and Eames ate lunch in their "office." Eames hadn't done anything spectacular all day, and he had a smear of mustard in the corner of his mouth which should have been disgusting, but Arthur still wanted to shove him to the floor and dry hump him like a teenager. He was wondering exactly what it was going to take to get Eames completely naked so Arthur could touch him everywhere when Eames plucked the bag out chips right out Arthur's hand.

The knowing look on Eames's face made Arthur's dick twitch. He began, "If you give me back my chips, I'll--"

"I'll give you your crisps back if you take off your clothes for me," Eames interrupted.

"I should have a problem with your blatant objectification of my body," Arthur said, standing up and abandoning his lunch, "but, frankly, I don't."

He started to pull sweatervest over his head when Eames pressed himself to Arthur and stopped him. "I changed my mind," Eames said, pushing their hips together so Arthur could feel how hard he was. "I want to take your clothes off for you."

"Whatever," said Arthur, furiously turned on, "I don't care, just--" He couldn't even finish that sentence. He pressed his lips together, overwhelmed.

"Your sweatervest makes me hot," Eames whispered against his cheek. He slid his hands into the back pockets of Arthur's pants and squeezed.

Arthur sighed, leaning into him. He pulled out Eames's shirttails from his bizarrely ill-fitting pants. "I can't even tell if you're being sarcastic anymore."

"Of course you can't, love. It's one of the things I like about you. That, and your face and your arms and your arse." He squeezed again. "Especially your arse."

They were making out on the bed when Cobb walked in.

"Oh no," Cobb said, and Arthur shoved Eames off him. "No, no, no."

"Cobb," Arthur started, buttoning up his shirt quickly. His sweatervest and tie had been tossed to the floor, and Eames's shirt was around there somewhere. "I--"

Cobb made a face at him. "Can you at least zip up your pants when you're talking to me?"

"Shit," Arthur said, reaching down to do just that.

"Listen, far be it from me to question your life choices--" Except Cobb's eyes flickered to Eames as he said it, and Arthur knew Cobb was definitely, definitely judging Arthur right then. "But can you please not do this on my time? And-- not where I can see it? I was really happy not knowing about any of this."

"It's my lunch break," Arthur said lamely, waving his hand at the half-finished sandwiches on the table, and Cobb squinted at him.

"Maybe we should go back to mine," Eames suggested, stroking Arthur's waist. His lips were red, and Arthur had to forcibly tear his eyes away from the tent in his pants. When he looked back at Cobb, Cobb was glowering at him.
Arthur tried his best not to give Cobb a pleading look. "It's my lunch break," he repeated.

"You're breaking my heart," Cobb said.

In the end, Cobb didn't let Arthur go back to one of the other rooms with Eames; he handed Arthur the stack of credit card statements his source had finally come through with, so that Arthur could piece together everything he could about their mark's expensive tastes (foie gras, escorts, yachts, diamonds, blah blah so typical) so that the dream felt more real. Eames, on the other hand, was allowed to go beat off in the bathroom, and knowing what Eames was doing didn't help Arthur's hard on.

"You're a cruel, sadistic bastard," Arthur told Cobb when he heard the bathroom shower begin to run.

"No hanky-panky during office hours," Cobb replied, giving him a squinty-eyed scowl. "Especially not with Eames."

Arthur frowned. "What's wrong with Eames? I mean, besides the obvious."

Cobb looked confused. "I thought you didn't like him. He almost got you killed. Belgium, remember?"

"I never said I didn't like him," Arthur answered. He didn't add, You've almost gotten me killed dozens of times, because now was neither the time nor the place.

"You're always fighting."

"It's not fighting, it's just how we talk to each other. Trust me, if we were fighting, you'd know."

The bathroom door opened, and Arthur nearly startled. He hadn't even heard the water turn off. Eames, fully-clothed and wet and dripping onto the carpet, gave him a funny look, but he didn't say anything. Instead, he took the empty seat at the table next to Arthur and continued eating his sandwich.

"You're dripping all over my work," Arthur said, moving his files to the other side of the table. "Go away."

Eames finished the last bite and then licked his fingers one by one. "Alright," he said, unusually agreeable.

On his way out, he patted Arthur fondly on the head. Cobb looked at Arthur like he thought he'd had lost his marbles.

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They'd been leading up to it, but Arthur was still caught off guard when it happened.

It was nearly midnight by the time he returned to the motel; he'd had to drive up to a town north of Vancouver earlier that day to meet their mark's former secretary, who had moved to BC after she'd left the company. He was tired from driving on unfamiliar highways and slightly nauseated from the fast food he'd wolfed down for dinner, but he'd gotten the information he'd wanted.

He'd called Cobb on the drive back, and Cobb had said, "Excellent. This means we should be ready to start the test runs tomorrow." That meant they were nearing the end of the job; Arthur didn't know how he felt about that. No, that wasn't true -- he was glad to be getting out of that
motel, which was dirty and cramped and attached to a family restaurant with a salad bar, but he didn't know what it meant about his thing with Eames. And he wasn't about to debase himself and ask Eames if they were—*dating*.

When he got to his room, he couldn't find his key card anywhere. He checked his pockets and his bag, but it wasn't in either.

He was cursing himself when a familiar voice called, "Looking for this?"

Arthur turned to find Eames leaning against the opposite wall and flipping his key card across his knuckles, showing off. "You should really pay more attention to your things, love," Eames said, licking his lips.

What Arthur wanted to ask was, "Do you want to come in for a nightcap?" or "Do you wear those clothes knowing it just makes me want to tear them off you, you greasy, unkempt, devilishly handsome man?" but what came out was, "What do you want?"

"So we're still playing, are we?" Eames mused, standing up straight.

Arthur was struck by the look in Eames's eyes. "Eames," he said.

"I'll give you the key card back if you let me fuck you."

Arthur would have protested that Eames was making an awful big assumption there, but then Eames cupped him through his pants and he couldn't remember why he was going to fight it.

"Yeah, sure, okay," was all Arthur could say, as Eames started to unbuckle his belt with deft fingers.

Somehow, Arthur got the key card out of Eames's hand and unlocked the door. They stumbled inside, Eames pulling Arthur's belt out of the loops and breathing hot in his ear, Arthur licking and kissing Eames's throat, the nape of his neck. Eames kicked the door shut. The lights were off but the streetlights shone bright through the window, and Arthur pulled back to watch Eames strip off his shirt. Silently, he ran his hands up Eames's bare sides to his chest, feeling nothing but the same warm skin and soft hair and hard muscle he'd been touching for the past week. Eames let out a shaky breath, and the next thing Arthur knew, he was unbuttoning his waistcoat as fast as he could and Eames was kissing him, hard, sucking and stroking Arthur's tongue until Arthur thought his knees were going to give out from lack of oxygen.

"I'm going to fuck you until you scream my name," Eames murmured against his mouth. "I'm going to open you up and make you beg for my cock, and then I'm going to make you come so hard you'll forget ever wanting to have someone else inside you."

Arthur felt like his skin was on fire. "Are you going to do it or just talk about it?"

Once he managed to get his waistcoat and button-down off (in a calm and dignified manner, unlike the way Eames was shucking out of own clothes like a teenage boy about about to get laid for the first time), he draped them onto the back of a chair. Mystifyingly, Eames knelt to undo the laces on Arthur's shoes and then set them and Arthur's slacks on the same chair.

In just their socks, they rolled onto the bed, legs tangled. They were on their sides, stroking each other, when Eames clenched the hand cupping Arthur's ass and said suddenly, "Wait, Arthur, stop."

Arthur groaned in frustration. "Are you serious?"
"Yes," Eames said, "I'm very serious. I'm confused."

"You're confused?" Arthur repeated in disbelief. He pointedly looked down at Eames's dick in his hand.

Eames pushed his hand away and up with a pained expression, pressing their joined hands against the pillow between them. "Yes. It would appear, to the casual observer, I've been coercing you into sex. And yet..."

Arthur grit his teeth. "And yet?"

"You seem to be getting off on it," Eames explained. "So you'll understand, then, when I say I don't understand what all this means. Do you have some sort of—of rape fantasy or something? Because you can tell me. And while it cuts me to the very core to hurt you, I will very gladly spank you or hold you down or call you a filthy slut. I can even do all three at once."

"No, I don't have a rape fantasy," Arthur growled. He sat up and ran his fingers through his hair. "Christ, Eames."

His face was serious, more serious than Arthur would have expected at a moment like this, and it made Arthur want to cross his arms over his chest. But he managed to restrain himself. "So is this about having sex with me, then?" Eames asked quietly.

Arthur went still, his chest tightening painfully.

Eames's eyes brightened. He sat up quickly. "It is, isn't it."

"I couldn't just ask you to sleep with me," Arthur bit out.

"Why couldn't you?" Eames demanded, looking like that was the most ridiculous statement in the history of the world.

"Because it's embarrassing."

Arthur threw his hands in the air. "I gave you my phone number and you never called me—"

"Because I was in jail."

"--and it's not like I go around propositioning guys all the time. I mean, while sober," he added, and Eames goggled at him.

"Let's be clear," Eames said, poking Arthur in the sternum with a finger. "You have absolutely no problem killing people, going inside people's dreams at the risk of being torn to pieces, and being hunted down in real life by various and sundry, yet you can't be forward with me about what you want because it embarrasses you?"

"Yes, that's exactly right," Arthur said, relieved Eames got it.

Eames stared at him thoughtfully for a long moment. Finally, he said, slowly, "Can I tell you something I want? Is that allowed?"

Arthur furrowed his brow. "Of course."

He put a hand on the back of Arthur's neck. "I want to be with you without these ridiculous games," he said quietly. "I want to kiss you or to touch you without asking permission, and I want to fuck you without wondering if it will later be used against me in a court of law. I'm sorry I didn't call
you when I was in Prague; I would have called you immediately if I'd known it was the only thing preventing you from going absolutely mad."

"You're so sweet," Arthur said flatly, pulling away.

Eames took a deep breath. "And I know you find all of this terribly embarrassing because you, I don't know, think I'm going to secretly find you pathetic, but the truth is -- and I'm sure Cobb can hear every word of this next door, but I'm going to say it anyway -- the truth is, I'm completely fascinated by you. I'm enthralled by everything you do. I've been for years. I'm not going to find anything you do silly, because I don't think you're a silly person."

Arthur stared at him. "Oh."

Eames raised his eyebrows in expectation.

"Now I feel like an idiot," Arthur said.

"Bloody hell," said Eames, and tackled him.

Arthur squirmed as Eames kissed a line down his chest, stopping to suck a mark under Arthur's ribs. At the wet pressure, he ran his fingers through Eames's hair and felt Eames chuckle against his belly. Without warning, Eames ducked his head and licked the head of Arthur's cock, and Arthur made an undignified sound. He made it again when Eames swallowed him down.

Eames released him with a obscene pop. "You've got slick, yeah?"

"Yeah," Arthur said, pulling it and a condom out the nightstand drawer, where he'd stashed them days ago because he believed in always being prepared.

Once he'd slicked up his fingers, Eames sat back on his haunches and pulled Arthur's ass into his lap. "I'm going to kick you in the face," Arthur warned as he rested his ankles on Eames's shoulders.

"I always knew you were kinky," Eames said, sliding a finger into Arthur. He didn't wait for Arthur to adjust before he added a second one, and it went in with a burn. Arthur's thighs shook. Eames's eyes were dark, and he turned his head and kissed Arthur's knee. This time, when he added a third, he stroked exactly where Arthur needed, and Arthur felt himself melt around Eames's fingers.

"I'm ready now," Arthur breathed, pushing into it. "Hurry up."

But instead, Eames twisted his fingers and started working them in and out, driving him crazy. It wasn't enough, he wasn't going to get off from this.

"Eames," he groaned, "Eames, if you don't put your cock in me right now--"

Someone banged on the wall. "Some of us are trying to sleep, you perverts!" yelled Cobb, his voice muffled. "Keep it down!"

At that, Eames started laughing, his whole body shaking, and Arthur pushed and pushed until he rolled onto his back. Arthur straddled Eames's hips and covered Eames's mouth with his hand. "I can't fuck you knowing Cobb can hear it, so shut the hell up."

When Eames licked his palm, Arthur pulled it away and said, "Ugh, very mature."
Eames pulled himself up and gave him a chaste peck on the lips. "Let's be quiet, then," he whispered.

Arthur met Eames's eyes and reached down to grasp Eames's cock before sinking onto it. Heart pounding in his ears, Arthur had to wait a minute before he felt his body loosening up and letting Eames in all the way, and he found he'd squeezed his eyes shut. When he opened them, Eames's face was slack with ecstasy, his pupils blown, and Arthur leaned down and kissed him at the same time Eames pulled his knees and thrust up. Arthur made a sound he would never admit was a whine.

"Shhh," Eames reminded him.

They rocked together. Arthur put his hands on Eames's chest and rolled his hips, searching for the best angle for a few moments before he found it while Eames ran his palms up Arthur's thighs, sliding his hands around his waist as Arthur found his rhythm; he looked wrecked, his eyes glued to where they were joined, and Arthur realized belatedly he must have been watching his cock move in and out of Arthur.

"Fuck," Arthur said, forgetting to keep his voice down. Sweat was running down his back, and he was tugging his hand through his hair, even though he knew it made it stand up on end, but he didn't care because every neuron in him was electrified. His ass burned with every slide of Eames's cock. He wasn't going to last much longer.

"Arthur," Eames whispered. He wrapped a hand around Arthur's cock and started pumping as his thrusts became faster, shallower. "Arthur, fuck, you're so tight, you feel-- do you know how long--" But Arthur missed the rest because he was coming in a rush, with Eames fucking him through it the entire time.

When he came back to reality, Eames was still talking: "--you're so beautiful for me, you're so, oh," as he pushed in over and over, and Arthur was saying, "Yeah, come on, come on, Eames," and Eames's hips snapped and Arthur could feel him coming.

Eventually, Arthur slid off, landing on his back on the cool sheets. "I think you've killed me," Eames said, panting for breath. Looking exhausted, he tied off the condom and tossed it in trash.

"Mmm," Arthur agreed.

"Cobb's going to skin us alive," Eames said.


His eyes drifted shut, and when he awoke in the morning he found Eames wrapped around him like a big, blond, British puppy.

* *

Later, on another job in another country, Ariadne asked them how they got together.

"I took his notebook and told him I'd only give it back if he blew me," Eames replied, throwing an arm over the back of Arthur's chair as Arthur glowered at him.

"That's a terrible story," Cobb exclaimed. "Why would you tell us that? Why?"

"Eames is such a romantic," said Arthur dryly, kicking Eames in the shins, but Eames just grabbed his knee under the table and grinned. "I know they're so hard to find this day and age, but somehow
I lucked out."

"I regret meeting all of you," Ariadne said.

End Notes

Thanks to Aja for correcting my spelling mistakes, and for not letting me name it "St Cobb's Fire."

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